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Title:

Speech opening Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association conference, Port Lincoln

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR DUNSTAN, OPENING EYRE PENINSULA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE. PORT LINCOLN. 25.2.74.

Mr Baldcock, Your Worships, Councillors:

Thank you very much for asking me here today to open your annual conference and giving me the chance to revisit Port Lincoln.

I'm sorry that it has to be such a short visit.

One of the things people generally say at conferences or conventions is that they are in some way specially significant. It's not always true but it is certainly true of this meeting.

This is a time of very great change in local government in Australia. People are making more and more demands on their local authorities and the Councils themselves are very rapidly reaching their proper stature and importance as the third level of Government in this country.

The process is, I believe, irreversible.

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And the State Government, in South Australia, is most anxious to see that local authorities get all the assistance we can provide to enable them to take on these new functions as well as being able to provide improved services of the more traditional kind.

This was why, for instance, we sought local government participation in the Community Welfare Consultative Councils being set up across the State - so that Councils can give their advice and so that local expertise and understanding can be drawn on in framing policies for a particular area.

These added burdens do, however, bring problems. Every level of Government in Australia finds that its resources are being stretched to the maximum. This is particularly true of local government where very limited resources are stretched very thinly indeed. And the situation is aggravated by the proliferation of local authorities providing duplicated services and being unable to take advantages of fairly obvious economies of scale.

This problem, of course, is now being given detailed study by the Royal Commission into boundaries. We expect the report to be made by July. It would be quite improper for me to anticipate its findings but the problem is an obvious one and a pressing one.

In addition to the Royal Commission, the State Government is also currently having a look at the existing regions into which South Australia is divided for grants commission purposes.

As you know they are at present based on the divisions of the Planning and Development Act. We're having another look to see whether these are, in fact, the most appropriate divisions for efficient administration.

This combination of new responsibilities and likely changes in the structure of local government administration then, is why I believe this conference is, indeed, a significant one.

I'd like now to turn to a number of specific matters in which the State Government is involved affecting the people of Port Lincoln and the Eyre Peninsula generally.

There are, of course, three major projects under way which will directly benefit people living in this region - development of Port Lincoln into one of Australia's finest grain loading ports; sealing of the Eyre Highway and construction of the petro-chemical complex at Recliffs.

The \$7-million harbour project will plainly be an enormous boost to this most attractive city and to the primary producers of the area. I'm assured by the Minister of Marine, Mr Corcoran, that the work is making good progress and that it should be completed in March 1975.

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This will bring greatly increased road traffic - in itself a powerful stimulus to the business life of this city and others. It will also bring a large increase in tourism. Trans-Australian motoring holidays will be the in-thing and that, too, means more money coming to Port Lincoln and other resort centres in the Eyre Peninsula. Our latest information is that all sections of the Highway will be completed in early 1976.

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