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Title:
Opening of Rundle Mall

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It's a great day for Adelaide, regardless of the rain. After years of pushing and persuading, the Rundle Mall is finished and we can all see that it was worth persevering with.

The Mall is an exciting addition to the city - exciting in concept, exciting in architecture and exciting in potential. It's an area where people are more important than cars, and it's the first step in giving more of the city back to people.

Rundle Street is a pointer to what can be done in other parts of the city. We have

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changed a noisy, heavily trafficked street into a vibrant and informal pedestrian area.

The Mall will be a meeting place, a strolling place, a shopping place, an art gallery, an entertainment centre and much more.

It will be an energetic part of the city's lifestyle and a common part of our language : "See you at the Mall" will be an easy and popular promise.

Already the Mall is filled with people during the day, and as more activities are staged here, many more people will come to the Mall in the evenings and at weekends.

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While Rundle Street is still Adelaide's main commercial centre, the Mall will make it an attraction well beyond shopping hours : The Mall will be a 24 hour event.

It hasn't been easy getting to this stage. There have been plans for a pedestrian area in Adelaide for decades, and while Rundle Street was the most obvious site, the enthusiasm of the planners was not enough to bring it about.

The Government decided that Adelaide needed the Mall, and in 1973 we promised to build it. The negotiations which went on from then were hard, but eventually successful.

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Jointly, the Government, the Adelaide City Council and the retail trade worked out the scheme and from that agreement Ian Hannaford drew up the plans which have now materialised in such an imaginative way.

The Mall has been a very good example of co-operation between the Government and the various groups involved in any changes to our city. The Adelaide City Council, in particular, should be congratulated for its determination to push on with the Mall, even though at times the task must have seemed daunting.

But the problems were overcome, and one

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person who played a tremendous part right from the beginning of the Mall was Geoff Virgo, the Minister for Transport and Local Government.

I once described Geoff as a tough man for a tough job, and the work he has done in getting the Rundle Mall set up reinforces that description. He put the legislation through both Houses of Parliament, he has solved a lot of problems which have occurred right through the project and he has made sure that the Government's policies in a wide range of areas have been tailored to fit in with the Mall. He has done a magnificent job.

Now that the Mall is finished, the only thing left to do is use it and enjoy it. I'm sure the people of Adelaide will make it a vibrant part of our city.

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