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**This is George Lewkowicz for the Don Dunstan Foundation for the Don Dunstan History Project. Today I'm interviewing Mr Andrew Lothian, on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2008 on the topic of environment and conservation in the Dunstan Government years, particularly in the 1970s. The location is the offices of the Don Dunstan Foundation.**

**Andrew, thanks very much for being willing to be interviewed on this interesting topic, particularly as it's so interesting these days with climate change. Can you just talk a bit about yourself, your brief bio, your training and then how you got to work in the Department?**

Sure, George. I originally trained as a planner, a land use planner, and worked in the State Planning Office in the late '60s and then I went overseas to study and came back in '73 and worked again with the State Planning Office '74, then joined the new Department of Environment and Conservation, as it was then, in early '75, and worked there really until I retired, until about 2002. (laughs)

**So did you have an interest in the area?**

Yes, I was always interested in working in the environment; in fact, I did Planning as a means of working in the environment because at the time, in the late '60s, there were no environmental courses, they started to come in during the later '70s. But the Planning course seemed to me to sort of fit all the sorts of things I was interested in and got me into that area. But as soon as it was possible I wanted to move over into the environment agency. Of course, when I did it, Planning, there wasn't any environment agency. That came in in '72. I was overseas at the time, then I worked on the River Murray when I came back with the State Planning Office for a year in '74 and did the River Murray Planning Study. Then a position came up in the Environment Division and I moved over there.

**And what sort of issues were bubbling around at the time that was interesting you?**

Well, I guess there were a lot of issues now which have gone by the board. Population was a big issue back in the '60s and '70s, whether Australia should have a population policy, and at the other end of the scale there were such issues as the old Hills Face Zone quarries. There was a lot about metropolitan growth, about the

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development of Adelaide, about which directions it should move, directions it should go, up and out and all those sorts of issues. There was emerging issues about the environment in a particular area. I guess with the development of the *Planning and Development Act* and the whole planning system the focus tended to be on planning issues, and then started during the '70s to move into the broader environmental issues. So issues of pollution became significant: air pollution in Adelaide, the problem of traffic and alternatives to the car, sort of car dependency that we have. The issues of the coast became important, the problems of storm damage along the metropolitan coast in particular. This was the time also in the mid-'70s when Monarto got off the ground as an alternative to seeing growth in Adelaide. The freeways: there was a big, of course, debate in the late '60s over the MATS<sup>1</sup> scheme over whether we should have freeways across Adelaide, and that was basically rejected and so we moved in towards, well, what else we do.

There were a lot of issues. I guess they were fairly urban-focused. There were rural issues. Vegetation clearance barely rated a mention, but people were becoming increasingly concerned about the state of flora and fauna and I guess also of land degradation, although we didn't really call it that in those days. There was evidence of erosion, salinisation was barely known about, the River Murray looked pretty robust and go on forever. So yes, it was very much an urban type of focus of environmental issues.

**Were you aware of any lobby groups on some of these issues at the time?**

Yes, there were a number of lobby groups. The Mount Lofty Ranges Association was one, and also the Town and Country Planning Association. Now, the Mount Lofty Ranges Association had a research officer called Ron Caldicott, who actually became a member of the State Planning Authority. What happened was that a chap – I can't remember his name, but he invested money and got a lot of money out of Poseidon, and he then invested that into engaging a research officer for the association for a period of five years and Ron was the man. So he was able to

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<sup>1</sup> MATS – Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study.

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actually advocate and lobby and push planning issues on the Mount Lofty Ranges, in particular environmental issues, and he got appointed to the State Planning Authority, as I mentioned. The other person was David Higbed, who was Secretary of the Town and Country Planning Association, and he was an economist. He worked for the Dairyman's Association as an economist, but his real interest was in broader town and country planning, so he was quite active there.

The other couple that I should mention was Anne and Peter Reeves of the Nature Conservation Society. Peter was President and Anne was Secretary through much of the '70s, and they were highly effective in terms of lobbying governments in terms of advocating issues and so forth. So they had a very strong advocacy role for not just nature conservation, as their name would suggest, but broader planning and environmental issues. They were into everything, and very strong advocates.

They would have been the key groups. John Coulter was another one who was around and he wasn't a senator at that time, he was still a researcher at IMVS:<sup>2</sup> he was very strongly involved in a lot of these planning and environmental issues. People like Warren Bonython were around, National Trust, people like that. Yes, they'd be the main groups. The Nature Conservation Society was I guess the strongest and scientifically-based of all of those groups. Town and Country Planning and the Mount Lofty Ranges were much more advocacy type of groups but very effective and did some great work.

**And did you get a sense of the politicians being aware of all this and getting really interested?**

Yes, very much so. It made media attention, got media attention quite often, some of these issues. I guess it was a state of transition. People were still trying to understand what this environment thing was all about and I think the politicians were still coming to grips with it; I think Don Dunstan was in a sense ahead of his time. He understood the planning dimension very well, he got the *Planning and Development Act* through in '67 and was the first to establish a Minister of

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<sup>2</sup> IMVS – Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science.

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Conservation, which was Glen Broomhill, and so he understood the need to start to address those areas – without really being too sure what they do, I think. And for many years working in the Environment Division through the '70s we really had carte blanche to do anything we like. Our basic role was in terms of environmental impact assessment, which we'll come to a bit later; but we could raise any sorts of issues and pursue them, and we'd of course get a lot of media attention on different issues and so we'd take up particular issues – off-road vehicles being an example, native vegetation clearance being another one – which we saw as environmental issues. So gradually, during the '70s, it started to coalesce around a number of issues what the environment was and what we need to focus on.

And I suppose also some of the issues started to be addressed. I mean, I think Glen Broomhill, for his credit, brought in a levy on the extract of industries and a dollar levy, I think it was, per ton – might have even been less than that – to rehabilitate the quarries along the Hills Face Zone. We don't appreciate today what those quarries used to look like back in the '70s, but they were really quite scars on the landscape. You could see the main quarry across the Gulf and many of the others were just very badly developed with very high faces that you couldn't rehabilitate. So he introduced that and brought that about. He also, of course, brought about a ban on subdivision in the Hills Face Zone, much to the chagrin of Stuart Hart at the time, I think (laughs) – give all credit to Stuart, but he couldn't understand how we could actually ban development of private land, and of course that was only the beginning of that sort of approach because subsequently, and it took some years, we banned clearance of native vegetation, which was always seen as a farmer's right to develop. And so there was this issue coming in of environment and planning starting to control people's inalienable rights to do as they want. Now, that had already come in, I guess, through pollution issues and efforts to try and address end-of-pipe pollution issues by looking at industrial processes and changing those; but during the '70s it was still very much about curbing the effect of the pollution at the end of the pipe, not really getting into the processes.

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So yes, there was a lot of issues around and it was really understanding how we could start to approach these during the '70s. That was the time when these start to coalesce and there were two broad issues that started to become apparent. One was around the pollution/waste/recycling area, and that still remains today; it's breadth has widened now into site contamination and a whole lot of other things and greenhouse and things like that. And the other broad group of areas was around the natural environment, and it's about biodiversity, it's about conservation and those sorts of areas. What's happened, I guess, in the process is that we've missed out a lot of things that fall between them. Things such as, for instance, off-road vehicles were something which came up and we addressed during the '70s and to try and work out what we should do about off-road vehicles. It tends to be now a sort of silo approach, that we tend to put things either into the pollution area, which is EPA,<sup>3</sup> or into the national parks biodiversity area; but there's no-one really addressing all of the other sorts of issues, which tend to fall between the cracks. And subsequently, later on, I was involved in some of those sorts of issues later on; but during the '70s it didn't really matter, we were involved in a lot of those things.

**You could ..... ..**

Yes.

**Do you have a sense that this was new in Australia or was it copying what was happening in some of the other states?**

All of the states started to establish environment agencies during the '70s and, to their credit, the ministers saw the need to talk and the Australian Environment Council was established – I'm not sure when, but it was fairly early on, certainly in the '70s. It may have been by '75; no, I think it was before that because I think it was Hunt was the Federal Minister and he was Liberal, so I think it must have been pre-Whitlam that they established the Australian Environment Council, which was a council of ministers, and of course then they'd have a standing committee of what we call 'CEOs' today; 'permanent heads' is our name then.

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<sup>3</sup> EPA – Environment Protection Authority.

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**That's right.**

*Impermanent.* And they would get together a couple of times a year and there would be a whole lot of things on their agenda, and they'd become increasingly effectively. Now, Geoff Inglis, who I mentioned, was involved very heavily right from the word go with all of that. He would be able to give you much more of the national perspective. But the big unwritten history is the effectiveness of the Australian Environment Council and its subsequent iterations on how they've developed environmental policy in particular from the national perspective covering a very broad range of issues – you know, from noise through to various pollution issues to conservation and so forth. So yes, that was I guess one of the big things that happened through there. And it was largely unseen, in the media or in the general public, wouldn't have – – –.

**The Whitlam Government set up a department, from memory.**

Yes, that's right.

**How did that impact on what you were doing?**

Didn't really a lot. I guess the thing that they brought in was some funds to assist in different things; but it gave a new impetus to it. I think the Federal Department of Environment – actually, *was* there a Federal Department of Environment? I'm not even sure there was. I'm thinking of the urban development.

**Yes, [Department of] Urban and Regional Development, DURD.**

Yes, DURD. I'm not sure when the federal department came in, it must have been about there. But it doesn't seem to have figured very much. (laughter) It must have done some things.

**Yes, there was the national estate work with – – –.**

Yes, it was very much the national estate back in '74 when the national estate was reported and then '75 they established the Australia Heritage Commission, but that focused very much around that area of heritage, not so much a broader environmental thing although their report covered a fairly wide range of issues. And

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I'm not sure what it really got involved in, the federal department at that time. It must have been involved in some things. (laughs)

**Yes. What about the Jordan Report? That was a bit earlier, wasn't it?**

Yes. Jordan Report – well, Grant Inglis was a member of that, he was on that, and that was a very effective body. One of the interesting things about committees in those days – and this was late '60s, early '70s, I think it reported in '72 and I've still got a copy of it – they'd have a chapter on different sorts of topics and each member was expected to basically research and write that chapter, so they actually had to do the leg work and get out and work it out, whereas today you go onto committees and basically you have an army of people out there who do all the work and you sit together once a month and see what comes up. It wasn't like that in those days, and those people on that Jordan Committee actually had to do the work, and they produced a very good report. It's interesting the emphasis on that on population, in that report; on pollution; on the size and shape of Adelaide; and it gives a good flavour of what the environmental issues were at the time. A bit on biodiversity; not much on native veg clearance and other sorts of issues, heritage and so forth didn't really figure.

**So was that a sort of bible?**

No, not really. It was important in terms of establishment of the Department, because it recommended it and in fact it grew out – I've actually traced through the history of the actual formation of the Department, and it actually grew out of that committee. They lobbied the Government to establish a department and of course Grant Inglis was part of that and he became the permanent head of it. So they were very effective in terms of lobbying Dunstan at the time to actually form the ministry first and then the Department after that. Yes, that had a big influence.

But after that – the report itself was a useful sort of snapshot of what was going on; subsequently or many years later we started to get into the state of environment reporting, but that was very early one, in a sense, what that was doing.

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**Just before we get into the Department and its evolution and change, just some of the other – you alluded to some of the countermoves, if you like, like people being horrified about the Hills Face Zone –**

Sure.

**– getting preserved. What was the feeling about the industrial side, the developers and all that sort of thing at the time?**

Well, these were the days of course it was the old ethos was development at any cost. If it stands still, shoot it; if it's lying down, bury it or dig it up and that sort of thing. It was that old development at any cost type of mentality which Australia has come out of, and it was still pretty strong in the '70s, that sort of ethos. So there was very much a view, 'What's all this environment thing and why are we stopping development?' The industrial lobby I guess was there, but we didn't have a lot to do with the straight industrial side of things. The public health people, in terms of air quality, had a fair bit to do with them; Alex Smith was involved in that fairly early on, he's retired now, but he could tell you a bit about air quality in the early days, what happened there, and they of course would have had much more to do with the industry, as would E&WS<sup>4</sup> because they also controlled trade wastes. But broader pollution – you know, water quality – just about unheard of. Now, it came up more of an issue-by-issue thing. I'm thinking of, for instance, the quarrying business. There was a pretty strong and active quarrying lobby against any curbs and controls on them. I remember Bernie Leverington, who was head of Quarry Industries, a large fellow and died some years ago, but he was a very strong advocate. And it was very odd, because I think I was still at the State Planning Office and the authority was buying up land across the Hills Face for regional parks, and they bought up Ansteys Hill, in which Quarry Industries had a major quarry, and so ended up, the State Planning Office, giving the job of working out its rehabilitation – I was actually involved in this and we had to have meetings with Leverington and so forth to work out how they could actually develop this quarry so that it actually

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<sup>4</sup> E&WS – Engineering and Water Supply.

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would provide for a future use, and put in benches and all that sort of stuff along it. So that was a sort of a change. But yes, there was a strong advocacy from him.

I think the Chambers of Commerce and so forth were pretty strong in terms of controls and things. Certainly I know from talking with Ron Caldicott, who later on became part of my branch and I knew him very well, he used to talk about the lot of pressures against – in fact, Ron would be a good one to talk to, he lives up at Scott Creek. There were certainly a lot of pressures against it. But there was also a fairly strong public in support, and I think media in support too, of what we were doing and what was seen to be a good thing about the environment. It was all about balance and not going to extreme and all that sort of thing, because there was a lot of that going around too at the time. Nuclear issues were around, there were some big international issues dealing with oil spills, dealing with Antarctica, dealing with Amazon jungles and rainforests, this sort of stuff.

**Did ..... feature at all.**

..... was a bit earlier, but by that stage I think people had moved on a bit from that sort of thing. There was a blueprint for survival came out of England which again started to put out an agenda for action in these sorts of areas, but this was way ahead of, you know, the Brundtland report, for instance, '87 – – –.

**Sorry, which report?**

Brundtland, Gro Brundtland, *Our common future*, 1987. This was the start of the sustainability as the issue, that's the UN<sup>5</sup> Commission for Environment and Development. But this predates all of that.

There was also, of course, the UNEP, the Stockholm conference in '72. I guess if you looked at an incident or an event that really triggered and launched the Environment Movement, that was it, '72 Stockholm conference. It was the first UN conference on the environment and Maurice Strong was the Secretary of it. He had

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<sup>5</sup> UN – United Nations.

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a very strong, big influence of all of this. And that was when governments started to sit up and take notice of the environment, nationally and at state level.

**So given all of this there was a move, people were getting more aware of the environment.**

Yes.

**So when you were positioning yourself, did you have any constraints, like ‘Don’t get too radical and green’?**

Well, not really. I mean the odd thing about us, we were all very young and, as I said in here, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. You look at the photographs of us back then and everyone with great hair and so forth – (laughs) but that was the era. So there was that sort of ....., and I know when the vegetation clearance thing started and you had these people, late ’70s, going out and trying to talk to farmers and they looked as though they’d just come out of university and there was a fair cultural gap between them, you’d have to say. But yes, there wasn’t a lot.

You see, we didn’t have any legislation in the Environment Division. We had a cabinet directive dealing with environmental impact assessment, that was basically what we’d call our bread and butter, but we’d work with agencies on addressing their environmental impacts on particular development, so they would have to submit to us a proposal dealing with something and we’d give an – I think it was called a ‘definition of environmental factors’, and that was just a three-page *pro forma* sort of thing which would come to us and we’d look at it and talk with the agency about it if we had any concerns or issues, and address them. In very rare cases, it went to an impact statement and I was involved with the earliest one on Morphettville with the State Transport Authority at the time, the Morphettville Bus Depot. But we had people amongst us, like Bob Shearer[?], who worked very closely with the agencies, particularly Transport, who really took on the ethos – because we didn’t have any legislation to beat them around with, so we had to work with them and it was our preference to actually work cooperatively with them and get them onside so that in the long run they would do the thing naturally and

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integrate it in their own work. And that's happened to a large extent, certainly in Transport, and quite a lot of other agencies, too; it's now just a matter of course.

But in the early days there was a lot of having to overcome prejudices and preconceptions about what we were about. I remember going to talks, giving talks to agencies about what we were about and saying, 'We want to work with you and talk with you about the developments. We're not out here to beat you over the head', and they were quite surprised. They thought we would be sort of doing that, we'd just be telling them what to do. We said, 'No, we want you to basically integrate environment into your normal working way'. So obviously you have your technical issues, you have your cost benefit stuff, and we just want the environment to be considered in there as well. And at the end of the day it's the government as to whether they decide to do what the environment needs or whatever, but if you get in there early – and this was Bob Shearer's emphasis – if you can get in at the beginning of the project when the options are being considered, then you have the maximum scope to actually address the environment issues. By the time it's narrowed the options down to 'That's my preferred option', your scope to actually change it is very small, and so that's what we emphasised all the time with agencies was the need to consider the options very early on. So working with ETSA<sup>6</sup> on power stations, northern power station, and various other developments – and that was an EIS<sup>7</sup> – but they actually had to address alternatives in there and what are the things that they had considered. Now, we knew in many cases it was already a foregone conclusion what they were going to come up with, it was a bit like the old MATS Plan in the '60s: 'Yeah, we'll consider public transport', but you know at the end of the day, being De Leuw-Cather, you're going to get freeways. But gradually over a period of time – and it was a period of years – the attitudes would gradually start to mould and yes, they would consider environment.

And I think one of the key things was you'd get the younger engineers coming through and they were much more sensitive to this and many of them wanted to do

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<sup>6</sup> ETSA – Electricity Trust of South Australia.

<sup>7</sup> EIS – environmental impact statement.

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the right thing by the environment, and gradually the cultures in these agencies would change over a period of time. So it was as much about cultural change at the agency level, because we didn't have any legislation to use and it was a matter of working with them and getting them on board with us.

**There were some bits of legislation but, as you said earlier on –**

Yes.

**– they were centred in other agencies.**

Yes. Yes, they were.

**So how did that work?**

Well, I guess it worked more through Geoff Inglis and people at Doc's level, Doc Inglis's level, they were certainly aware of those areas of legislation. See, Geoff comes from an industrial chemist/engineering background, chemical engineering background, so he understood a lot of that, and he worked a lot with, for instance, E&WS, worked a lot with Keith Lewis and various other heads of E&WS on the pollution, the water pollution areas. John Shepherd, who was head of Water Resources in the E&WS, he was one we worked a lot with – I don't know where he is now. And Public Health, Phil Woodroffe, Dr Phil Woodroffe, but the air quality people in there. And so there were times that we worked with them, and also the noise people were in Public Health at that time too: Gary Stafford[?] was in the noise area. And so, for instance, on the Morphetville Bus Depot I liaised pretty closely with Alex and Gary on those sorts of issues.

**Alex being?**

Alex Smith, head of Air Quality – or he became head of Air Quality – of Public Health and later in the EPA. And Gary Stafford, he became subsequently a Director now in the Environment Department, but he was head of Noise at one stage.

**What about the mining area?**

Mining, we had a lot to do with mining. Yes. Mining was, I guess, another major area of our interest and I remember one particular project I was involved in where

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we were trying to understand the mining process and Geoff got me to study the legislation and chart what are the steps involved in the exploration phase and in the mining phase and all the different components of it, which I did, and we started to understand the different parts we could influence and bring about.

The other interesting thing, we had a little project in with the Flinders Ranges and this Class A, B and C and the ban on mining in Class A, and we wanted to get a better understanding of that so I actually was asked to go and talk with Glen Broomhill, which I did, down at his home, took a tape recorder, to understand where he was coming from when it went through cabinet to understand the commitment that was made about that, because we felt we didn't fully understand where cabinet was coming from. So we would pursue those sorts of issues. But mining, we did work a lot with the Mines Department; I'd have to say they were one of the more recalcitrants, it took a long time to change. Noel Hiern we dealt with over many years –

**Who was that?**

– Noel Hiern, H-I-E-R-N – and he actually did a degree in Planning, I think, subsequently, to understand *us*. (laughter) And we had a lot to do. There was an extractive industries committee under the old State Planning Authority and I used to go along to meetings of that. I wasn't a member – I *was* a member at one stage, I think – and we'd go out on site visits and talk about things there. So some of these committees were quite important in terms of trying to bring parties together and talk around these issues. But we also dealt directly with people in mines, on particular projects that we had.

**Did they see themselves as the agents of the miners?**

Very much so. Very much so. I think they saw themselves very much as the advocate for the mining industry, not so much as an agent of government, and I guess that was a shift that happened. I think there was a lot of advocacy by agencies – I mean, we were the same; we were advocate for the environment, but we were trying to reflect, I think, what the government was wanting in that. But some of

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them would take a very strong industry sort of line. Agriculture to some extent, too, but I think they were just sort of behind the 8-ball in terms of understanding the environment.

**So if they had any performance targets and ..... at the time it would have been the number of mines –**

Oh, very much so.

**– and the amount of land being cleared.**

The contribution of mining to the State GDP,<sup>8</sup> and then the so-called freezing areas up or ‘sterilising’ I think was the term, sterilising areas that you couldn’t mine in – you know, Hills Face and then parts of the Flinders and places like that – so all of the applications for mining exploration would come through us and we’d comment on them and say what we thought about it, whether we saw some problems or that. Yes, so there was a lot of contact with mining.

**Did you get a feel that you were influencing the decisions?**

Well, yes, I guess so. In the end of the day I think it was their decision and they had to take our thing on board. We actually then later employed a geologist, Rick Horn[?], who came in. He’s now I think one of the hotshots in one of the mining companies around. But he was a fairly fresh – he’d actually come from Mines, he was actually a geologist there, and then we recruited him so that we had sort of (laughs) a bit of an in there.

**Yes.**

Noel Hiern was very good, but he was very much an advocate for the mining industry, and I say it with respect. That was his passion and he wanted to advance their interest. But he understood, I think to a fair degree, what we were doing on that. But his great thing was you can’t move the mine. The mine is set where it is, because that’s where the ore is. But he couldn’t appreciate that the environment’s the same, you know, there are sort of centres of biodiversity which are where they

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<sup>8</sup> GDP – gross domestic product.

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are because that's where the characteristics are. And where they clash – well, you know, problems.

**You mentioned you took a tape recorder when you were talking to Glen Broomhill.**

Yes.

**Can you just talk about Glen Broomhill a bit?**

Glen was a great bloke. He was the first Minister, of course, and he and Grant Inglis I think got on pretty well – although I remember Grant saying how they had to chivvy Glen up sometimes to go into cabinet. He would be sitting in his office shaking at the thought of going to cabinet.

**Why was that?**

Corcoran.

**Oh, right.**

Probably Corcoran. He would know he'd be going into a battle. He'd know he'd generally have the support of the Premier, but nevertheless there was going to be a battle with some other ministers; and I'm not privy to that, but my understanding is it was particularly Corcoran was very hard. So it was very odd that Corcoran later became our Minister.

But Glen was someone who was very personable. He didn't come around to the Department, in those days they didn't, they were somewhat remote – in fact, I don't know he had an office in the Department – so we didn't really get to know him much at those times. Although I just remembered Grant talking about this, and Geoff also, they had to really gird him up to get him into cabinet to sort of push the particular line that they wanted to push. It wasn't that Glen wasn't committed to it, it's just that he knew the pressures and the power structures and so forth at the time were such that it was a very hard call and he wasn't a senior minister, even though he had the support of the Premier. So it was a difficult time for him, and I think for the environment generally, right through that time with Don Simmons subsequently. I think Glen was willing to go in and bat but it was pretty difficult times.

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**Did he understand the issues?**

Yes, I think so. I think so. And he also was prepared to initiate things which were against what his agency would say. So, for instance, I mentioned the Hills Face Zone and the ban of subdivision against Stuart Hart's advice: he said, 'You can't do that'. But he did.

Container deposit legislation was his initiative, and I can remember sitting in the office with Grant going in for something and Grant was talking to Oregon because the time difference was such that he could talk to them about their beverage act, because they were the first one who did the 'Bottle Bill', as it was called over there, and learning from them about what to do. And so Glen was behind that and Grant was very keen on that. And then subsequently, of course, Glen had to leave over the health of his wife and Don came in and he had the passage of the bill, I think – I'm not sure exactly when the bill went through – but Don had the job of actually introducing the system, because I think it took a couple of years to introduce: all the marine stores, the beverage container depots. I remember him poring over these maps on the floor to see that we actually had them scattered across the metropolitan area, that they were sufficiently close to people and so forth, because no-one knew at the time how that would work. And of course it's history now that it has been successful, but at the time people thought, 'Well, are people going to gather up their cans and bottles and take them down to these places?' And it took a while to get established; but it was seen to be real leading legislation and I think the Premier was very keen to see it happen.

The big disappointment, of course, has been that no other state has done it; but that's largely because they've been bought off by the industry. The beverage industry around Australia has paid millions of dollars to other governments on the proviso – for so-called 'litter campaigns' along highways and things – on the proviso that they don't introduce beverage container legislation. The minute they do, that money's gone. And Geoff can fill you in a lot about that because he's been very intimately involved in all of that, of course, nationally.

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**And Grant Inglis, what was his role, if I can ask the question in a sort of broad where were you getting your strategic soundings and your policy soundings from?**

You could well ask that. I think it was both top-down and bottom-up.

**Right.**

We were certainly encouraged to raise issues and to develop issues. I remember a very minor one was, back then, the need to advocate rainwater tanks, and so we actually did some work. We had an engineer amongst us who did some work on actually generating some graphs and things to work out for an average householder how you could actually work out what size rainwater tank based on where you lived, what size a roof you had and what uses you were going to make of it, and we put out that as a pamphlet. Now, that was a bottom-up type of thing. I think the off-road vehicle stuff came in from outside but it also came in from our own awareness of what was going on, so there was that. Top-down, I'm sure there was a lot of things that came through that from the top down.

**There are policy statements I've picked up along the way that talked about the environment a bit –**

Yes.

**– so people sort of refer to them as something that – – –.**

Yes. I'm not sure the policy statements you mean.

**Well, the election policy statements.**

Ah, yes. Well, sometimes you wondered where they came from. (laughs) We sometimes saw those the moment they were released but we didn't have any real role in drafting them at all. It's probable that Grant and people like that would have had. Yes, I've got some of those too, going back.

**That's even a 1970 one I've got here.**

Really?

**So that mentions mining and bits and pieces.**

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Yes. I think that was handled very much at Grant's and Geoff's level. Grant and Geoff worked very closely together on a lot of these sorts of issues. But I think it was still a time that we were still trying to work out what this environment was all about and what *do* we do, in the policy sense; what are the sorts of things that we want to take action around?

**So people weren't into strategic planning firmly in those days?**

No. I guess at that stage in the environment it was very reactive. Whereas now we try and be proactive, in those days you're still dealing with a lot of issues that are out there, trying to address them and trying to fix them up, so there were a lot of pollution issues, a lot of the things that you could see, highly visible problems, and you do something about them.

One other thing with Glen, of course, was that he was of course Member for Henley Beach and he was aware of the coastal issue and the coastal damage that happened after storms and so forth, so it was his initiative to get the Coast Protection Board up and the *Coast Protection Act* and one of the first in Australia to actually do that, so that was another one of his wins, to get that through, and that's lasted the distance.

**Did you get any sense of the Labor Party and some of the younger – like the Young Labor lot or some more radical people in the Labor Party pushing this area at all?**

Not a lot, (laughs) I'd have to say.

**Right, okay.**

I guess we always took a fairly non-political, apolitical, sort of role within the Department. We weren't terribly interested where the ideas came from; we were interested in the environment. And I guess it's been always my view that in a sense you work for the environment, you work for the betterment of the environment, regardless of what the government is, because otherwise you can get into the thing of, 'Oh, this is a Labor idea we'll do it, a Liberal idea we won't do it', and yet it might be a good idea. And so yes, it's more on judging how things go in terms of the environment.

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**And how did you see the Department evolving? Like it was set, it was a new thing, and over that period of time from say '75–79? It was a short period –**

Yes, it was. It was very critical.

**– but you had, what, three department heads and three ministers.**

Yes, that's right. It was, yes, a state of flux, I guess, was fairly constant. It was changing quite a lot. It grew quite a lot in that time from just half a dozen officers back in about '75 through to a much larger group, probably twenty or thirty, by the late '70s, and in fact we were in that GRE Building on the corner of Gawler Place and Grenfell Street but we actually then started renting places next door and they actually had to cut a hole through the wall of the two buildings to join us together because we were getting that large. And that was about the time that Dempsey came in, because I remember him walking around there.

**Rob Dempsey?**

Rob Dempsey came in about then. And I'd been working – one of the issues, I guess, was this EIA<sup>9</sup> thing, *EIA Act*, and this was I guess a policy mission that came down. But Geoff and I worked very closely on developing an *Environmental Impact Assessment Act* for South Australia – this was in the '70s and there wasn't anything much around. There was a national one and there were some states had done some, but we were still working off a cabinet directive and we saw the need to actually bed this down in legislation. So I worked with Geoff Hackett-Jones, Parliamentary Counsel, over a period of probably a couple of years, developing draft after draft, and this developed under Dempsey but I was working with Geoff mainly, Geoff Inglis, and Geoff Hackett-Jones, because Geoff was head of the Environment Division at the time. And we actually had Rob Fowler come in and do some consulting things for us, two or three papers on particular issues in that area. And we got it to a point where we were pretty happy with it and then of course there was a change of government. The Liberals came in and that was the end of that.

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<sup>9</sup> EIA – environmental impact assessment.

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**Yes, '79.**

Yes, so it didn't go anywhere after that. I think I've digressed from what ---.

**So when Rob Dempsey came in, what was he going to do?**

Yes. Well, he brought in a strong policy role, and I guess most of us didn't really understand what this policy thing was all about. You know, we'd just gone out there and done it and we hadn't really seen it in terms of policy directions and establishing a policy for a particular thing. We were, I guess, fairly young and just didn't understand that political process sufficiently well at that time. But I'd done quite a lot of research on the EIA area and particularly NEPA in the United States, *National Environment Protection Act* of '69, in its evolution during the '70s and what happened there and I'd written up a bit of a paper on this which Rob saw. And so subsequently, when Andrew came in and established this Coordination Policy Division –

**This is Andrew Strickland?**

– Andrew Strickland – they called these two positions a 'Senior Policy Officer' and 'Senior Coordination Officer'. Well, Sue Briton-Jones got the Senior Coordination Officer and I got the Senior Policy Officer job, and so suddenly I was meant to know something about what policy was. (laughter) And from there on I was working very closely with Andrew, of course, on policy issues and EIA was one of those.

**So what did you get to understand what policy was?**

Well, I guess I'm still trying to understand it – and I've lectured now quite a lot at Flinders on this – but it's really about defining a direction of what you want to do in respect of a particular issue, in abstract from that issue in a way, and say, 'This is going to guide all of our actions and all the things that we're going to do. We are setting a policy, a direction of addressing it'.

But I guess – in fact, I remember once we tended to be still reacting and responding to issues that were given to us but I said to Andrew, 'Look, I think we really need to actually initiate some policy'. So I actually drafted up a policy

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dealing with wetlands. I said, 'Look, we need to have a wetlands policy', and it seemed to me the sort of thing that we ought to be doing something about. So I drafted up a few pages on wetlands and why we needed it and what a policy could cover and so forth and put it to him and I don't think he knew what to do with it because it didn't come out of any political process, it was something which was initiated outside of that and he didn't see the need for it and understand that, and subsequently, some years later, we set up a wetlands committee and went into it a bit more thoroughly. But at the time it was ..... ..

I guess the other example of that was the native vegetation clearance area, which we saw as a very significant issue and we needed to address, and again Colin would fill you in about that. But I'd been involved in this back in the late '60s or early '70s when I'd plotted all the vegetation in the Adelaide Hills and shown how it was decreasing from air photographs, looked at what the extent of it was in the late '60s and compared that with the end of the [Second World] War from the previous maps and shown that it decreased by about sixty per cent and showed that, left to itself, it would all be gone by about the year 1990. The government decided, under Glen Broomhill, to establish a committee of inquiry into vegetation clearance and Colin Harris was given the job of chairing that. This was '74, so it was fairly early on, '74, '75. And they did a lot of work on the extent of vegetation clearance around the State, plotted it, mapped it and all the rest, and then started to work out what you should do about it and the first thing they did was to put forward a set of positive initiatives or positive incentives to keep it: so you'd provide farmers with fencing and rate relief and various other things to help them. We knew that that wouldn't be effective; we knew it would basically attract those who wanted to keep it anyway, and it did. It saved about fifteen thousand hectares early on, when the thing was finally launched. That didn't happen until under the Liberals, David Wootton. They weren't prepared to actually bring in controls on vegetation clearance and it wasn't until there was a change of government and Don Hopgood came in that they bit the bullet and said, 'Right, we actually have to stop clearance'.

**That's 1982, roughly, yes.**

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And then we started getting into that, so that's the next era. And, to their credit, the Bannon Government, in spite of the incredible cost of it – you know, which was very high, the cost of compensation and so forth which actually had to come in – they stuck with it right through that period and as a result of that we have the very large areas of vegetation which would have otherwise gone.

**You mentioned earlier on the Department was about thirty-something people –**

Yes.

**– and then there's this coordination unit.**

Environment Division was.

**Environment, yes.**

Now, when Rob came in I think he reorganised it, and I'm not sure exactly how it all worked out. Geoff was in part of one of it. I think there was a sort of a pollution division, I think Geoff moved into that area; and Andrew became head of coordination of policy.

**Just wondering what coordination was required.**

I don't know. I still don't understand Sue's role.

**Okay.**

But it was really, I guess, being consistent in policy across government.

**Yes.**

(laughter) She'd be able to tell you what her job was. I think it was as much troubleshooting and dealing with things that Andrew could see that was a problem or Rob could see, because she was very much closer to – very close to the Labor Party, so she understood these things much more than I was. I was politically neutral in that sense and I was just innocent. (laughs)

**Who was the Minister when Dempsey came in?**

Corcoran.

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**Des Corcoran.**

I think Des Corcoran. No, hang on, was it?

**That was after Don Simmons.**

Dempsey was appointed under Simmons. He was just at the end of Simmons' reign, role. Dempsey was appointed by the Premier.

**So it was to get some policy bite in the Department.**

Well, that was one way of looking at it. (laughs)

**What's your way?**

I think someone wanted to move Dempsey out of Premier's Department –

**I see.**

– the role he had there with the Premier. Anyway, that's what we did. And then he had to work under Corcoran, and of course those two personalities just chalk and cheese.

**Oh, really?**

Seemed that way. Although I think Dempsey worked with him, but I think Corcoran couldn't stand him.

**Really?**

That's my understanding of it.

**So how long did Dempsey stay?**

Well, he was there for about eighteen months, I suppose.

**Eighteen months.**

Mid-'77 and through to about early '79, and then there was of course – Corcoran became Premier for a very short time, called the election and that's the one he lost, and then Wotton came in.

**Peter Ellyard came in under Corcoran?**

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Then Ellyard came in – yes, he came in just at the end there, under Corcoran I think. There was also a very brief period where Casey and Cornwall – actually, Casey was there for a very short time and then Cornwall was there for a very short time, and it was just as Cornwall was brought in – who became Minister of Health – Ellyard was brought in. Now, Ellyard – yes, that was then a subsequent significant period.

But I think Dempsey was characterised by a lot of agro within the Department.

**Why is that?**

I don't know. The Department couldn't understand him, what it was about and this whole policy thing. The Coordination Policy Division was an anathema to much of the Department: they couldn't understand what it was about, why it was doing anything. It was part of our – well, I suppose a common lack of knowledge about what policy was in the time. I mean now we see policy as so important –

**Yes.**

– but in those days it was not understood why you want Policy Division. There was no-one there doing anything, you know, and so we got a lot of flak from people saying, 'Well, these people sit around all day and work up these things and dream up these ideas and things and don't actually do any work', and so there was a lot of problems in actually working across the Department because of that.

**Did you have any relationships with the Premier's Department?**

Well, I didn't much myself. I remember doing one particular job for Corcoran, actually: it was (laughs) very interesting, because there was a lot of interest in the O-Bahn, the whole issue of the north-east transport corridor, at the time, and he was, as I understand, was given the job of actually analysing the work that was coming out of that major study on that whole north-east area transport corridor thing and trying to give advice on whether we should actually build a light rail. And I actually then wrote a report on it and actually had to then deliver it to Corcoran personally. And I remember going around there on a Friday night, when it was about seven o'clock or six o'clock, and he was in there in his room with a judge and some businessmen and having his end-of-week drinks –

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**Yes, his beer.**

– he was known as ‘Three-Fridge Des’, wasn’t he?

**Yes, something like that.**

And so I sort of dropped it on his desk and ran. (laughter) And I remember him saying to someone outside, ‘Who was that?’ And they said, ‘Oh, it was Lothian’. And he came to the door and called me back and said, ‘Come in and have a beer’. So I came in and had a beer, and – – –. (mimes trembling, laughs)

**You escaped five hours later, did you?**

Oh, no. I had a beer and then went. But it was like the bloke. He was so well-networked, he could have all of those people in there having a drink at the end of the week. And yet I remember seeing him in a lift and he knew my name. He didn’t have to think very much before, ‘Oh, yes, you’re such-and-such’.

**I’m just wondering whether some of the tension was this, on the one hand you had people seeing themselves as sort of scientific, scientific officers –**

Yes.

**– and that professional pride, and on the other hand you’ve got these people who are talking about policy and probably politics –**

Sure.

**– and how to manoeuvre and how to do this, how to do that. Was that – – –?**

Yes, I think so.

**Could you ..... it that way?**

I think there was a lot of that view, the traditional people in the Department were focused on their particular areas of work. There was also the issue, I guess, at the time as ‘Where does policy emerge from?’ Does it come from the operational area, or does it come from elsewhere? And my view now, of course, is very much that it can’t come from the operational area; they’re too busy, and also they can’t get above it to see what are the policy issues involved in a particular area. So if you’re working in noise or in air or in heritage or whatever, your focus is on that. So you

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actually had to have someone coming in from outside working with those people and understanding the issues, understanding how you approach the particular area, and developing the policy in conjunction with them. But, if you leave it to them, it'll be very much protective of them; it will be very insular and very narrow in its scope, whereas coming in from outside – and therein lies the problem of the Coordination Policy Division –

**Yes.**

–coming in from outside and attempting to develop policy when all these operational people say, ‘Well, we know what we want; why don’t you just give it to us?’ (laughter)

**‘We’re professionals.’**

That’s the source of some of the tension.

**Yes.**

There was the political element involved, sure; I think there was a feeling that there were these highly-paid, as it was then, people running around in Coordination Policy: ‘What do they do?’ There was a lot of misunderstanding of what our role was and I kept saying to Andrew, ‘We have to promote ourselves to the Department, we have to sort of put out what we’re actually doing’. And we did a bit of that – not sufficiently, I don’t think.

**I remember Andrew’s style was more issue-based, not, ‘Here’s an issue, let’s go to it’.**

I liked Andrew; I worked closely with Andrew and I enjoyed working with him. It was a completely new dimension for me, I didn’t understand any of that stuff. But good fun. (laughs) And I guess I would be pretty naïve in those days in terms of understanding what policy was about and trying to get – – –.

**You mentioned the other departments before.**

Yes.

**Did they take more notice as time went on?**

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Yes. I guess by the end of the '70s they were starting to recognise that this was a power to be recognised and it obviously had the power within government to carry with it. So yes, there was that. We'd also made, I think, a lot of progress in terms of working with them. But there was a big shift from that [?as time went on?], too, because the whole impact assessment area became submerged into planning and it became very much a by-the-book type of thing and the broader dimension of influencing change, cultural change, that all went by the board, I think, and it's become very much a paper sort of process now.

**Is it really?**

Much less than actually bringing about change. You see, now you only really focus on those big issues which you end up with an impact statement, but what about the hundreds of ---? You know, that's the tip of the iceberg. It's all the other ones that you really need to influence because they can have quite a big effect, too, cumulatively. So all of that went. And they were with all the other agencies involved. But with many of them things had changed sufficiently, and there was new blood in those agencies that were bringing about change as well, to recognise the environment, so that was good.

**Were they brought in on the environmental impact assessments?**

Yes.

**The methodology at the time?**

Yes, yes, we'd work with them.

**What was the data and evidence base for a lot of this?**

Seat of the pants. (laughs)

**Right, okay.**

There was, increasingly during the '70s and then on from there, we were gathering a lot more information and data on the environment and our understanding about the environment grew over that time. When I first did the first State of Environment Report, which was in about '84, it was just a small thing and I just gathered together

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everything I could find at the time, and there was a lot there. It was mostly scattered and so forth, but it was growing; and we knew a lot more about the biodiversity, of course, we knew a lot more about the state as a whole. Landsat was coming in, we had John Douglas working away on his Ecological Survey Unit, but I'd have to say we didn't see a lot out of that. He worked with National Parks, did work on Coorong and various other areas. He's still around – he's up in the Hills, I think, somewhere or other. And in fact Vaughan Levitzke, who's now head of Zero Waste, worked with him for many years. He was an ecologist then, or biologist.

So they were doing this work with the old Landsat, but it was always, 'Yes, it'll be tomorrow we'll have that sort of information for you', but it was – yes. It was useful, I think, in terms of the veg clearance work, probably some other projects too, so there was a lot more data and information coming in on the environment all the time and, to a large degree, these impact assessments drove a lot of that, too, because they actually had to carry out surveys of the biodiversity along a particular, say, highway route. They started bringing in heritage surveys, doing the surveys at European and Aboriginal Heritage and all of that, too. In those days, one of the things that came out of the Dempsey era was the *Heritage Act*, and I remember that was written out of the Policy Division. Ilsa Matthews[?] was involved in that, in writing that. So that was a plus.

We had the Aboriginal heritage area covered under the old – who was it? – Bob Ellis was the head of it. *Aboriginal Protection Act* or something, I can't remember the exact name. But in those days they didn't mind identifying all the sites of Aboriginal heritage, as they called it – 'relics'. Nowadays, of course, they don't; they don't want people to know. But it was all about identifying all those, so there was a lot of information about that, too, and the Heritage Unit was established in the late '70s and started to do heritage surveys across the state over a period of quite a long time, and that was a very effective ..... ..

**How was the data recorded? I'm just trying to remember when computers came in.**

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Yes. Computers really weren't – well, the personal computers came through in about mid-'80s, so back then it was still mainframe-type computer stuff, if you had anything. But mostly it was just written reports, and card indexes and things like that, that people had. There weren't any electronic means – – –. I can remember in the Environment Division when our first electronic calculator came in, which was a CompuCorp, and it was a big instrument, a big box thing, which could add and subtract and multiply and do all that sort of stuff – pretty basic; but this was held by Grant and Geoff, you know, this was something which was *really* – this made us, this thing arrived.

I should say also in those days – and digressing – but we didn't have personal computers so all the reports were written longhand and then they went into a central typing pool. And you remember the old typing pools would be a dragon sitting over it who would have the task of making sure you didn't do any changes that were unnecessary and things like that. Because any change basically meant you had to retype the whole thing. And so you'd also be trying to get, say, cabinet submissions through and you had to do them very quickly and there'd obviously be changes and things on the way, and boy, I can remember many, many times on a Friday night trying to get changes to a cabinet submission to get it up, and (groans) tear your hair out. We were down at the Ansett Gateway Building by that stage.

**It was close to parliament, anyway.**

Well, it was that, that's right. And Des used to go round to the Ceylon Hut, it was, for lunch –

**Yes, that's right.**

– and of course every lunchtime Rob would go out for lunch and that was the afternoon written off.

**That was the end of it, yes.**

(laughs) I went to a few of those, too. And actually I remember talking with him about the *Impact Assessment Act*, because he couldn't work out how we could get this through, and I was saying to him, 'Look, we could separate the sort of private

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sector and the public sector and’ – I think it was that – ‘focus it around the public sector’, and he said, ‘Yeah, maybe that’s the way that we could go’. Anyway, I can’t remember exactly what the details were, but – – –.

**So have you got any reflections on change processes at the time? One observation I’ve made is a lot of trust was put in younger officers –**

Yes, incredible.

**– and the new people coming in and things like that.**

Yes, yes, incredible.

**So they were open to ideas.**

Yes, I think Grant and Geoff were both very willing to take what was coming up from their young officers. And when I look back I think, ‘Wow! It’s frightening, really’. Because they’d put up these reports which were pretty amateurish sometimes and things, but there would be a grain of something in there which Geoff and the others would work with and you’d be ..... in and developing it up and so forth. But there was an incredible amount of trust put into officers.

On the other end of the scale, there was no interest in OHS, occupational health [and safety]. They were the days when everyone – I didn’t, but a number of people smoked and I remember the fire in the basket (laughs) going off one day. But in terms of trust, yes, there was that, and I think one of the things that happened with the Coordination Policy, there was a lessening of that sort of trust. Coming out of professional officers there was a feeling that professional officers working out of Parks or out of pollution areas were, okay, restrict their professionalism to those areas, nothing beyond that, whereas we were used to working right across the board, we weren’t interested in particular demarcations like that.

In terms of change process – – –.

**You talked earlier about how you’d work with and relate to the other people in the other departments.**

Oh, yes, the other agencies. Yes, yes, there was a lot of that. Because most of us were involved in impact assessment in one way or another. We’d have different

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agencies we were responsible for or different particular aspects of them, and so we worked a lot with other agencies, some more than others. I think Bob Shearer was the lead one in that, in doing the work in that. What else?

**Were the universities involved – like Nick Harvey did a study on environmental impact at one stage, too?**

Yes, he was involved with the coast protection people at one stage, before he went down to the uni. He has always been interested in the impact assessment area, but he wasn't working with us at the time; he came much later. He worked with Ian McPhail, for instance, on the Marina strategy. He did a lot of work with him on that, and that was more the mid-late '80s that he came in, sort of predates that.

**Do you remember the joint consultative councils that were set up under the industrial democracy umbrella?**

The old industrial democracy? I remember that term coming in and we all sort of said, 'What's all this about?'

**Yes, right.**

None of us really knew. And there were those councils. I can't say I can remember anything much about them, they didn't impact me very much at the time.

**Okay.**

I've always been a member of the PSA, Public Service Association, right from the word go. I've always thought that unionism was important. But I don't think the people in the agency were particularly political, politically attuned. Until the Coordination Policy came in, we were really amateurish in terms of politics, it was very, 'We're here for the environment. Politics is getting in the way'.

**Just to get on record, I made a list of some of the issues or initiatives and I think you've covered a lot of them, but just to get it on the record and maybe we can come back to any that this might remind you of: parks conservation I think we've spoken about; Hills Face we certainly have; you mentioned Monarto –**

Yes.

**– or its earlier name, Murray New Town.**

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Yes.

**The built heritage you mentioned, that's the *Heritage Act*; vehicle pollution.**

Yes.

**The waste management, that probably came in later on as a big thing.**

Yes, waste was not something we were much involved in.

**Weedicides were picked up somewhere along the line.**

Yes. There's been a lot on DDT and those sorts of issues, but they were a bit beyond us.

**The litter and container deposits you mentioned.**

Yes, yes.

**Wetlands you've mentioned.**

Yes.

**Water, you mentioned briefly in terms of a Murraylands study, but was there anything more you got involved in there?**

Water: well, I know Geoff was involved a lot with the E&WS on water and water quality, as was of course Keith Lewis in dealing with the water issues in the River Murray – I mean the tanks on the houseboats and things like that, with grey water. And they were also I think involved a lot with the reuse of water issue with Bolivar and so forth, there were some studies done way back then about how to reuse Bolivar water, there were studies initiated in that with Public Health. I mean, they'd used the water out at Glenelg for years on the irrigation of the golf course, but now they were talking about using it for human consumption in terms of vegetables and things, so a lot of work on that.

The broader issues of water *resources* management and catchment management came in with John Shepherd and his crowd, an engineer out there –

**Yes, I know the name.**

– Jim Killoch[?].

**Andrew LOTHIAN**

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**Jim Killoch, that's right.**

He got the first *Water Resources Management Act* up in the – must have been in the late '70s, I suppose – and we had a fair bit to do with them over that. More at Geoff's and Grant's level. But in terms of water quality, there was quite a bit I know coming out of the Mount Lofty Ranges people on problems with piggeries and waste and that, and of course E&WS then brought in these catchment zones around their reservoirs and said, 'Right, all the piggeries out', and that was fairly significant – and dairies, as well. And I know Ron Caldicott, for instance, lived on what was formerly I don't know whether it was either piggery or dairy, and of course he's in the catchment of Mount Bold and Scott Creek, and he said over a period all of these just went, they had to all be moved out. And that was a far-sighted move, because if we still had them there we wouldn't have Mount Bold and all the other reservoirs, so there was that recognition of the pollution side from agriculture. This is non-point-source pollution, this is diffuse pollutions coming from grazing and that, which was also in those days quite radical. I mean it was always the [?old factory/olfactory?] type of pollution that they dealt with; this is diffuse pollution. And so they started addressing those sorts of issues, too.

Salinisation was, as I say, pretty well unknown. It was later on that the problems of salinity became apparent in the Upper South-East and some other areas, and then we started to see them, and Victoria and that too became aware of it. Yes, ..... pollution.

**You mentioned Aboriginal relics.**

Yes.

**And there was another one, visual pollution, like the control of advertisements.**

There was a lot of that. Yes, yes. See, under the old *Planning Act* there was – there was actually a *Control of Outdoor Advertisements Act*, which Dan McCabe[?], one of the planners here, had as his personal hobby, getting rid of all the old signs. Because I don't know if you remember going back in those eras, the '70s and '60s, there'd be signs all along the main roads out in the rural areas, and this *Control of*

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*Advertisement Act* basically removed them and so you'd have at the entrance of a town an information board where they could put some of those but they couldn't be third-party advertising, they had to be about what was in the town. And so that changed enormously all of these ads, which if you go to America you see these huge billboards everywhere and you see them interstate as well, to a fair degree. You come out of Sydney Airport and you see massive billboards as you come out. Well, that dealt with a lot of those. They're still around. One of the residues of that – and I say this because outdoor advertising was quite one of those big issues in the early '70s, late '60s – but one of the issues was that they were along railway land, somehow or other the railways saw it as a means of revenue, and they still have them there: even though I can remember Murray Hill, when he was Minister of Transport, saying, 'We'll get rid of those', they're still there. And I reckon that's something that ought to be dealt with because you come over any area of railway land and you'll still see outdoor advertising. It's the only place – apart from the airport, which is another story – where you'll see it; so it's an anachronism, I think, that that still remains. But outdoor advertising and that whole visual thing, the aesthetics of cities was important at the time.

**So how was that brought up?**

No-one really dealt with it. We didn't really have much to do with it. The old Civic Trust – you know, Jim Warburton and David Corbett –

**Yes.**

– they were quite instrumental in holding various seminars on issues. I remember when we had the first bushfires in '81 or '83, you know, the Ash Wednesday, we talked to them about having a bushfire seminar; but they'd already had a series of seminars through the '70s. Quite an instrumental group for raising the public profile of issues and having speakers address these particular things. So I think there were some in the '70s of visual pollution and that sort of thing, but they also addressed a lot of other major issues at the time. They were very effective.

**All right. Well, I think we've had a pretty good run at all of this.**

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Yes.

**Is there anything you wanted to reflect on in terms of the Dunstan Government's legacy or the ministers at the time?**

It was an exciting era at the time. You really sensed you were in at the beginning, on the ground floor, and because of that it was important on how you went about things and we were trying to set the right scene for things. We were trying to do things in a different way than had traditionally been by working with people cooperatively and that, but trying to instil in them an understanding and a commitment to the values that we had about the environment. And so that we saw as important. I guess the only other area that operated in that way, to some extent, was Public Health and a commitment to health. And the environment was one of those early value-adding type of areas. So it was an exciting era to be involved in and we were all at the beginning of our careers, as it were, so we were all sort of in there and enjoying it very much.

**We haven't talked about Don Dunstan a lot, but was that his premiership, his leadership, a part of that sense of things happening?**

Yes, I'd say so. Yes, he had a big influence, obviously, on the style of government at the time and its willingness to embrace these sorts of things. It was almost, when Corcoran went and the new government came in, it was as though the door closed, to a degree.

**That was a Liberal government.**

The Liberal Government came in under Tonkin. I mean, he was amazed that he became Premier. And David Wootton came in as Minister and he was fairly junior in them, and he was a great bloke – I know David well – but basically nothing happened for the next three or four years until there was again – Bannon came in.

**Bannon, yes.**

And then that's another era. But that time was a time where you had incredible freedom to actually initiate things and to actually drive things. If you saw it as important and if you could convince people like Geoff and Grant that it was

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important, they would back you. And you would put up reports and you'd put up letters and minutes to the Minister and things like that and they wouldn't change them. You know, they would support you and trust you and say, 'Oh, that's how it goes'. And I'm a bit amazed now.

**Right, yes.**

Because subsequently, of course, even in Coordination Policy, things would never go up like that. It was just iteration after iteration to craft it and refine it. I mean, I know now words are everything; but in those days it was a matter of just get it up.

**That's good.**

Yes.

**All right. Well, on that note, thanks very much, Andrew, for the great interview.**

No worries.

END OF INTERVIEW.