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Shipping and Commerce of Australia

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ARTICLE FOR SHIPPING AND COMMERCE OF AUSTRALIA BY THE
PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, DON DUNSTAN.

South Australia - the most urban of the Australian States - contains the third largest industrial complex in the country.

Manufactures are concentrated on the production of motor vehicles and consumer goods.

The State is also an important agricultural producer - notably wine, wheat and wool - and of minerals.

It is a broad economic base from which to plan further development but one which is still over-vulnerable to fluctuations in national demand (particularly for consumer goods) resulting from central Government policies.

Our present development strategy is based on diversifying our production and markets to offset, so far as is possible, these variations in demand.

We are doing so by the encouragement of new skill industries, by broadening domestic and foreign markets and by reducing the impact of the rural recession through industrial decentralisation.

South Australia has many advantages which make it a desirable location for industrial development.

It offers a low cost structure, availability of industrial land at competitive prices and low wage and salary levels in relation to the rest of Australia and a central geographic location.

Generally lower prices ensure for South Australia a standard of living equal to that of other States.

One reflection of this is higher productivity resulting from fewer days lost in industrial disputes compared with other States.

South Australia has, in fact, the best record of industrial peace in Australia.

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We have 9.1% of the Australian workforce but only 2.8% of working days lost throughout Australia are lost in South Australia.

New South Wales' workforce, by comparison, is 37.8% of the national total with 64.7% of national working days lost.

The Government is determined to ensure that the present pace of development is maintained or accelerated.

We are already a research and development oriented community.

Centres such as the two South Australian universities, Weapons Research Establishment, Australian Minerals Development Laboratories, the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science and Branches of the C.S.I.R.O. provide a solid base of pure and applied scientific research.

The work of these official and semi-official agencies is supplemented by a diverse range of highly skilled industries such as I.C.I., International Computers, Texas Instruments and Philips. SOLA International, a South Australian firm whose optical products have won international contracts, and Paton Industries, manufacturers of scientific equipment, are local companies whose success has been largely due to the importance they place on research and precision work.

The Government will also assist
Government assistance schemes have been formulated to attract developments of equal value in the future.

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The South Australian Housing Trust is empowered to provide new industries with factory premises under lease-back arrangements with guaranteed options to purchase.

A new Industries Assistance Corporation has been set up in the past 12 months to boost smaller industries at an early and often critical stage of development.

It is able to make non-repayable grants for development and research to country industries, to lend money to industries anywhere in the State with deferred interest payments and to take up a share in the equity capital.

An Industries' Research Institute, at present in its formative stages, will provide another link in the wide ranging scheme for the planning, promotion and expansion of industry in the State. This body will be empowered to make grants for product research in South Australia where investigation shows this is likely to lead to the expansion of existing markets or the creation of new ones.

These agencies are geared to stimulate the growth of new enterprises with a highly skilled technological component which promise future benefits to South Australia.

In addition to the encouragement of skilled technical industries the Government has set in motion a programme which will give a massive boost to the State's tourist industry.

We have natural attractions which rank with those anywhere in the world.

And we are building on this solid foundation with a general up-grading of hotel, motel and restaurant facilities; the construction (with Government assistance) of an international standard tourist hotel and the establishment of a major performing arts centre.

These projects are planned to make South Australia a national convention centre as well as an important holiday region.

An important aspect of this area of development is the number of jobs it will create for women and young people with consequent strengthening of the State's employment base.

One of the most significant areas of the South Australian Government's integrated development programme is a concerted drive to expand and diversify our export markets, both interstate and overseas.

In this we are concentrating on establishing a mutually profitable trade with the rapidly growing countries of South East Asia.

A Roving Trade Officer, based in Singapore, has been appointed to service this region and trade agencies have been established in Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo and Djakarta. A second Roving Trade Officer has been appointed to concentrate on European and Middle East countries.

Industrial expansion in the State has recently been stimulated by the completion of a natural gas pipeline from gas fields in the north of the State to Adelaide. Contracts have recently been finalised for the supply of natural gas to the Sydney market and recent discoveries in the Cooper Basin suggest that a commercial oil field may soon be proved there.

Major industrial developments during the last year, including a \$12 million expansion of the APCEL pulp and paper mill, extensions to GMH and Chrysler plants and ANI's new \$2 million drop forge plant indicate that leading industrialists share our confidence in South Australia.

I believe the foundations we have laid can be consolidated and built on so that South Australia will stand as a strong and economically viable State.
