This is George Lewkowicz for the Don Dunstan History Project for the Don Dunstan Foundation. Today, 6th June 2008, I’m interviewing Mr John Cain, the former Premier of Victoria and a long-time associate of Don Dunstan. The location of the interview is the Old Treasury Building, Spring Street, Melbourne.

John, thanks very much for doing this interview for the Don Dunstan History Project.

Good, George, I’m pleased to be asked to take part.

Can you just talk a bit about yourself?

Yes. Well, I’m a Depression baby, I was born 26th April 1931, and my father of course was in politics for a long, long while so I suppose I was brought up in a political household.

He was Premier of Victoria.

He was Premier three times. A couple of them were short-lived – although the first one was short-lived in terms of days only, but the latter two, ’45–47 was two and a half years or thereabouts and again from ’52–55, the last government being a victim of, I suppose, the most public manifestation of the split that occurred in Victoria in 1955 and across the country, but more sharply in Victoria than elsewhere.

As I say, I grew up in the post-Depression years, educated at state primary schools, Northcote High School, and the last two years at Scotch College where I was a boarder for a time, then Melbourne University where I did a law degree, and went on and did postgraduate subjects and my articles and was admitted to practise as a barrister and solicitor in 1953 it would have been. And I practised as an employee for some years after that and then started my own practice in the suburbs, in Preston, a Northern Melbourne suburb, where I practised until 1976 when I was first elected to parliament.

I must say, during those years, my father took out my first ticket in the Party in 1948 and I was active in Party politics, branch politics, internal politics, in Victoria in the Labor Party really ever since the ’50s. Saw the worst excesses of the warring factions and the split and what led up to it, and was fairly active in the Party from the time that the split occurred, mostly and identifiably with what became a dissident group that were seeking to get some sense back into the Victorian Branch, which after ’55 was a political and
institutional mess, I suppose. We worked hard, a group of us, to bring about change and it finally occurred with intervention by the national executive, national governing body of the Party, in 1971/71.

Who was behind that, Clyde Cameron?

Well, Clyde Cameron was one of the key figures at the end. I say at the end, in ensuring that the processes within the Party that required a form of action that couldn’t be challenged in the courts was undertaken, and Clyde and the late Xavier Connor, who was one of our members in a group that became known as ‘The Participants’, they worked closely together in ’69/70. Yes, Clyde Cameron was a key figure. And Gough Whitlam was the other key figure – in fact, I recently said at John Button’s funeral oration, where he asked me to talk about that period of his involvement, that really only Clyde Cameron and Gough Whitlam, of people in elected public office, they were the only two that really had at any stage – I qualify that by saying Kim Beazley was a supporter –

That’s Kim Beazley Senior.

– Senior, I’m sorry, yes – but really only Gough and Clyde were, publicly, of members of elected parliaments.

Now, the split was the Australian Labor Party and the Democratic Labor Party?

Well, it was the Democratic Labor Party emerged as the titular manifestation of what was – well, it was a sectarian split, essentially. You don’t want me to go into the details of that. I suppose not as much as should have been has been written about it; but it was a sectarian split, yes. Santamaria, Mannix, I won’t bore you with all of that. But when the split occurred there was a group of politicians who voted my father’s government down in May ’55 who became the core of an anti-Labor Party group that later was named the Democratic Labor Party.

I see, right.

It was less – it happened in the other states to some extent; Queensland perhaps was the second most serious; but I think South Australia, where Don was coming to prominence at that time, was less affected. It seemed to me as an observer that South Australia in the
post-Playford years, I suppose was more caring and understanding about processes. The Party was small, it didn’t have the trade union influences that we had in Victoria. You could write a book, I suppose, about the Victorian Labor Party.

That’s right, yes.

But it really wasn’t until the ’70s, early ’70s, and then the election of the Whitlam Government really showed what could occur with a sensible Labor Party, and I was first elected – the whole rules and process of the Party were changed and that led to a recognition of adopting I think it was the South Australian model of proportional representation for internal Party elections, which then was introduced in all states. That I think was the key to it: it meant that the broad church of the Party was able to ensure that any significant view within the Party had representation within its councils and its policymaking bodies that reflected its base of support. And that’s ensured Labor’s capacity to win elections has been a much greater capacity in the last thirty years than the thirty years immediately after the [Second World] War.

So the Victorian political history is a very, very sad one, in a way, that the parliamentary system and the maldistribution of seats to votes, preponderance of voter weight going to country areas – which I think South Australia had in the Playford years, certainly Western Australia did – ensured that Labor Party victories were very few. In fact, my father’s government in ’52 was the first time a Labor government had a majority in its own right, and our election in ’82 was the first time really that we had an upper house. We changed the law then to ensure we had an upper house that didn’t have a limited franchise. (laughs) When you look back, it was pretty crude, our parliamentary system, until the last twenty-five, thirty years.

So you became Premier of Victoria in 1982. What, broadly, did that involve, being Premier of Victoria?

Well, there hadn’t been a Labor government for twenty-seven years, so it required a significant change in attitudes, I suppose, across governments, across administration in the public sector generally. We did a lot of things about reforming the process; we introduced, I think for the first time – and I had consulted Don Dunstan about this and others – a proper cabinet system of decision-making or the process of handling cabinet
material, and I’d done some work before we came to office, I’d done work in the late ’70s and early ’80s, in New South Wales and South Australia and at the Commonwealth, and when we came to government in ’82 we did introduce a number of reforms in that sort of administration area, so it was a very different culture when we came in.

And some of the things we did were seen as being very radical for Victoria, which had been a conservative state – tempered a little by our immediate predecessor; immediate-but-one was a bloke called Dick Hamer who was fairly small-L liberal in attitude, and I think it’s fair to say also that Dick Hamer, Don Dunstan, Gough Whitlam and John Gorton were the pioneers in it being recognised that governments should play a part in the arts. That’s certainly how we saw Don here. That late ’60s period where John Gorton I think was starting to shake and rattle the cage a bit and Don certainly was, then Gough Whitlam in ’72, and then the Hamer Government came in in ’73, I think – yes, I think I’m right, ’73 – so that early ’70s period did see the beginning of the arts and the recognition in Victoria for the first time of a separate Ministry of the Arts.

**Just getting your perspective about being a premier, what do you see that as – just getting inside your head, and I can talk to you about it?**

Well, I suppose it’s a bit different in [Victoria]. Each state I think has its own particular aspects of what state government means and what heads of government mean, I think. I saw it as one of our introducing a large and significant program of reforms here. We didn’t have a majority in the upper house, but it was an opportunity to introduce what I regarded, and I think most people did, as sets of reforms and changes that reflected Labor values, around equality, gender issues, about equality of opportunity, around job opportunities, trying to ensure maximum opportunity for creative jobs and satisfying jobs, a lot of law reform we did. We introduced for the first time in Australia the separate Director of Public Prosecutions, independent of and separated from government. I’d been across to London and had a look at what model they used. We introduced the first FOI¹ legislation, much to the concern of our (laughs) colleagues in other states. So things like that. And we had a fairly strong view about policies: we introduced – and even got it

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¹ FOI – freedom of information.
through the upper house, despite not having a majority – that the State should be nuclear-free, legislation that interestingly has never been repealed, it’s still there.

**Interesting.**

We were taken on on that by Malcolm Fraser, who demanded that the porting of allied vessels in our ports, either nuclear-armed or nuclear-powered, should be allowed under the defence power. So we had a few hiccups with that, but we were fairly robust in our attitude. And we were Keynesian in approach, we took the view that the state should intervene when the economy was depressed, as it was for most of our time.

So I saw the premiership as being one where you had to, as it were, play an overarching role in getting those things as far as you could where legislation was required through the parliament as early as possible. You are better able, you have more goodwill, as a first-term government than any term of re-election, so I was conscious of that. We didn’t want to ‘frighten the horses’, as I used to say.

**And you were the leader, or you were the assembler of ideas from others?**

The Party was very productive, and that’s in marked contrast to what’s not happening now, George. Yes, I took the view that the Office of Premier and the private office in particular should play an overarching coordinating role, but the central agencies – we call it Premier and Cabinet, Treasury and the Public Service Board as it was then called, it’s got a different name now – really had a key coordinating role, and that was essentially what we did. And I suppose the other thing I was always conscious of, we had a rampant Party. The Party behind us, it could be cooperative. With the sharing of power and the new rules change you could harness, use, tame – all of those words – the factions from time to time, but there’d be breakouts. We had a particularly acrimonious dispute with the Builders’ Labourers’ Federation.

**That was Norm Gallagher, was it?**

Yes, that’s the subject of writings of some detail. And we had a fight within the Party on that, taking them on. Defied the Conference. Things like that you can only do so often; you can’t, as it were, dissipate your goodwill too far. And the Victorian Branch I think was more divided, more factionally-rampant, than most other state branches and more
progressive/left oriented. I mean, they used to say to us at Labor Party National Conferences and at Premiers’ Conferences that the most left-wing members of Labor Parties and/or governments in other states wouldn’t have gone near the right wing of the Labor Party in Victoria. We were just seen as being the outcasts, which I think was an exaggeration, but certainly we were more – – –. And after our election, in April ’82, Neville Wran was there at my first Premiers’ Conference and Don had gone, Des Corcoran had gone, and a bloke called – he was an eye specialist –

Yes, David Tonkin.

– David Tonkin was [there], I think I’m right. But then John Bannon won in the following

That’s right, yes.

– March, April, February? He came in twelve months after we did, and Brian Burke came in, that bloke Ray later went to jail – can’t think, tall bloke, was Premier. Tasmania was Robin Gray won I think a month after we did or thereabouts. But the win by Brian Burke and John Bannon was a bit of a fillip to us at the Premiers’ Conferences.

And when you were Premier or chair of cabinet, how did you operate the cabinet?

I’ve written a bit about that in a book. On consensus.

Right, consensus.

Yes. There’s a book I wrote which you’ll pick up fairly easily, there’s a chapter on cabinet processes and what was brought to cabinet, so you can cite that if you wish, but I don’t want to bore you with too much detail. We sort of laid down a number of – I had a rule about the form of cabinet submissions: no more than six pages and they had to have consultation with other agencies before, and a whole heap of rules on the front page of the cabinet submission, and a competent – Bob Smith you referred to, Bob was one of the key public servants in imposing the disciplines across the agencies to ensure that cabinet – I think I used the phrase that cabinet had to have first-grade material before it and everything had to have a series of material provided, options available and a
recommendation, and if you couldn’t agree on something then you sent them away to determine it. So we never had a vote in cabinet, ever.

So there were occasions when you could see something really needed to be done but the others were still – – –.

You just deferred it.

Just deferred it till they’d sorted it out, right.

Yes. You didn’t have votes and have people going to the caucus. Although we’ve been back-doored a bit, I have to say, in certainly our second and third terms, we’ve been back-doored a bit by some ministers who were close to factions who would then on occasions – not a lot – but when things were getting a bit tough for us politically there were Sunday night phone calls when the cabinet papers were being looked at and the factions used to meet before the Parliamentary Party meeting on the Tuesday and there would be attempts to get the caucus to roll the cabinet. So that made me a bit angry at times. That didn’t happen very often, but nevertheless it was there. I was a member of this independent straight Participant group, but I just severed my links with that as soon as I became leader in September ’81, but there were still ministers who – and I didn’t try to stop them, nor could I stop them – who were active factional warriors. So the factional structures were still there right through the life of that government, so as George Brouwer, the head of the department said to me, frankly, he said, ‘You spend a third of your time putting out bushfires in the Party’, which wasn’t untrue. And I didn’t have, as both Neville Wran and John Bannon did, a member of the government with a trade union background who could do the heavy stuff within the Party.

I see.

Neville had Jack Ferguson – did you ever know Jack Ferguson?

No; I’ve heard of him.

Well, he’s Martin’s father. Great bloke, Jack. I had a lot to do with him. But he came along to the Premiers’ Conference when Neville Wran stood down because of that charge against him of trying to influence some magistrate – – –. (telephone rings, break in recording) Yes, John Bannon had Jack Wright, who was very good. And I think they
both benefited from having that capacity. Both were cabinet members, ministers. I didn’t have that. There wasn’t anybody in Victoria who could do it because of the state of the Party.

See, the Victorian Branch really it was different to the other states and when intervention came it remained different. The scars of the split were very deep indeed. (laughs) There was a couple of academics celebrated – or that’s not the right word; ‘commemorated’ I suppose is the right word – the split fifty years on, it was in the Parliament building, actually, over a weekend, we had a conference, and they dug out very lively, interesting people. Fifty years on, ’55 to 2005, and the same old bitterness was still there.

Really?

It was heady stuff. See, people like Pat Kenneally and Arthur Calwell really were driven out of their church.

Really?

Oh, yes. I was very close to Pat Kenneally, my father had been, and Pat, who lived in South Melbourne, he wasn’t welcome; and he didn’t want to be subject to listening to a priest running a political line on a Sunday, so he came to church at St Patrick’s. And Arthur Calwell was the same, I think. So those Catholics who stuck with the Labor Party and didn’t go to the DLP were pilloried by the Church at the highest levels, and that didn’t really disappear. But the contrary, or the contra view of those who were in many cases members of the Masonic Lodge who were ferociously anti-Catholic and took over some of those unions and became members of parliament, they were just as stupid, just as extremist. And I said at John Button’s funeral they each deserved the other. They were very small-minded. Now, they had no real concern about Labor values or Labor policy. All they wanted to do was crush the other mob. So even thirty, forty years on, Victoria’s a pretty ugly place. In fact, the DLP still ran candidates and they’re back in business now, I believe, there’s one in the Victorian Parliament now. (laughter) Oh, jeez. And the separation of church and state means nothing to them, they just think that’s all crap. So
it's European politics of the nineteenth century, eighteenth century, twentieth century, very much in evidence.

Old hat, yes.

So I shouldn’t bore you with all that.

That’s all right.

But if you are to understand the Victorian position you need to have regard to that.

Yes. And what we’re interested in is the contrast, like how difficult or easy.

Well, I think that’s what Don – Don Dunstan appeared to us, and you mentioned in these notes I think he came to Victoria in ’55: I don’t remember that, but I certainly do remember him being seen as a beacon of freshness and purity to us as Labor members from about the mid-1960s.

And he came over here and spoke?

My first recollection of Don coming over here was in my own campaign. He came to support me in my first election, I was in a marginal seat, in 1976 he came and did a fundraiser for me or a function in a park. But I had communicated with him and been to see him, or I think I’d spoken to him at some length about the cabinet process, but my first recollection of him being here was in ’76. He probably was here another time. He might have come to conferences. He probably came to Fabian conferences, I think. It’s a fair while ago no. But he was, to Victorians, living in the gloom of a shattered Party and being in opposition year after year, Don was seen as being the architect of a South Australian revival after the long Playford years and what the Party could do. It wasn’t just Adelaide being seen as the Athens of the South, it was more than that; it was Don’s attitude on Aboriginal issues and equality of opportunity and gender issues and all of those things were seen as being those to be lauded by us.

He was worthwhile getting over to raise some money for you.

Oh, yes. Yes. And to inject some sort of balance and sense into people, into the Party. I don’t think he had anything to do with The Participants. Certainly not openly. I don’t recollect that. But he certainly had a bit to do with the Fabians.
And the Victorian Fabians, mainly through Race Mathews, were a key outlet for Gough Whitlam in those years, late '60s, when Gough was Deputy Leader and he really, singlehandedly in my view, created a policy face for the Labor Party across the country using the Fabian lectures on equal opportunity issues, on law reform, on the arts, on urban renewal. And Gough was a trailblazer for us, and I suppose primarily what kept us going, I think. We were pretty disillusioned about Labor in Victoria in those years, and Gough was the federal – he won in ’72, of course. And Don had a short period in, what, '65 or '67 or thereabouts.

Yes, ’67 and ’8 and then the break when Steele Hall was the Premier –

He won again in, what, ’70?

– and then came back in 1970, yes.

Until ’78.

'Seventy-nine, early ’79.

'Seventy-nine, yes.

When he retired.

See, I cite Don Dunstan as a case where the coppers brought a government down. I don’t know whether it’s the view held in South Australia. That certainly seemed to me to be what happened, and I well remember that last press conference when he came out in his dressing-gown. But the coppers can be very dangerous, very dangerous. Is that the view in South Australia, the coppers brought him undone?

Well, it’s one of the views.

Not widely-held?

A couple of things. One is the work they were doing just tracking his own private life, and that was sometimes secret, sometimes not so secret with his relationships with young men; and then the whole Salisbury thing really shook things around as well.

Yes. Salisbury’s the bloke who came from England?

From England, yes. And he got sacked by Don and largely because of the Special Branch files on people, none of them who happened to be conservatives.
When was the Torrens River thing when the coppers threw that bloke in the river, an academic?

**That was probably about two years earlier, George Duncan was the chap they threw in.**

Duncan. Law lecturer.

**Yes, probably mid-'70s, and then the Scotland Yard people were brought in to have a look but nothing ever happened because they said it couldn’t be proved. The police, ‘allegedly involved’ I’ll say – at least two of them resigned.**

And there was a piece on the telly, rerun of that documentary that was done on that case: did you see it, recently?

**Which one’s that?**

On the Duncan case.

**No, I didn’t see that.**

Following it right through until there was either a royal commission or judicial inquiry, I think, wasn’t there?

**Yes.**

Certainly the impression a number of us had was the coppers just turned on Don and made life difficult. They can do that, they’re a very powerful lobby. We’ve got a bit of a problem – – –. (laughter)

**Some issue, yes. Big-time, yes. So when you first saw Don or listened to him, what did you think of him?**

Well, he was refreshing in the sense that he was not in the mould of the Victorian ALP’s normal parliamentary member. He was different, he was refreshing, he was audacious, he was innovative, and made you realise that the politics of the Union Movement, which dominated the Victorian Branch and I suppose all branches, there was something different available. That politics, that practice had to be mellowed, I think that’s what Don made us realise.

**What about his dealing with the media, did you observe how he did that?**
Only as a watcher, I suppose. When you say ‘observe how he did that’, he was the consummate television performer that you needed to be, I suppose. There were a few around like that. Gough Whitlam was very good at handling the media. Our own premier here, ..... ..... I suppose with Dick Hamer, he was almost bland to the point of being – Dick could never upset anybody, but he just was like a sponge, I suppose, he just absorbed it. So there were a few who were good performers.

But I think Don’s innovative attitudes on policies and social issues were seen as attractive to us, yes. We understood South Australia was a different colony[?]. There was a bit of a view, I think, that Adelaide really was a city state, there wasn’t much else happening, so that it was a bit like the Athens (laughs) in that sense: if you took – I suppose there was a bit happening at Port Pirie and Port Augusta and Whyalla and Mount Gambier; there wasn’t much else happening, though.

That’s true, yes. Except the hinterland was controlling the state under Playford and Don did bust that through.

Yes.

Did you talk to him about how he got his ideas?

No.

You didn’t. Right, okay.

No, I didn’t.

And you mentioned the policies that you picked up. You also mentioned you spoke to him about cabinet processes. What were you picking up from him there?

We had no cabinet process here at all. When we came to government, there wasn’t a cabinet office in that sense. There was a cabinet secretary, who was a member of the parliament, and he or somebody else would just scribble decisions across the back of files. So I think what I learnt and set up fairly quickly – and I’m not sure when Bob [Smith] came to us, but fairly early in the piece – within six months we had a fairly good cabinet process going in terms of disciplining agencies about the sort of material that had to be there and the timelines and the recording of the records. George Brouwer I suppose was more the key to what we did than anything else. George was in the cabinet office in
Canberra in the Federal Government from about 1968 to ‘74 or ’5, and I’d known George as a member of the Law Reform Commission under Michael Kirby, George was the first chief executive of that. I was on that Law Reform Commission from ’73–’76 and George was the first chief executive. I think he joined us about ’74 or ’5. And I rang him when we came to government and asked him to apply for the job, because the secretary of the department, who’d been there for many years, well, he wasn’t too impressed by us, I don’t think. He was of a different kind: he wanted a knighthood and I didn’t—

Protocol man, yes.

— I didn’t go along with that and made it very clear to him that there wouldn’t be any knighthoods and he was — — —. (laughs) That’s another story — — —.

That’s all right. And Don never said to you, ‘Whatever you do as Premier, if you’re going to become one, watch this or watch that’?

No. I sought his help when he was over here on the tourism thing and I had a problem with the Governor here. But no, he didn’t do that, but he was always there as a source of advice. So I didn’t really come across him at the Premiers’ Conference level at any stage, and when I became leader he of course was gone. So I think he was, in our years immediately before government, he was seen as the elder statesman who could be very helpful and informative.

What sort of things did he talk to you about when he was over here in tourism?

Oh, tourism was a different issue altogether when he came over for that job.

Yes — not tourism specifically, but about — — —.

No, no. No, I think the Labor Party and I think our common interest was trying to make this wilful beast conform to the requirements of modern government, and I think he was very helpful on that.

And campaigning tactics?

He was very good on [those]. Those were the years of the public meeting. He was very good on that, could hold an audience, put a case very well, and in Victoria was seen as being a successful Premier and governor. So he had some status here because of his
political and electoral success, and because he led the way on so many reform issues. I mean, when you look back, the New South Wales Labor Government of both Neville Wran and before were never great architects of radical reform, they would very much go along with the Establishment, and they were incremental at best. Of course, John was up in Queensland, what, from ’68–’86 or something. So it was a pretty gloomy picture, really, there wasn’t much – – –.

Don was the shining light for all of us here because he was the only progressive Labor leader or Labor government as we saw it that you’d want to model yourself on. I mean, Neville was very good on lots of administrative things, but that Party over there is very much dominated by the right and very much dominated by Sussex Street. The Government was very much in the grip of the right wing of the Party.

**Did you ever talk to Don about the role of government in – you mentioned earlier on – industrial development and infrastructure, economic development?**

Yes. I think that was something we shared, that both Victoria and South Australia recognised that industry assistance was a key role for governments. I mean, they were trying to nurture the motor industry, the whitegoods industry, and I suppose wine was the other thing that they were – – –. And I suppose he led the way in looking at major events, festivals, which have become very important and admired right across both here and the US, [that] state governments pursue. So Don was very good on that. The festivals that he nurtured were seen as a model.

**Do you think Don made any mistakes that you learnt a lesson from that you wanted to avoid when you were Premier?**

Well, I think I was conscious of his experience with the police, as I said to you before. That seemed to me to demonstrate how careful a government had to be with the police who, under our Act and I think under theirs – I’d have to look at it – had some considerable independence in operational matters and they could be quite destructive of government. And shortly after we came to office that was brought home to me. We had an incident where the police, a number of senior police officers, were accused of taking favours from an airline with cheap fares. And the more we went into it the more we realised that, despite our protestations, the police force were maybe not as lilywhite as
we’d thought. So the way they handled that and the way they said they would react if we did certain things, against the government, I think made us realise that Don’s experience in the late ’70s wasn’t necessarily a South Australian experience that couldn’t occur elsewhere.

That’s right, yes. When Don was working here in tourism, I don’t really want to go into what he did or didn’t do there, but did he ever talk to you about after his retirement he regretted he didn’t do certain things while he was Premier?

In government?

Yes, in government.

No, he didn’t, no.

So he didn’t have an agenda he still wanted to implement that he talked to you about?

He wanted something in the tourism area, I think, and I was less than impressed with some of the things he did so far as his dealings with some of the people. He did some things that were, for a first-term government in a conservative state, a little provocative and he was used by the media as being seen as an irritant to the government, which he wasn’t really. They tended to overplay some of these instances. And so there were some tensions in that period. And I don’t think he was entirely comfortable with the job: he had to leave his home and come over here, and the minister who negotiated that he was coming here did it all before I or the government was aware, it was almost delivered as a fait accompli, so that created some difficulties. So it was not the most productive experience for either of us, I don’t think. I’m not sure how long he stayed; was it a year or two?

I can’t remember – yes, it wasn’t that long.

No. I think Don felt in the end that it wasn’t best for him, too.

Yes, interesting. Well, I’ve covered the areas I was wanting to run through. Is there anything you can think of that we haven’t spoken about?

I’m just looking through here. (leafs through papers) No, I think we’ve covered most of it, George. (pauses) Look, I think when you say ‘the Labor Party’s broad strategy of democratic socialism’, I think Don was seen as a model by me and others because he was
upholding – and I remember going into this before he died, and I spent half a day with him: it was a very hot, December day and the Test was on in Adelaide and we had lunch with one of his friends, an Asiatic bloke, I can’t remember his name.

Stephen Cheng.

Stephen, yes. And we were talking about our joint disappointment at the way the Party had moved away from the values that we thought it should be exhibiting, the alacrity with which Labor governments had privatised public utilities. We shared a view about the importance of a mixed economy and the infrastructure provided by government, and he was very, very angry about all that – and he wrote a bit on it, I think.

Yes.

So I think he felt towards the end of his life – as I do, I think, to some extent – that the Party’s moved a long, long way away, a long way from the values that were its strength. Now, I recognise that society has changed; I think he did, too; but the sale of public assets like the Commonwealth Bank and TAA\(^2\) and those commercial operations. We shared a view that they were to the detriment of the nation overall. This probably shouldn’t be on the record here – – –. (break in recording) This nation has lost much. I think Don was, at the end of his life, reflective – this should go in – Don was reflective of what had been lost by the Labor Party, its desire to be seen as middle-of-the-road and attaching or attracting the middle electorate. We had perhaps gone too far as a party in too short a space of time. That was not a fashionable view. But I think it was Don’s view; it certainly was mine at that time, and still is.

Well, thanks very much, John. It’s been really interesting.

That’s all right. Good to talk to you.

END OF INTERVIEW.

\(^2\) TAA – Trans-Australia Airlines.