Good morning, Carolyn, and thank you for taking the time to do this interview.

That’s a pleasure.

Now, perhaps I could start by asking you a little bit about yourself and your background and experience in visual arts and craft before you joined Don Dunstan’s arts development team.

Right. Well, I’d always been interested in the visual arts area since my time at school and always gone to the Art Gallery a lot as a teenager and as a student at the University of Adelaide. Unfortunately, when I was at school I was never allowed to study Visual Art because I was always in the academic stream, but it was something that I’d always had a great interest in. And so, when I was doing my master’s at the University of Adelaide, I actually started going to art school night classes to learn about the history and theory of the visual arts at the SA School of Art; and I subsequently – it would have been in 1975 – applied for and gained a position in the Premier’s Department in the Committee Secretariat area, where I worked with State Government committees of inquiry. And that area was being wound back, and we were advised that the Arts Development Branch, as I think it then was, of the Premier’s Department was looking for a research officer, and so I went for that job and was interviewed and I started there in January ’76. So I was very delighted to win that position.

Absolutely. And you, of course, reported directly to Len Amadio.

I did, I did.

And it was your interest, your early interest, in art that attracted you to this position.
That’s right, yes.

Yes. I think I’m right in saying that the South Australian Craft Authority was opened in 1974 at the old Jam Factory on Payneham Road.

Yes.

Was that enterprise the main focus of your work?

It did take up quite a bit of my time, but only a part of my time. I think it was actually established in ’73 but I think it opened in ’74, because there’s always a bit of a time lag between things being established and opening. But it was actually before I’d started anyway, so I might not have that quite right. But I think the Jam Factory was one of Don’s great achievements in the visual arts and craft and design area, because a lot of the work that he actually did initiate new organisations in or develop and build on existing institutions in the arts was actually more in the performing arts; but in that visual art and craft area the Jam Factory – unlike some of the others, which proved to be quite good – the Jam Factory went on to become a national flagship, and I think that’s a real achievement, and it’s always been a focal point for craft and design people throughout Australia, whereas things like our theatre company, although they’re good, I don’t think they’ve always had that national profile that the Jam Factory has had.

On that, the Arts and Crafts Authority had two aims, I believe: on the one, it was to support and encourage artists and craftspeople, and there was an importation of skilled people from overseas who were training these –

That’s right.

– and then, on the other hand, there was an outlet, if you like, a commercial aspect to the whole enterprise, wasn’t there –

Yes.

– selling the arts and crafts.

That’s right.

Can you talk a little bit about how that worked?
There was a shop and there was a gallery, and I think one of Don Dunstan’s objectives was to try and expose the South Australian community to contemporary craft objects of a high quality, and he really hoped to build a market for the mainly younger people that were going in and training in the crafts area. But I guess there ended up being a few little problems in that area because you can’t produce things as cheaply when you’re making them by hand as mass production, so it was always going to be a bit fraught, actually.

And there were also some problems on the training front I think - with some of the people who came out to train or were meant to come. It didn’t always work out. Like I think it was Pietro Solemne – this was, once again, before my time – was meant to come and work in the leather workshop, and there were problems over him coming, I think.

What kind of involvement, in your experience, when you started, a couple of years after the Jam Factory had started – was Don Dunstan involved only in a stand-back way, or was he regularly involved with the people at the Jam Factory?

Well, it would be my perception that he had sort of a figurehead role. I mean he had been right behind the establishment of the organisation and ensured that it had funding, but he didn’t get involved in any way in the day-to-day running. I mean he was too busy for that.

This was your role, the day-to-day running, of course.

Well, no, no. It had a chief executive officer, and the arts funding agency that I worked for was the conduit for providing that money and for keeping an eye on things, basically.

Yes.

And I mean the department didn’t actually have a visual arts and craft official position until about 1978, I think it was, because I had actually joined the Arts Development Branch as a research officer, and so there were people like Len Amadio and other administrators who were senior to me, anyway, although I did have quite a bit to do with it, you know, going there a lot and talking to people and
making sure, or trying to ensure, that things were happy, because there were a few ups and downs.

But, thinking about Don Dunstan’s vision, it was a very bold scheme, wasn’t it?

It was.

And, as you say, it has developed into a flagship.

It has.

It was the first, yes?

It was the first and, even now, there’s still nothing quite like it. I guess the thing was I think Don was a good listener, because it’s always been my understanding that the seed for the idea of the Jam Factory came from Dick Richards and some of his peer group. Dick was the Curator of Decorative Arts at the Art Gallery of South Australia. And I think the thing is that Don had the foresight and the good sense to listen to people like this and to ensure that their vision could be enacted.

Yes. Well, I have read a document where I believe his vision was that South Australia would become the ‘design State’.

Yes, I’ve read that, too.

Yes. I think he wanted to see several hundred small handcraft workshops and businesses start up here. How do you think he went in his vision, now 30 years down the track?

I think that the achievement’s quite good. I mean I think that there was always, as I mentioned earlier, going to be this tension between – the handmade product is always more expensive than the mass-produced product. But we have managed to establish and to maintain a good, strong nucleus of craft practitioners. There used to be more ceramics people, it seems to me, practising here and doing sort of production-line work, possibly in the late ’70s, than we have now; but we have some extremely talented potters working here now and the ceramics workshop at the Jam Factory still provides a strong nucleus for the activities that happen here.
And there’s a couple of fabulous furniture makers at the Jam Factory.

There are. And I think one of our other real strengths, though, has been the glass workshop, that we have had a very strong national profile in glass, and that’s I think directly down to the glass workshop at the Jam Factory. Canberra has recently upgraded its glassmaking and training facilities, so we’ll have to see how that pans out in terms of the future. But I think the Jam Factory’s been a fantastic addition to the State.

One of the things that, when I interviewed Dick Richards, he said that there’s apparently quite a lot of jade in this State and one of his ideas was that there would be the quarrying of – is that what one does to jade?

I presume so, yes – well, mining, anyway.

Mining. Did that happen at all?

I don’t think it happened on any huge scale that I’m aware of. I mean I may have missed it. I’m not a particular fan of jade myself, (laughs) but I’m not aware that there was, I don’t think there’s been a huge jade output.

No, I’ve not seen any examples. I wondered whether it had come and gone.

No, I don’t think so. I don’t think it ever achieved a really high profile, no.

Let’s just go back to the other aspects of your work in the Arts Development Branch. You said that the Craft Authority and the Jam Factory was only one aspect.

Yes.

What other things did you get involved in?

Well, we ran a small grants program, and I think this is one area where Don really did show a great deal of foresight, and this is probably something that may have come from himself rather than – like for the Jam Factory I think that Dick was the driving force – is that in the early ’70s Don established an Arts Grants Advisory Committee to provide funding to both individual artists and to arts organisations, and this was like an adjunct to the funding that the State already provided, and always
had provided for a long time, to the cultural institutions like the Art Gallery and the Library and the Museum. But Don established a funding program for arts organisations and individual artists and I believe that was the first state funding program of its type.

You’re talking about institutions like developing the opera, the South Australian State Theatre, those ones?

They’re a bit different again because a lot of things like the opera and the theatre company and even ADT, the Australian Dance Theatre, which Don didn’t establish but he went in and provided funding for it to grow, they were funded somewhat differently. Eventually the Arts Finance Advisory Committee was established, which was a bigger funding committee than the Arts Grants Advisory Committee, and those other things – like the opera, the theatre company, the Regional Cultural Trusts – got their money through the Arts Finance Advisory Committee.

But before those things were sort of up and running Don had established this other, smaller funding program, and in the visual arts area I think this was a good thing to help the grassroots arts practitioners and to get them up and running, because I guess one of the differences between the performing arts and the visual arts is that, in the [visual] arts, you have people a lot of the time practising individually, whereas in say theatre or dance they’ll get together in a company to put on a performance. So, in the visual arts and craft area in particular, this small funding program was very valuable.

And because South Australia has been different from the Eastern States we needed to do things like that. I mean in 1970 we would have had very few professional visual arts and crafts people over the age of 30 who were making their living as arts practitioners here in the visual arts and craft area; they tended to go through the SA School of Art – which had a good reputation – and train, but then they would move interstate, to the Eastern States. And I guess the thing is the Eastern States in those days had a larger network of art schools to provide valuable part-time employment, or even full-time employment, to people who wanted to be
visual arts and craft practitioners. They also had a far more vigorous network of commercial galleries to market and sell the work of the visual arts practitioners. And they also had networks of regional galleries and more corporate headquarters to purchase their work. So they were leaving South Australia, so it was very important for South Australia to always think of ways to try and keep our people here, if we could, through things like the Jam Factory, to attract people to come here and then to keep them here.

And I think the small grants program was one of the first things that we did, along with the Jam Factory, to try and attract or keep people here. And people were, particularly in the arts, also attracted here because of Don’s social policies, which people found very attractive and made us a very tolerant, good place to live.

Actually, Len told me that you were tremendously good in flushing out young artists and encouraging them and supporting them with grants, and I quote from Len telling me that. How did you sort of suss out or ferret out these?

You go to lots of exhibitions and you get to know people and you spend time looking at the work and talking to people and you make sure that they’re aware of the grants program because, if you’ve got more people applying who are doing good work, well, then you’ve got more of a case to go and try and get more money to support them. So I did things like that. But I also would seize on opportunities like we had, in the late ’70s – and some of this was just at the end of Don’s time, but it continued after he had departed – we had groups of artists coming out [of art school], wanting to set up collective studios, and I would go to the Government, sometimes even when we didn’t have a grant call on, and try and get money for those groups to set themselves up; and I would certainly make sure that they applied at the project grant round for, say, equipment for their studio – which was, of course, an incorporated body, so you weren’t giving that equipment just to one person. You might give them a bit of assistance with their rent when they first set up, give them some funds to purchase equipment, maybe some funds towards holding an exhibition somewhere, but to try and talk through with them what would be the opportunities that might help that group to stay here and to work here.
And the other thing that I [did] – I put this idea up to Don, which (laughs) he didn’t fund, nor did John Bannon initially; in fact, Murray Hill is the one who funded it and, to be fair to Murray, he funded a few of the (laughs) ideas that I had – is that – Peter Ward was the other person, it relates back to Peter; Peter was the other person in Don’s administration, you know, another one apart from Dick, who had a lot of good ideas – and Peter was instrumental in getting Don to get the Art Gallery of South Australia Act changed in 1975, and there were two very important amendments.

Yes, just explain that for the purposes of the archive.

Yes. One of them was that the Act was amended to encourage – or it’s probably stronger than ‘encourage’, but they didn’t do it – to get the Art Gallery of South Australia to establish a public art program; and the other one was to get them to run a regional exhibitions touring program. They were actually doing a bit on the regional touring program front through an educational touring program they had, but Peter I think had visions of something bigger. So the Art Gallery was meant to do those two things and it never got around to actually doing them; but the thing is that Peter had encouraged Don to get the legislation changed, so if you wanted to go back to the Government and say, ‘Let’s do something’, there was something in the legislation which you could throw at the Government to say, ‘Look, you really need to do these two things’.

I don’t want to interrupt you, but wasn’t the Art Gallery a strange sort of government department all on its own?

It was, it was. And Murray Hill put an end to that.

And brought that in –

To an Arts Department.

– to the Arts Department, yes.

Department for the Arts, under Len.
Yes, that’s right, yes. What was the official – other than these things which you were trying to encourage: the regional circuit and all that kind of thing – was the Art Gallery at that stage, when it was an entity until itself, was it buying local artists’ works?

It was buying some for its collection. But I guess what really annoyed – and I was trying to get the Public Art Program up because I wanted to do that because I could see that it would provide valuable work opportunities for our artists, another reason for them to stay here; and, once again, I think the only other state that had a public art program was Tasmania and it was very small, a very small budget. But they were buying a bit of local art; but I guess, to be fair to the Art Gallery, one has to remember that they’re a historical institution, they’re a collecting institution, and so you would only ever expect them to buy the cream of any one time period, and I understand that. A lot of people get quite angry about that, but I can appreciate that. But I guess what they did that really annoyed Murray Hill was he’d given them some money for public art, to get the thing up and running, and what they did was they spent all the money on public art that they put around the Art Gallery, like some drinking fountains and things: one actually in the courtyard of the Art Gallery and another one out the front, and then another – you might remember ‘The Knot’ by Bert Flugelman?

Yes.

So that was how they spent the public art allocation. And so, you see, Murray had thought that they would get involved in doing something further afield. And so then when I went to him with the proposal that I had developed – actually, I’d involved the Art Gallery in developing it, initially – and mine had things happening further afield, Murray was very happy with that and he was happy to put the money into it.

I know that during Don’s era, with the historic sort of business of the Art Gallery being a department on its own, the Director reported directly to Don, as I understand.

Yes, yes, it did. As the Minister, yes.
And was he keen to get it into the Arts Branch, or was he perfectly happy for it to stay as an entity on its own?

My impression is that he was happy for it to stay as an entity on its own.

Because he was in charge of it anyway, wasn’t he?

Yes, yes, yes, he was in charge of it anyway. And John Baily would have been the Director [of the Art Gallery of South Australia] for quite a long time and it has always been my impression that John and Don worked well together and John played a leading role in getting the public art around the Adelaide Festival Centre commissioned; but Len would know more about that side of things than me.

Well, I’ve interviewed John Baily. It’s just always nice to have this from another point of view.

Yes. I wasn’t aware that there was any tension; my impression was that there was quite a bit of tension, though, between Murray Hill and the Gallery Director [who succeeded John Baily] once Murray came in. In fact Murray made a few terse comments to me about how he just wanted them [i.e. the Art Gallery] to get out there and be doing things beyond their walls, really.

Well, that’s a bit later than the period we’re concerned with here.

Yes, it is.

Were you the middle person, if you like, between the Premier saying, ‘Look, I’m sick of these pictures, get me a new lot’? I presume they had a loan arrangement going from the Art Gallery. Did you take a part in that?

Only to defend the Art Gallery. (laughter) They were criticised – once again, though, I think it was after Don’s time – for how they were running it, and I could see that there was a situation brewing and so I’d written a paper sort of defending their position on not putting works sort of here, there and everywhere, and making a few charges on occasions for things like – I think charging freight when works would go to the Agent General in London.

Oh, as far afield as that!
Yes.

I hadn’t realised that.

I’m pretty sure that was the case, I mean I haven’t got the papers anymore. But I mean the Art Gallery shouldn’t have had to be out of pocket over whatever it was that they were doing and it takes time and money to run a loan scheme. The works have to be maintained, they have to be cleaned, and it’s staff time, and running the inventory; and I think it was someone in Tonkin’s time – it’s probably Murray once again – was getting anxious about why they weren’t doing more. And I could see it coming, so I’d just written a paper that was aimed at defusing things, so when it exploded I’d just have it ready.

Very prescient of you. But you did have, presumably, artworks around your area that were on loan from the Gallery, or at least in the Premier’s office and so on?

The Premier, the Premier did have; but the Arts Development people, we were based in Don’s time in Edmund Wright House, and we certainly didn’t have any – – –.

You had bare walls.

Yes. And it was later again – I think it was in Bannon’s time – that I set up an art hire scheme that we ran for ourself through the Public Art Program that I had set up, and that’s now since been expanded to include other areas. So the public art people who I was running, we started to do that for the Department for the Arts and for a few other, key areas that wished to get involved and to pay. And it’s a loan scheme to the art so the artists get a rental fee; it’s not work that’s then – – –.

That’s good, yes.

And their works are for sale as well, so that’s something else.

During the ’70s, in Don Dunstan’s time, what was the visual art scene like in terms of commercial galleries and outlets for artists? You suggested that it wasn’t very well-developed here, but you also said that you sourced a lot of your young talent by going to a lot of gallery openings and meeting artists and so on, so you’ve made two sort of slightly conflicting statements.
Yes. Well, the thing was, places like the Experimental Art Foundation and the Contemporary Art Centre and the Jam Factory were showing artists’ works, and the Art School had a gallery as well, so I used to frequent those places. And there was the Bonython Art Gallery.

Yes, in North Adelaide.

That’s right. But there weren’t a lot of others.

Because there’s just so many now.

Some of the collective studios used to have little places where they used to show within their studio spaces, too. Also I used to travel quite a bit, and when I was away on holidays I’d always be keeping an eye on galleries interstate. So if somebody came to me and they said they were looking to show interstate I’d suggest, ‘Well, this one might be suitable or that one, or you might want to, if you’re going interstate, go and look at these ones and see what you think about those and make contact with the gallery owners’. And I guess also once I started running the Public Art Program, which was once again after Don’s time, because we did some very big commissions which were national commissions I got to know quite a few of the major gallery dealers from interstate.

Who were your big successes that you sort of massaged and nannied along the way, can you just give me a few — — —?

I wouldn’t say. I think that gives me (laughs) too much credit, really. But I think some of the really talented, long-term practitioners that have come through that we’ve given some help to are people like Hossein Valamanesh; and some of them – people like I think Shaun Kirby was another person who was very good; but Annette Bezor has stayed here; Aldo Iacobelli I think is very, very talented. And in the craft and design area there’ve been a lot of people. I mean Stephen Bowers is someone that we can be very proud of, but Stephen once again, like the others, would have achieved what he’s achieved without me. And the Gray Street Workshop women are fantastic jewellers: Julie Blyfield, Catherine Truman, people like that. I think one of
our most talented artists, though, is Fiona Hall, who of course came here from interstate to teach at the Art School. And I mean once again these people would achieve what they’ve achieved anyway, I think, but you just hope that you’ve established some programs that have given them some assistance along the way.

Yes. That’s good. (break in recording) When you arrived on the scene, was there any instances where Don recommended an artist to you that should receive funding or a small grant or assistance from his grant program?

He never interfered at all, he was exemplary.

Well, I wasn’t really suggesting interference; I was suggesting did he ever come to you and say, ‘This person’s fantastic, can you consider them for money?’

No, he didn’t.

Oh, he didn’t?

No. No, and I mean he used to let things take their course through the grants committee.

Did he have any involvement with that grants committee, did he sit on – – –?

He had to approve the grants. He was involved in appointing the people who were on the committee, most of whom were very well-regarded, and he would then look at their grant recommendations, and I don’t recall him ever like rejecting anything; he was exemplary in terms of accepting the recommendations of his committee. You know, he’d appointed them and he listened to what they had to say.

Yes. Did he come to you or to anybody else – to Dick Richards or to the head of the Jam Factory – when he was making overseas or interstate trips, for gifts or for visiting dignitaries that he commissioned or was keen to purchase gifts?

He had a Protocols section within Premier’s [Department] which I think was headed by a woman called Suita Ahwan, and I think Suita would have liaised pretty directly with the Jam Factory and other places. They didn’t come to me for advice in that regard. Some people have subsequently, but Don didn’t.
Actually, Don did do some things to help people in particular. For example, there was a very talented furniture designer called Michael Angerson – in fact, I’ve bought things from Michael; he designed that table [interviewee points to a table in the room] – in the early ’70s.

It’s beautiful.

And I had some other things, too, which I don’t have anymore. But Michael was an extremely talented designer. He passed away a few months ago and very suddenly, unfortunately. But I think Don tried to open some doors for him nationally with people in Canberra and things like that. But I don’t believe we ever – certainly not in my time – we never provided Michael with any funding, and I met Michael completely separately because I think I visited his showroom and bought things. But I know that Michael told me that Don tried to help him.

Oh, that’s a nice story. In your day-to-day workings in Len Amadio’s department, the Arts Development Branch, you weren’t in the same offices as Don; but did you see him from time to time?

At exhibition openings, particularly at the Jam Factory, sometimes he would be there at the openings.

Tell me about your personal encounters with him.

I think he was a very nice man with a great deal of foresight. I think his appointment was very timely. He established a lot of new organisations or else he was directly responsible for the development and growth of existing organisations, some of which became a new organisation, but it wouldn’t have happened as quickly without him. I think the tide was really starting to turn like nationally, and probably it would have eventually happened here; but he certainly was a great catalyst. And I think he was a man of great integrity and I think he believed passionately in what he was doing. And I mean I came across him again later – and probably had more to do with him, on a more frequent basis actually – once he was appointed as the Chair of the Jam Factory at a later stage.
This was in the ’80s, was it?

It would have been in the ’90s.

This was after he’d completed the stint that he did in Victoria?

Yes, it was. And it was after the Jam Factory had moved to its new premises on Morphett Street, which was about 1992.

Oh, it was as recent as that, was it?

Yes, and it was when Frank McBride was the chief executive, and there were some tensions between Mr McBride and the minister, Minister Laidlaw, and Don was great at trying to smooth the way. (laughter) So we both tried to smooth the way. Yes.

He was appointed Chair of the Board, wasn’t he?

He was, yes.

How long was that, did that appointment last?

I think those appointments – I haven’t got them [with me] – I think they were either two- or three-year appointments, yes.

And he got several repeats, did he?

I think he may have got one repeat, I haven’t got the stuff with me. But he certainly did his very best and he was very easy to work with.

He was a good conduit between the management and the Government, was he?

He was, he was. (laughs)

Have you got some funny stories?

Oh, probably ones that I shouldn’t repeat, which I don’t think I’ll go into (laughs) because other people who are still alive may be offended.

Oh, okay, all right. Well, it’s always good to hear little firsthand anecdotes, because he was a person who – and I don’t know whether you agree with this – a lot of people I’ve interviewed have said that they liked him, they enjoyed his company, but they weren’t close to him. Would you go along with that?
Well, I didn’t see enough of him to get close to him, but I did like him and I found him to be very approachable. So I don’t think he was a distant person.

**But a private person.**

Yes, yes, yes. I think so.

**Yes. Now, tell me about the buzz, the excitement, the zeitgeist in the office at the time that you worked there.**

I think it was amazing, and it was the same when I was working in the Committee Secretariat: you felt that it was a time of change and progress, and they were very exciting times. I mean I enjoyed working at the Committee Secretariat but they were winding that back, clearly there was a feeling that they weren’t going to perhaps be able to do as many new things, I think, and even in that second half of the ’70s, and I think that’s why they were winding that back.

**How long were you there for?**

I was only there for about six months.

**And that was in …..?**

And, see, I actually got a phone call telling me I’d gotten the position there earlyish in ’75, and then I got a letter saying that I didn’t have the position, which was a bit annoying, and it said that in particular I didn’t have the position that I’d been interviewed [for] – it was a very weird letter – and that I’d been spoken to about. And then, anyway, out of the blue, some months later, I got a phone call from someone on a Friday and I said, ‘Oh, why should I believe you?’ I said, ‘I’ve had this phone call before, been offered a job and’, I said, ‘then it didn’t come to pass’. And then they said, ‘Oh, well, look, this job’s definitely going and today’s Friday, you can start Monday’.

**Oh.**

Which I did, and when I got in there I was told the money hadn’t come through earlier but now it was the new financial year and they had some money.
What did you do there?

I did research for various committees that were looking into the possibility of new initiatives. And the committee that I spent a bit of time with – in fact, George Lewkowicz was a member of this committee, whereas I was the research officer – I was working with the East End Relocation Committee. And we had terms of reference that we had to respond to and Brian Chatterton was the Minister – – –.

And this would have been a Don Dunstan initiative.

Yes, it was. And Brian Chatterton was the Minister for Agriculture and we were reporting to him, as I recollect. And we had these terms of reference, and Tom Miller, who was from the Department of Agriculture, was chairing it and Tom was very well-regarded with the local market growing community, and I expect he was in his late fifties, around sixty, and he’d got people to give up time and come to meetings and make submissions on the understanding that this was all in good faith and the market would move from the East End, just up the road here. And anyway, we went in and we delivered our report to Brian Chatterton and one of the questions we were asked – and I remember we were all flummoxed – was, ‘Well, do you think the Government should move the market?’ And, you know, when you’ve got terms of reference –

Which was what you were investigating.

– which were actually like, you know, what would [be] the best location and cost and whatever, we’d taken that as a given. And I think Tom was quite upset, actually, because the rest of us would move onto other things but that was the area he had to continue to work in.

How was that resolved?

Well, it didn’t move, did it? (laughs)

It didn’t move until quite a lot of years later.

Yes, a long time afterwards.
Yes.

So, actually, I think that was a symptom that money perhaps was running out and they weren’t going to be able to do as many things. I mean as it happened for me it turned out well because, while I was interested in the market and I had a background in geography, I was really more interested in getting into the arts, so I didn’t mind moving on. But I guess they were cutting back in that area, and then they disbanded that Committee Secretariat area, so – – –.

Yes, yes. Now, wasn’t there at one stage a grand plan to redevelop the premises just up the road here, the old brewery, and that was going to be the sort of centre of the crafts area?

That was around for a while but didn’t really get anywhere.

Oh, is that right? It was just – was that a Peter Ward initiative, or did he come up with that idea? I’ve seen a document about making that little shops, crafts, cafés, a whole sort of arts precinct, if you like. That might have been before your time –

I think it might have been.

– and it might have already gone by the board.

It might have, I’m not sure. Somebody needs to talk to Peter, though, because he did have so many good ideas, and he really had Don’s ear.

Yes. Well, Don certainly, in the arts, through Peter and people like Dick Richards, certainly had a grand vision, didn’t they?

Oh, yes, yes. And, see, Don was a good listener and he was prepared to help those ideas be realised, whereas some people might listen but they wouldn’t. But I mean there was just a string of things that happened in the early ’70s – as I said, either newly-established organisations or else revamping and developing existing ones.

And such a lot going on at the one time.

Yes, there was, there certainly was. I mean it looked like a litany of things, actually.

You’ve got some documents in front of you.

Yes, yes. I mean there really were a lot of things.
Yes.

Yes.

Is there anything you particularly want to mention?

No, well, actually I’m sure that Len’s dealt with a lot of the things. I mean, it was in 1970 that they decided to build a Festival Centre instead of just a Festival Theatre. Carclew Arts Centre was established in ’71; the State Theatre Company in ’72; the Film Corporation in ’72; the Jam Factory in ’73 with the original premises opening in ’74; Come Out in ’75; the State Opera was established in ’76, and that grew out of New Opera. The Australian Dance Theatre –

Elizabeth Dalman.

– yes, but it was redeveloped and got all the extra money from Don in ’76 and Jonathan Taylor, I think, came out then from Britain [to run the Australian Dance Theatre]. The Regional Cultural Centre Trusts were established – the first one I think was established in ’77 in the South–East, then in ’78 we had the Whyalla Trust and then in ’78 we also had the Port Pirie Trust and then we had the Riverland one after that. And the Constitutional Museum – which doesn’t exist anymore – but that was I think ’78. And the Graduate Diploma in Arts Management was set up in the ’70s when Don was there. So there were just a string of things, really.

Yes, yes – it must have been so exciting.

It was. And in fact when I was in France in 2001 I was up at Saint-Paul [i.e. the village of Saint-Paul de Vance] and I ran into the person who had originally told me I had the job at the Committee Secretariat and then I didn’t have it, and of course then I did get the job and she rang up – I was working with her; her name was Vicki Laneson – and I ran into Vicki at the bus stop waiting to go back to Nice. And Vicki said what I said – because we ended up going back to Nice and having dinner together – and she said she would never work in such an exciting workplace again. I mean she was out here from Britain with her husband, who was working at I think it was the Weapons Research Establishment then, he was a weapons research scientist,
and then they went back to Britain, and I met her with her new partner because her husband had died, and he – the new husband – said to me, ‘Oh, don’t tell me’, he said, ‘you’re not from that place that Vicki worked under Dunstan in the ’70s, are you?’ He said, ‘I’m sick of hearing about it’, he said. ‘She’s always going on about how it was the most exciting time, the most exciting job she ever had.’ And Vicki went back and studied law and became a lawyer, but she always looks back very fondly on those years.

And you do too, presumably.

Oh, yes, yes. And I think the people that I worked with in the arts and the people that I worked with in the Committee Secretariat in the policy area do as well.

Well, I think that’s probably the memory of Don and what he did for the State and how he sort of pulled it into the modern world – because it was rather an old-fashioned kind of conservative place, wasn’t it?

It was, it was.

Are you an Adelaidian by birth?

I am: very early settlers, in the 1830s.

And how would you describe the difference, then, between pre-Don and post-Don?

I think it’s a much freer society and we have many more amenities available to us. I mean I love going to things in the arts, I love food, I love wine, so I mean he was certainly on the same wavelength as me.

Yes. Well, certainly in the food and wine area he brought in new legislation, I believe, about being able to have cafés on footpaths and that sort of thing.

Yes.

Shock, horror! Is there anything else that I haven’t covered – – –?

No, I think that that’s about it, actually. I don’t think we’ll see the like of Don again. To be fair, I think Diana Laidlaw was a very strong admirer and I think that she tried
to cast herself in a similar mould and she didn’t do a bad job, actually. She put a lot of money into the arts and did a lot of good things.

One question that I haven’t asked you: you were there, of course, when Don resigned.

Yes.

And he was not a well man, and then he went off to Italy, and he wasn’t very, very well-treated, you could say, when he came back. I mean the Jam Factory was the only board appointment that he got and I know from people that he was disappointed that he didn’t get other senior board appointments and so on, and he had to go off to Victoria. What do you think about the way he was treated? Tell me first how it was when he resigned: was there a general pall over the State? What was that like, first; and, secondly, what do you think about the way he was treated in the years after his premiership?

I think there was disappointment in some quarters when he resigned, probably from the areas that he’d seemed to be closely allied to, like the arts. But I suspect that wasn’t universal, would be my perception. I won’t be specific about that. But I think our area was sorry to see him go, but he wasn’t our Minister at the time that he resigned; John Bannon was.

That’s right, yes.

You know when he returned, that would have been when John was still Premier, and it’s surprising that he wasn’t offered something sooner. But anyway – – –.

Yes.

I think he was probably hurt by that, would be my feeling; but he was very happy to take up the appointment at the Jam Factory.

That was good, because it was really very much his baby.

It was, it was. I suspect he was more of a performing arts man and may have actually felt closer to some other institutions, but he certainly did his very best for the Jam Factory and he was very fond of the institution, of the organisation; and I think
that the people who were training there and working there were very happy to have him as their Chair.

**Well, he certainly had a sort of personal and vested interest in the place.**

He certainly did.

**Yes. Well, Carolyn, unless you have anything else you’d like to add – – –.**

No, that’s it.

**Okay. Well, thank you very much indeed for your time.**

It’s a pleasure.

END OF INTERVIEW