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Title:

Speech opening the 7th National Kiwanis International Convention

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, DON DUNSTAN, OPENING THE 7TH NATIONAL KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION - 22.8.75

MR. PURBRICK,
MR. AND MRS. DAVIS,
THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION,
PARLIAMENTARY COLLEAGUES,
YOUR WORSHIP,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Thank you for inviting me here this afternoon.

I am pleased to be able to open this Convention for a number of reasons.

One of these is a purely Governmental one. For some five years we have, in South Australia, been very consciously promoting this State - and Adelaide especially - as a leading venue for national conventions. The size of Adelaide, its theatres, auditoria and general convention facilities, together with the proximity to the city of major tourist attractions, make it ideal for such activities.

And we have had singular success in this programme. Since the establishment of a State Government supported Convention Bureau three years ago, some three hundred conventions have been held here, massively boosting our State tourist income. Planning and booking for the next five years indicates a rapidly expanding awareness of what the State has to offer - already one hundred major conventions have been booked.

However, enough of the convention business. My reason for mentioning it basically relates to the fact that many of you are from other States and a number of you are from other countries. I trust that all of you will enjoy your visit to Adelaide and surrounding areas.

My main reason for being glad to be here is that I have this opportunity to talk of the role of service organisations, such as yours, in modern industrial communities. They are, in many respects, vitally important to the overall health of the community. Service organisations provide activities that constantly reinforce or assist areas of social need that cannot properly be reached by Government and other more formally structured community organisations. (For instance, there is no way for Government to provide many of the essential services needed by pensioners living alone.) In addition, the self-help tradition in our communities has led to the development of many hospital and medical and retirement activities outside the framework of Government services. Eventually, of

course, at least in Australia, the need for such facilities and activities is proven, and Government assistance is forthcoming, sometimes very substantially. But there is always an essential residual area of activity needing funding, and over the years service organisations have played an increasingly important role in these vital areas.

My Government is committed to an extensive programme of funding for health, hospitals and community welfare structures and organisations. But it has always seemed to us a desirable situation to have community organisations involved in ancillary, augmentative, or even additional, supportive activities.

The notion of self-help in community activities and service facilities is, I believe, a most important one. I believe that in social planning we should at all times seek to achieve an effective balance between what is provided by the community's taxes through Government, and what is provided either through private donations or desirable community activities by citizens.

In this respect, Kiwanis International is an outstanding organisation. Its activities, directed as they are to specific work projects in the community, avoid the situation that some service organisations have found themselves in of sponsoring an apparently endless list of paid endurance tests - Walk-a-thons, Bike-a-thons - Marathon marble contests, Pole-sitting fiestas, and the like. The energy and organisational effort that goes into the sponsorship of such contests could, it seems to me effectively be used within the community as such, in actual work projects. Chopping pensioners' wood - assisting in repairs to senior citizens clubs - participation in the organisations of community services that should be encouraged.

There is nothing particularly socially useful in walking along the beach from Brighton to Semaphore, other than perhaps for the health of the participants. To ask people to pay so many cents per mile for such an activity seems to me to be inane, as is the effective dissipation of energy thus encouraged. Energy should be used for sterner, more socially important objectives.

I personally decline to sponsor people on these pointless exercises. I simply send a donation directly to the charities concerned, in a conscious effort to encourage a different and more productive attitude to community activity.

Well in all this, come summer, we will in South Australia have the chance of seeing how effectively the community groups and service organisations can participate in community projects without indulging themselves in such energy wasting activities.

This summer it is the State Government's intention to embark upon an extensive, and long term, State-wide anti-litter campaign. For the purposes of the Campaign, litter will be considered to be anything from cars dumped in the outback to paper cups and cigarette packs on the beaches. The community - schools, industries and service organisations - will be encouraged to join in this Campaign. And in addition to raising people's consciousness of the growing litter problem, it will be designed to fit in with subsequent legislative action the Government will take in this area.

And my point in mentioning this is, that if we are to have 'marathons' organised by community groups, I believe that they should be designed to assist in specific projects. Ten cents for each unit of litter gathered in, if you like, regular litter 'marathon' clean-ups, seems to me to be far more socially desirable than so-called endurance tests at ten cents a kilometre.

And as I have said, it is because of the very practical community work and service programmes of the Kiwanis that I am pleased to be here today and to open your 7th Convention.

I trust your deliberations and discussions will be fruitful and effective in continuing your realistic programme of service to your communities.

Thank you.

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