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Title:

Speech on the occasion of the presentation of the Australian Jew of the Year award

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR. DON DUNSTAN ON THE OCCASION OF THE
PRESENTATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN JEW OF THE YEAR AWARD 19/11/75

Your Excellency and Lady Oliphant, Mr. Jacobson, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a relief and a pleasure to be able to take time off from the hustings tonight to pay tribute to the Jewish community and to a great South Australian citizen. In a spirit of unity rare for these times, my Parliamentary colleagues present will, I'm sure, join with me in acknowledging the immense Jewish contribution to our national life.

There is no sphere of activity in Australia where Jews have not left an indelible mark. In Science and medicine, in industry and commerce, in the Arts and sports, in Politics and the Law, in Philanthropy and Education, the Jewish community has a record of achievement of which it can be justly proud.

At least six Jewish convicts were among those who arrived at Botany Bay in 1788. When freed, they became valuable citizens of the Colony and in fact, produced Australia's first policeman. Since then, the Jewish contribution to the nation has continued out of proportion to the community's numerical strength. I think, for instance, of the Jews who served with such distinction in the two world wars; of commanders like General Sir John Monash and Major-General Sir Charles Rosenthal who led our troops to victory in Europe.

It would be invidious - and impossible - to try to list Jewish achievements in every field, but it seems I cannot get away from politics and government altogether. However, I do not tread on dangerous ground, for eminent Jews have arisen from both sides of the political spectrum. The first Australian-born Governor-General of Australia was Sir Isacs but long before he achieved this position of prominence, Jews had been active in the service of the State.

In South Australia in the 19th century, while the Jewish population numbered only 500, there were four Jewish members of the Legislative Assembly - Judah Moss Solomon, Emanuel Solomon, Vabian Solomon and Lewis Cohen. In the last year of that century, Vabian Solomon became Premier of this State.

Many other distinguished names spring readily to mind for their prominence in public life - Sir Saul Samuel, Sir Benjamin-Benjamin, Sir Daniel Levi, Sir Archibald Micahelis, Sir Albert Wolff, Sir Arthur Joel and Senator Sam Cohen. In South Australia, we still honour the name of Montefiore - Jacob who was one of the 11 Commissioners appointed by William IV in 1835 to found the Colony of South Australia

and his brother, Joseph, who became one of the colony's outstanding commercial and industrial figures.

A noteworthy feature of the Jewish commitment is that it has always extended far beyond members of the Jewish faith. It has always been the whole community, not just the Jews themselves, which has been the beneficiary.

This tradition of service and philanthropy is epitomised in the man whom we have gathered to honour. Mr. Gus Hines tonight receives the highest award of Australian Jewry, the first South Australian to win this honour. It is not only the Jewish community of this State which feels a sense of pride and satisfaction that one of its members has been thus honoured - it is the whole community.

For over 30 years Mr. Hines has worked for the betterment of South Australia. He has been involved in a breath-taking variety of public activities - too many for me to list. Perhaps the one which I personally find the most imaginative is his commissioning of a new work from American composer, Charles Wuorinen, to be performed at next year's Festival of Arts. Mr. Hines is a generous patron of the Arts and I would like to put on record my personal appreciation to him for his splendid work as one of the initial Governors of the New Opera Foundation.

Mr. Hines, may I use the opportunity of your winning this Award to thank the Jewish community for the outstanding role it has always played, and continues to play, in Australian life; and may I congratulate you for being honoured this year as that community's most outstanding member.

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