



Archived at the Flinders Academic Commons:  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2328/27231>

This is a scan of a document number DUN/Speeches/0091  
in the Dunstan Collection, Special Collections, Flinders University Library.  
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/library/info/collections/special/dunstan/>

**Title:**  
Article for 'On Dit' (Hackney Redevelopment)

Please acknowledge the source as:  
Dunstan Collection, Flinders University Library.  
Identifier: DUN/Speeches/0091

© Copyright Estate Donald Allan Dunstan

17 91

Article by the Premier, Don Dunstan for On Dit.

Hackney Redevelopment

The State Government's comprehensive plan to revitalise the Hackney North area is an urban renewal scheme which I believe to be among the best yet produced in Australia and has attracted considerable attention from academics and students.

This is welcome. I believe there should be the maximum informed debate and participation among citizens on this and any other matters of public policy which will obviously affect them.

Indeed, the whole of our present planning and development legislation is designed to provide for this and to give those affected the maximum opportunity to voice their opinions and, if there are any, their objections.

The need for redevelopment is obvious and stems from a serious problem now affecting us and other States - the decay of central city and inner suburban areas.

The seven key inner local government areas in the heart of Adelaide are all losing population.

Their overall population loss between the 1961 and 1971 censuses was 11.4% while at the same time the population of the total Adelaide urban area rose by about 28% and that of the State as a whole by 21%.

The Hackney North area has suffered particularly from this urban blight.

State Government is deeply concerned about this situation from a number of aspects.

Firstly, we are worried about the serious social problems arising from the general degradation and depopulation of the area and the destruction of a once attractive village-type community.

The inner suburban areas have extensive social capital facilities already provided - sewerage, electricity, gas, roads, bus services, shops, factories and offices.

Decay of the inner housing areas seriously damages the budgetary position of the State in the manner in which the flight to outer areas requires the extension of these public services at far greater marginal cost.

Provision of adequate public transport systems becomes increasingly difficult as this occurs and the spread to the outer suburbs increased the pressure for multiple car ownership further worsening the drain on public expenditure, increasing road construction, congestion and air pollution.

If this trend is to be stemmed it is essential that ~~the central city and inner suburbs~~ the central city and inner suburbs be restored as attractive residential communities with a permanent population.

This is what we are seeking to do in Hackney.

The redevelopment scheme - now on public display - covers 14 acres at present containing 77 properties many of them substandard.

It is bounded on the west by Hackney Road, on the north by the River Torrens, on the east by Torrens Street and on the south by a proposed road along the line of Bertram Street extended through the northern tip of St. Peter's College grounds to Torrens Street.

Redevelopment will be undertaken by the South Australian Housing Trust and by private groups.

About nine acres are proposed for private development with the remaining five allocated to the Trust.

The private development proposed is a mixture of 270 terrace houses, patio houses and apartments in multi-storey blocks with a residential density of some 90 people to the acre.

The Housing Trust development comprises a variety of two and three storey flats, one and two storey terrace houses and one and two storey aged persons units with a residential density of about 45 persons per acre.

This scheme, therefore, provides homes for a community of about 1,000 people.

A highlight of the concept plan now put forward is the attention given to landscaping of the area to provide the maximum open space facilities associated with the River Torrens.

Some variation in the scheme will be inevitable when detailed submissions are considered by the State Planning Authority but it is anticipated that in its final form the plan will be in harmony with the concept now published.

Some of the critics of the scheme have made much of the delays which have ensued between the first proposal for Hackney Redevelopment - by the consultants to the St. Peters Council in 1965 - and the supplementary development plan now published.

Obviously there has been delay. But this has not been the fault of the Labor administration.

It was not until 1967, after a protracted parliamentary fight, that we were able to obtain passage of the Planning and Development Act, the first effective town planning legislation in South Australia since the early part of this century.

Following this a statutory committee of the State Planning Authority was established to report on Hackney Redevelopment proposals.

This committee did not report until 1968, then presenting a proposal which differed from the original scheme. After initial publicity for this proposal, the Hall Government announced it could not find the necessary finance but would endeavour to find private finance. At the same time the Liberal Government cut funds allocated for any redevelopment to peppercorn level.

On our return to office the redevelopment committee was reconstituted with new terms of reference as we believed there were a number of social and planning objections to the existing scheme.

The committee made an interim report early in 1971 which, on consideration, the Government again thought unsatisfactory. The committee reported back in May.

I deferred submitting it to the State Planning Authority to obtain the views of private consultants providing a greater degree of rehabilitation measures and a detailed critique of the proposals.

The scheme then went to the State Planning Authority which approved it and forwarded it to the St. Peters Council for publication.

Our concern while this process was taking place was twofold: to obtain the most attractive and effective plan possible and to ensure that the rights of existing residents were properly protected.

The Housing Trust announced that it was a willing buyer of property in the redevelopment and a Trust official, Mr. O'Reilly, was given the specific responsibility of contacting and consulting with residents on an individual basis.

Residents are offered the choice of relocation elsewhere or priority in the allocation of homes on redevelopment.

The procedure we have adopted in relocation represented a breakthrough in compensation policy and has raised interest among housing authorities elsewhere in Australia.

In providing compensation and relocation the Trust considers not only the value of the property itself but the actual cost to the family affected in establishing a home elsewhere.

Residents have been given a very wide choice if they wanted relocation. One man actually returned to his native Yugoslavia, others, less affected with nostalgia or wanderlust, have been found homes in Adelaide itself (a man who thought even Hackney was too far from the city), Christies Beach and Norwood.

It was clear from the public meeting announcing the plan at St. Peters Town Hall which I attended that residents generally are well satisfied with the Trust's policy in this.

One other specific criticism is that redevelopment will not merely upgrade but will revalue it and price out the present residents.

This is not the case. Low cost housing (for pensioners at subsidised rates) within the scheme by the Trust ensure that present residents who wish to maintain their ties with Hackney can do so. In South Australia, 2,400 tenants have rent reductions because of welfare problems.

Indeed, it is precisely because we have been anxious to overcome this potential problem that the earlier plans were referred back for reconsideration.

To sum up: I believe the Hackney concept now made public provides the opportunity to restore Hackney as an integrated, attractive community and that the rights of residents in the area have been fully and properly protected.

It is a small scheme in relation to the total problem of urban decay now being felt across Australia.

Only with direct Federal Government assistance can we tackle the problem on the scale necessary.

But relatively small as it is the Hackney North scheme shows what can be done to alleviate a very real social problem.