



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

This is a scan of a document number DUN/Speeches/0686  
in the Dunstan Collection, Special Collections, Flinders University Library.  
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/library/info/collections/special/dunstan/>

**Title:**  
Press statement - Sola International Pty. Ltd.

Please acknowledge the source as:  
Dunstan Collection, Flinders University Library.  
Identifier: DUN/Speeches/0686

© Copyright Estate Donald Allan Dunstan

PRESS STATEMENT: 6/11/70.

FROM: THE PREMIER (MR. DUNSTAN)

SUBJECT: SOLA INTERNATIONAL PTY. LTD.

"Sola International Pty. Ltd., has proved to be one of the most significant newcomers to the industrial scene in the past 10 years", the Premier (Mr. Dunstan) said today at the opening of the Company's new laboratories at Lonsdale.

"It is the only company in the Southern Hemisphere which manufactures optical lenses as well as optical equipment. It started trading in 1960 with a staff of nine at Black Forest, and now employs over 300 people.

"It is estimated that by the end of next year 400 people will be employed in this highly skilled activity".

Mr. Dunstan said that the lenses manufactured by Sola International are made from a plastic called CR39 whose high quality has been responsible for these South Australian products attracting a rapidly expanding export market.

"The new laboratories will provide increased capacity for export production, at an anticipated rate of 75 p.c. throughout.

"The factory at the moment is producing 50,000 lenses per day, and the demand for them is so strong overseas that the company's only difficulty is to keep up with that demand.

"From its inception Sola International's managers have insisted on an exceptionally high quality of craftsmanship and research.

"I believe that its success can be wholly ascribed to this", Mr. Dunstan said.

"It is no longer sufficient in our modern technological society to rely on entrepreneurial skill and low animal cunning to achieve success in industry or business.

"If Australia is to avoid becoming merely a consumer society, our industrial leaders and our governments must devote more and more time to planning and research.

"We cannot always sit comfortably behind a protective tariff barrier, complaining of 'unfair competition' every time somebody else wins an international contract.

"If we do, we will suddenly find that our markets have withered

away and that we are, in fact, producing very little and relying on post-industrial societies to provide us with all our consumer wants.

"This is a highly unpleasant prospect.

"It can be avoided if Australian industries and governments can be made to realise that carefully planned development and investment, backed by detailed research and experiment is imperative.

"Sola International has backed its enterprise with this sort of planning and it has reaped its just reward.

"The Company's products were selected by NASA, in preference to those from other major international lens manufacturers, for the equipment used by the American astronauts in their landing on the moon.

"The binocular ophthalmoscope made by Sola was released for international sale in 1969, and has sold throughout the Americas and the USSR.

"And its markets can only go on expanding.

"The Federal Government of the U.S., for instance, has recently introduced legislation which will make unshatterable lenses virtually mandatory in all new eye glasses, worn by Americans.

"It is estimated that 100,000 adults and 20,000 school-children were injured every year in America by accidents in which eye glass lenses were shattered.

"Lenses in future will have to be made of heat-treated glass or of plastic. The plastic used by Sola is 30 times stronger than ordinary glass and is much lighter in weight, which gives it a significant advantage.

"The safety factor has always been one of Sola's main concerns", Mr. Dunstan said.

"Its work can do much to reduce the number of eyes injured by shattered glass."

---