

DON DUNSTAN FOUNDATION SA CHAPTER LUNCH

Dr Jane Lomax-Smith

With introduction by Michelle White

The Governor Hindmarsh Hotel

11 February 2001

Introduction (Michelle White)

I have the pleasure of introducing our guest speaker to you today. Before I do that, I just want to thank you for coming. It is such a pleasure to look out at so many people. I guess the popularity of our speaker is quite evident by just how many people are here today. It is our biggest turnout yet for a Sunday lunch seminar so thank you for coming. Now, Dr Lomax-Smith is a founding trustee of the Don Dunstan Foundation

Jane's dedication and commitment to the Foundation since it's inception has been absolute and she is always willing to speak on behalf of the Foundation and she has done that many times and we are so very grateful for her time and commitment. Now, just in case some of you haven't read the paper or seen the news for the last three years, I thought I might fill you in a little bit about Jane's background. Jane obtained her medical degree in London and went on to specialise as a pathologist.

She was enticed to come to Adelaide, we believe, mainly it seems by descriptions given to her of Don Dunstan's Adelaide which was described as the renaissance capital of Australia at the time. Too good an offer to refuse obviously. She came to Adelaide and to Adelaide University to teach and undertake research. Having also worked in Boston during her medical career, Jane currently maintains her work as a consultant pathologist in private practise.

Jane was Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide from 1997 until last year. Prior to this had served for five years as a city councillor with membership on a myriad of committees. Whilst Lord Mayor, Jane championed many issues including preserving Adelaide's unique

heritage, maintaining and improving the city's vital parklands and supporting developments of strategic programs which address the city's social growth responsibilities.

Currently Jane is the pre-selected ALP candidate for the state seat of Adelaide and remains a strong voice in opposition to discrimination, supports reconciliation and defends equal opportunity for women. Now, Jane is also a member of many boards including the Patawalonga Catchment Water Management Board, the Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee, Adelaide University Council, South Australia Centenary of Federation Committee and Business Vision 2010.

She is also actively involved in community and environmental projects, chairing a reconciliation group, drug and alcohol management groups and a wide range of city-based business and community organisations. She is a wonderful role model for us all. Jane's decision to continue her involvement in public life is centred on her sense of equity, justice and fair play. Described recently in the media as someone who has always been prepared to speak out on controversial issues and put her beliefs on the line, it is therefore most appropriate that we ask Jane to discuss with us today her thoughts of the Foundation value which she is—just here—democratic and inclusive forms of governments. I now introduce you to Jane Lomax-Smith.

Dr Jane Lomax-Smith:

Well, there aren't many places you can go in Adelaide and know that you will like everybody in the room and I think I have just found one. I would suggest that you are not just here to listen to me but to actually collaborate with groups of people who you know have the same values as yourself. They are on the wall behind me and if you don't know everyone in the room, why don't you mingle a bit afterwards because, in fact, you will find the people here are the most decent, honourable people in Adelaide.

It is interesting actually because people say that when you have a foundation that is based on someone's life, it is a historic commemorative backward looking event. It is looking at the past. You know, heaven forbid we have got a prime minister who wears cardigans and wants to go back to the 50s. We are not in that situation because we are fortunate enough to have a foundation that celebrates a life of extraordinary achievement but is based on the desire to improve the future and go on with that same ethic and that same commitment.

If you think about what Don did during his life, it is often easy for us to say: well, of course you know, it was terrible then, you know, it was awful in that dim, distant past. What happened to Aboriginal people, what happened to gay people, what happened to homeless people, what happened to the environment, what happened across a whole spectrum of life was appalling and with the retrospector-scope, it is quite easy to look at that - those issues and some of us actually know we should say for some of it. Others don't.

The real challenge and the real courage in life is to actually say something when it is happening. I've often pondered if, in the same situation, I or even you would have had the same courage to put yourself on the line for all those appalling events and I'm sure some of you were there with Don, but also going back in history. I was at the Holocaust Museum and I've often been ashamed of Australia, particularly at the moment when we are eulogising our country as part of the Centenary of Federation, saying what a wonderful tolerant country we are.

If you go to the Holocaust Museum, you can be really, really ashamed of Australia. There is a sign on the wall which shows a shipload of children who were sent back from Australia to Europe during the war when Menzies was in charge which his words: we don't have a Jewish problem here and we don't want one. Now, the courage to be under those circumstances and actually stand up and say: hold on, is actually a very important ability and many of us now look across to Woomera and see things that should not occur in a civilised nation.

We see something that harks back to that wartime era when people were interned and we see a country that is extraordinarily polarised so that there are good victims and bad victims. You know, if you are an overseas paying university student and you over stay, then you are looking for citizenship. If you happen to be Muslim who comes on a boat who is a genuine asylum seeker escaping from the most oppressive, manipulative and evil empires of the world, then you are pilloried and you are abused and you are marginalised.

In a way, that is what we need to keep in our minds all the time that we have to live up, if you like, to the reputation that Don left and the example he gave us that we have to always complain and argue when things are not of the standard we would like. So for me this two years has been a time when the Foundation has moved forward but is doing so in

a way that empowers people to recognise that it is not just good enough to come to the lunch and meet your friends.

It is not even just enough to be out there donating the odd raffle ticket though please take your money from your pockets because they are still travelling round. We really have to be part of the debate, the lobbying and the will to make things better in the country that we live in. Well, this morning we are looking at where we are going, what happened yesterday, astounding changes. One government falls, another one rises and I was thinking about the topic when, in the middle of the night I heard a despondent lib who was saying: we'll be looking for answers.

In a way, I think it is an interesting idea because in fact the whole of government is really based on the concept that there are questions and answers and as I lay in bed, listening to this man wail quietly in the west, I thought there is no good looking for answers if you don't know what the right question is. In reality, any form of government is about looking at problems and asking the right questions. As a scientist, my training was the answers don't always matter but if you don't ask the right question, you won't advance the argument or the issue.

In fact, the idea of questions and answers played on my mind. Sometimes you learn more from a question than you do the answer and some of the most telling questions I've been personally asked in the last five years fall into two categories. They come from members of the community who are decent and honest people but the type of question is interesting. Just as the idea that we should be looking for democratic and inclusive government when most of us believe that - or some of us believe that is what we have got.

There is an inherent sense that we haven't achieved that goal. Now, the questions and answers that people have are interesting. The public have very often asked me an interesting question about the process of government. As Lord Mayor, the most frequently asked question, apart from how can you manage without a Lady Mayoress, was - and the answer is easy - the most frequently asked question was: how can you control the bureaucrats. How can you stop them preventing you have in your way?

The reason that is such an interesting question - and my answer was maybe not so interesting - was that it implied as the result does in Western Australia that there an awful lot of people out there who don't trust the process of government. While we are

celebrating those 16 seats, just remember that one in four or one in three people across the whole state voted either for One Nation or another minor party because they would not have a bar of the political parties or the real - the major political party candidates. The idea that they don't trust government is entrenched as well.

The average person in the street is deeply distrustful of government and actually likes to elect people who don't believe in government either. Now, what an extraordinary idea. Gone is the view that government is the legitimate instrument of the will of the people. Gone is the idea that only government can legitimately run hospitals and education for the good of the community. Suddenly there is a view that all the things that we would hold dear as the basis of civilisation are suddenly a private benefit rather than a public right and that government has no place in running it.

The question is interesting because nobody trusts governments. The other question, of course, I'm perpetually asked is: why would you join the Labor Party and not become an independent? Again, you can't trust the major parties. They will not serve us well and they are not to be trusted. The questions, of course, that the community asks are interesting because they tag onto all those other questions that never get answered. Not only the community. You have got parliamentary committees, the media.

They constantly ask questions of a government which is unable to answer them. Actually if you look at the way people are ignored in their questions, you can't but understand why they distrust the process. In fact, I learnt early on in my career when - long before I was Lord Mayor, we had a former Lord Mayor who loved to travel and I was constantly asking questions about how much these joy trips around the world would cost. I asked one question about how much a trip to a certain place for three days had cost the ratepayers.

I waited two weeks for my question on notice to return with an itemised account and it came back the trip to KL and Hong Kong cost the ratepayers zero dollars. Now, that is a weaselly answer but like lawyers, you have to know the answer before you ask the question. In fact, it cost \$23,000 but the question was wrong because the ratepayers didn't pay. The Corporation of the City of Adelaide paid. So asking the right question requires you know the answer and you may even have had to have something leaked before you ask it.

In fact, if you ask our present government if they have signed a deal with Mr Panoz from that race organisation to build permanent buildings in the parklands, they will tell you it is commercial and in confidence. Now, I find it hard to understand how a shed on our parklands is commercial in confidence. Now, will there be a wheeler-dealer in Cuching or Arizona who is about to put up a shed on their parklands that could get a leg up by knowing how much we have promised for our shed here.

Is there a way that they could put up a shed in another state that would service our car race here? It is inconceivable that it is really commercial in confidence but whenever you ask a question, you get these sort of woolly managed, massaged answers that never really answer the questions even the statistics are massaged to the extent that they say, or I said: why would you stop this? 300,000 South Australians went to the race. Well, of course, 300,000 people went to the race track but they went over five days.

Maybe there were 50,000 people who went five times. The numbers are robbery. The facts are robbery and there seems to be a game in avoiding tell us what is going on. In fact, if you look at the way many of the questions are put back to the community, that also is a subtle way of manipulating the truth and it is very trendy now to have a view that there should be community consultation about anything that occurs. If you look at the way the questions are posed, it is the questions that are so telling.

It is like push polling. How do you actually ask someone's opinion without explaining simply what is going on. How many of you have been phoned on a Sunday evening by a polling company who ask you questions, all of which are unanswerable? The more you know about something, the less you are ever able to answer the questions. In fact, if you said to me: would you ever support permanent buildings in the parklands, I would say: yes. You need lavatories. It does not mean you need a wine office. It does not mean you need lots of things.

So the questions are so difficult to answer, that the idea of including us in decision-making on the basis of that kind of polling is a nonsense. In fact, when you look at the way the questions are phrased, it is almost impossible to give a straight answer. So government will ask questions in order to use the response to make up - to support the policy they had invented anyway. In fact, if you say to someone: would you like to clean up Victoria Square, well, of course I want the cigarette ends picked up.

It does not mean moving Aboriginal people out. The answers are weighted by the quality of the questions. Now, community consultation is probably one of the most over used ways of pretending that we have a say. In fact, it is not the forte, I think, of governments in doing it. It is the way the polling companies phrase the questions. I was involved in a wetland in the parklands and wetlands are fabulous things. When you have got dirty water with chemicals, heavy metals, sediments, radicals, you need the wetlands to let the nasty bits drop out.

It is quite simple stuff and the more wetlands you have along a riparian course, the better the water becomes towards the end. It was fascinating to watch how the community consultation was laid out. The questions were: would you like a wetland? Of course, why wouldn't you want a wetland? Next question is: would you like to be part of a planting process? You can plant seeds and grow little native plants and plant them. You will get ownership. Yes, it's wonderful and you can watch the butterflies and the birds. Yes, it's fabulous.

What they don't say, though, is: yes, you will have all this and there is a fair chance you will get mozzies and people think: that's not such a good idea. The next thing is, well, the other problem is you can plant all these bushes around the edge but at the end of five years, because the sediment is so contaminated, we will have to bring the dozers in and we will have to rip up your trees, remove two feet of soil, let it sediment again because once the chemical balance gets saturated, you have to remove the soil. People think: I don't like that.

But they never actually go as far as educating people and the process of community consultation is not answering a simple one clause question: do you want a wetland? Yes. It is: do you understand that the wetland will bring mozzies? Do you appreciate that we have ways of planting trees and plants that will reduce the mosquito concentration and there are ways of managing the water? Do you also understand that it will have to be dug up every five years? That is not enough. You have to actually explain to people: if we don't do it, we will lose our sea grasses.

If we don't do it, the Patawalonga will clog up and get contaminated beyond measure. If we don't do it, there will be sludge at West Beach. It is a matter of educating people, not just doing the polling. While I'm on polling, it brings me back to Don Dunstan because the polling that is done now is done in such a different manner from the way he started it. All

of you will remember his anger at the accusation that he had started it. Whenever people complained about poll driven elections or poll driven politicians, he would be prickly about it because he would point out he may have polled.

But if he wanted to legislate in a particular way, he polled to find out how much support the idea had. He then went on a speaking campaign. He would do whatever it took and he would poll again to see where the numbers fell. That is a completely different way of polling from the polling that is done now which is the reactive type of polling so that people then react by developing policies. So those questions and answers are extraordinarily important in shaping ideas but not as the only way of shaping policy because the questions are so biased.

In fact, the language of the questions is such that it is almost impossible to give the wrong answer and in fact I've started double-guessing who is doing the survey when I answer the questions on the phone when they phone home. So that you have to work out what they are trying to ask you in order to fiddle it and surely, if so many people like me are lying, the answers they get at the end are distorted. But how can you answer a question that has: if, also, perhaps as part of it? It does not work in the system.

We have simplified it to the extent that the answers that are got are wrong because the questions are totally inadequate. Now, it sounds all rather Orwellian that the language has been manipulated to ask us questions we don't understand and won't support. It sounds so distorted but do we really believe that there are people out there who are asking questions that are unanswerable in order to get questions they can use against us? Now, I don't believe that it is done intentionally. I think it is done simplistically. I think it is done without thought.

There has to be a way of actually raising the debate and that is what the Foundation wants to do. The question is not: do you want Pelican Point built? The question is: how, as a community, can we service our electricity needs? How, as a community, do we want our assets used? Which assets should not be sold? So often the consultation is after the decision has been made and instead of asking: what would be an appropriate way to make a choice, the choice is far down the track, at the end, when the last project is being mounted?

Now, if I were into conspiracy theories, I would probably suggest that maybe this is a federal plot by gutting the ABC to make there be less debate. I might argue that News Corp is dumbing us down as well. I might argue that this is a whole conspiracy to remove debate but this isn't an issue in Australia, South Australia or even in Adelaide. Around the world, the 30 second bite has become the 10 second bite and people no longer actually want to inform people of the intricacies and people are smarter than they are given credit for.

People want to know but the question is not how many more power stations but how we can have an environmentally sustainable business and domestic residential population in South Australia. The issue is not how we can deal with the River Murray by limiting the number of cotton farmers who take water out. It is how we treat our environment at large and how we use water and how it should be husbanded. The issues are more than just minor rehabilitation.

So if you look at the questions and answers that people ask at the election that has just taken place in Western Australia, the real question is why are 20 to 30 per cent of people not voting for major parties? They are voting for people who could, on the whole, rarely participate in the electoral political process once they are elected. They are often people without a strategy base, a policy base, a skill base. There are few of the independents who are highly skilled and talented but many of the people are being elected as a protest.

If it weren't compulsory, it would be like Israel where 48 per cent of the voters did not vote because they were so disheartened. It would be like the United States where even more didn't vote because a fair proportion of black people have been disenfranchised by their voting process or their votes have been thrown away after they have been voting. They voted in any case. We would end up with fewer and fewer people voting. So what can we do?

Well, I have some suggestions that may help our political process. Firstly, you might argue that the political parties have missed the pulse. You might argue that they are internally driven, they are inward looking, they are internecine in their battles and they forget what is going on and what are the big issues. But one of the major problems has to be that with unfixed short terms people are always looking over their shoulders for the next election and policies are always likely to be short term and never long term.

There is also no way of really making our political process accountable for whilst you know where the major parties are going to vote generally, there is no way of telling of how the independents vote. The irony is that many of them are elected with a promise that they will use their best endeavours to vote properly but nobody knows where they stand on any policy other than perhaps the No Pokies or the No GST or No Governments. So their voting pattern is anything but accountable. Their voting pattern is inevitably going to be feral and unrecognised and unknown.

In fact, the only way you can really follow them up and probably it should be done in all local governments is to have electronic voting so their voting pattern could be charted throughout the whole period they are in government and you can see then on some kind of Excel spreadsheet what they have been doing. Now, in local government, it is easy because perhaps the issues are narrower but certainly if I were voting at local government level, I want to know how many of them had voted against low cost housing projects.

How often they had voted in a way that marginalised Aboriginal people in the city. I would want to know how often they had voted against non-complying developments. You could make it easy. Just say: how many times have you voted against something that is over 50 per cent over plot ratio and that would sort the wood from the trees. There are lots of ways you can quantitate how people vote and then the so called independents who deplore, constantly derides the politicians and parties would have to actually put their life on the line.

Probably the most important thing that anyone could do either in local or state government is to actually have the courage to explain things to people. Actually take the time to explain that none of the questions are simple. All of the answers are complex and the longer you spend explaining an issue the more sympathy people will have. Now, I haven't had much experience in government but I know one of the most complex issues I ever addressed was the leachate of the Wingfield Rubbish Dump. Most exciting issue.

Rubbish maintenance is one of the most important issues that affects our community. In the United States I understand 60 per cent of landfill is disposal nappies. Interestingly, in Adelaide 60 per cent is rubbish from building debris - demolition debris. What ever you think about rubbish, it is something that will destroy our community if we don't deal with it

properly. The issues to do with the Wingfield dump were particularly interesting because they related to physics, they related to hydrology and they related to leachate.

If you took the time to explain to people the problems with capping that mound quickly rather than slowly in that the water run off was more damaging if you had a flat surface than if you had a pointy surface, if you explained the issues with leachate, then any reasonable person would say: well, obviously you can't stop putting the stuff there until you have shaped it into a good contour that will stop water running through the pile. If you take the time to explain difficult issues, people will respect you.

For me, the most useful thing I will take with me in the next phase of my life is the experience of knowing that you can explain complex issues to anybody knowing that when they understand how difficult the questions are, they will understand that the answers are not always simple. Unfortunately in the west, one in three people believe the answers are simple and the problem is they have been asking the wrong questions. So the questions and answers we ask are essential.

Now, what can we do? We can demand that we are taken notice of. When we are given consultations, we can take part in them and argue that we are not given enough information. Every individual can write a letter and complain and we must never give up because as Don said: there is work to be done. Thank you.

Michelle White: Jane is quite happy to answer questions and I guess that is a very important aspect of what she has been talking about. So if anyone would like to ask Jane some questions before we thank her for her talk - already some hands.

Question: We have had two respected male Aboriginal politicians, Neville Bonner and Adrian Ridgeway. Until the Western Australian elections, we have never had an Aboriginal woman politician. What force do you have on this milestone in Australian political history?

Dr Lomax-Smith: Well, there can never be enough women or enough Aborigines and I think that the circumstances in her pre-selection were peculiar but I would like to think that there will be no impediment in other seats across the country but my fear is that it is not that it is tokenism but that there were special circumstances in that pre-selection and there should be more efforts to involve Aboriginal people in public life. Certainly in Western Australia, the prevailing politics is much different from the rest of Australia.

I think their position on Aboriginal affairs has been poor for many, many years and I hope that the Labor Party take heart over there and are more generous than they have been perhaps in the past.

Question: I was a councillor for two terms at the Woodville Council before it was reformed. I'm just a bit curious when you become the member for Adelaide, what are the mechanisms by which you can better inform people? On a one to one level, that seems like an extraordinary amount of time you can spend? What are the sort of mechanisms you have in mind for informing your electorate about more complex issues.

Question: Can you repeat the question, please?

Dr Lomax-Smith: How would you inform your electorate as to what was going on and what were the important issues? I've always believed that you should never present someone with your credentials the week before an election and it's incumbents need to be out there communicating all the time. What I think the new technology allows us to do is to have a data base where you can e-mail people constantly with issues that come up but using the old technology because I think that many people don't have e-mails.

You just have to send out newsletters and my newsletters have always been rather eccentric because I've always believed you should have substantive issues debated and argued so that there is actually more - less photographs of me and more facts and arguments. I've always been pilloried by experts. They have always said there are too many words, too many sentences, not enough photographs, nobody wants it. In fact, people quite like to have ideas and not to be talked down to.

In fact, one of the great ideas I've always thought in life is you shouldn't take too much notice of media managers and advisers. One of the most interesting things when I was Lord Mayor was we decided to fund the Gay and Lesbian Festival, a huge amount of money. \$10,000 out of \$97 million. It was hotly debated and then voted on unanimously because it was a cultural event. It fulfilled the criteria and it is against the law to discriminate against people on the basis of their sexual preference.

So there was no reason why we shouldn't give the money. But when they asked me if I had put a forward in the program with a photograph, the media adviser at the council said:

don't do it and I was told that it was better not to let anyone know we had done it. My view was I was not prepared to put money in a brown paper bag and deliver it quietly, that I had to support it and I put my name in. Interestingly, the premier had his message underneath with an empty box, because he had got the same advice as me, saying the premier declined to send a photograph for this publication.

Question: You mentioned the policies of all parties being short term next election What chances are there of a foundation like this or some other organisation insisting that our political parties, all of them, do talk up some long term, 20 to 25, 50 year, ideas that we might then begin to turn things around in other directions for people, like the environmentalists who are worried about the, you know, the broken economy, where it's going in 50 years time. What chances are there of somebody gaining a debate that if widespread, not just here but is it a newspaper of these issues, demanding that all parties have a long term agenda, not just a three year one?

Dr Lomax-Smith: I think it is really interesting. Everyone thinks you need government incentives to make people behave sensibly and yet you might argue that a sensible business does not waste water, it does not waste electricity. Does not waste resources because they can make more money. So it is actually a matter of educating people and similarly with a government. It seems daft to do things that are long term but I suspect I've got less interest than most people in being re-elected and have always thought that it is better to do what you want - think is best than to do something that is short term because we are looking after other people's resources and other people's investments and dreams.

You can't sell people short. This Foundation's role will be to generate debate and argument and have it always there so that there is a discussion and an argument. One of the problems that we have had in South Australia is we have had no meaningful debate so that when assets have been sold, there has been no one voicing, apart from Don, an opposite view. We had the head of NCCC last week saying as far as shop trading hours were concerned, there were no public benefit arguments to prevent complete open trading hours.

That is an extraordinary argument. Why has he not seen - well, the reason he hasn't seen it is interesting because it is a separate body without the benefit of a public service which produces unbiased arguments, the pros and the cons, and the documents that will produce argument internally. If you are in an organisation as many of our governments

are where you only pay consultants to tell you what you want, the chances are you won't get a balanced argument. That is why the Public Service and the structure of government is so important.

That is why it is so important to actually defend their independence at every turn and make sure they are recognised as being the only people who have no vested interest in policy development. I think it is the debate that matters. We need people arguing against the prevailing wisdom which has failed us. The economic rationalist argument has taken over to such a degree that we only have to hear the word efficiency and everyone goes weak at the knees. We only have to hear certain words and we don't know what we are arguing about.

Efficiency is used to - a basis for all the bad decisions that governments make because they don't realise that many actions of government are not efficient. I'm a pathologist and people say Gribbles is efficient. The IMVS isn't efficient. The reason that the IMVS isn't as efficient is it can never make money because it actually does research and it teaches and it trains. It is nonsense to expect government organisations to be as efficient and cheap as others. It is the argument so we all have to argue against every lunacy that comes up. Unless we do that, they will always prevail.

Question: Yes. Look, where is the Labor Party going to give up polling and the Federal Government When is the Labor Party going to give up have this 9 million dollar budget that universities and how The second question is when is the Labor Party going to the illegal drugs by telling when is the Labor party going to do that?

Dr Lomax-Smith: Well, I can't say when the Labor Party will do anything but - the question was when will the Labor Party avoid the economic rationalist path, particularly federally and when will the Labor Party support opiates as not being a dangerous drug. I personally think that we should decriminalise and have safe injecting rooms. I have no problem with that but that may not be a federal outcome with the Labor Party yet. I personally would not subsidise private health insurance. I think that my taxes, I want to put into public hospitals.

I think it is bizarre that it was allowed—they allowed the passage of the funding of private schools. They make me very cross but there is no way you can change them unless you get in there and argue it.

Question: Is it fact that when you were talking before about the public service, I do some work in a little while ago last year I was with middle level managers and absolutely horrified, quite depressed, of the fact that they were consistently referred to the minister customer. Well, that's the issue and this - not of economic rationalism about public servants from public service

Dr Lomax-Smith: Well, I actually feel really strongly about customers. I feel enraged that we, as a community, don't recognise that the Public Service is there to provide for the good of the community, as is government. It is not the role of private industry or private enterprise to provide health care. It is not the role of private industry or organisations to provide education. We have a basic right to those issues from our government. That is why I pay taxes and the more taxes you pay, the better, because taxes are good.

Having said that, the issue that is important that I talked about, efficiency, is we have to regain our language and one of the problems is we have allowed them to dictate the use of English to the extent that the vocabulary is theirs. The evil empire owns the language. We have to get it back. Efficiency is not what we want. In my background, science is not efficient. It is not there to produce a gismo that you can sell. It is where people sit around with envelopes. They have ideas. They argue. It is not efficient. They can't do it the way lawyers do where they write out chits every 15 minutes to know who to charge it to.

It is inefficient. I run a business and I have staff. I've done by BAS. You know, it is proper business but if I just talk about efficiency and cutting margins by 2 or 3 per cent, I will go under. It is a waste of time. The way to make money and be successful is to be creative and innovative and different and efficiency is not the only way to do it. So efficiency is a word I particularly dislike. Having said that, you don't waste resources. You don't make a mess of things. You don't have people—10 people doing what one person can do.

You don't, you know, be inefficient with paper. You know, switch the lights off but it is not efficiency that makes money. It is creativity and ideas and old industries will always go under because someone new and bright will do something different. So efficiency is a waste of time. Customers—I'm enraged by being called a customer. The reason—why do we put up with banks? Your custom is important to us and you hang on for 20 minutes. Why?

I was in England dealing with my father and I had to phone the phone company and I was in a phone box and I went through to 10 pound phone cards waiting for a human being to get on to me and they say it is efficient. Well, who is it efficient for? We have to reclaim the words. We are not customers. We are citizens. The primary customer is the community, the citizens and when I go into hospital please, God, I'm a patient, not a customer. Anybody in prison is a prisoner, not a client.

It is the language and we have to break the nexus, re-claim the English language or re-create new words that are not loaded. You can't argue if you use their words.

Question: with the Don Dunstan Foundation since its inception and support the whole idea I've always felt that Don was much, much bigger and much, much more, I guess, understanding that what he needed to do was to improve everybody. That's what those Given the Western Australian outcome I'm just curious about what we can do with the Don Dunstan Foundation today that people in South Australia I think Don was much more than the Labor Party and I'm very, very interested who are approaching to give them some idea and some, I guess, genuine understanding of what it is about under our particular political party banner to do in Queensland how to vote cards and so on and we're not actually I'm just very interested in how you feel and obviously all of us here How can you take South Australia some discussion so that we actually have an effective government.

Dr Lomax-Smith: Well, I think that - the question was how can we communicate more broadly because Don was not a party animal so much as a man who could communicate with all strata of community. I think that is it and how can we make government be more inclusive. I think the problem is that we haven't always had any sense of what we wanted. Now, when I complain about community consultation, of course, when I was a child it wasn't done at all and people think they are doing really well by asking people what they think now.

The fact that - I mean, you know, you deal with the transport organisations, you have got to put a road through somewhere, they have the consultation after they have designed it and then ask you what you think. I mean, it is daffy. The consultation process, the best I have seen was 2010, the planning assessment that was done in the Bannon era, that was a really broad reaching discussion where there was community consultation across the whole of the state where people said what they wanted the place to be like.

Out of that, planning laws and strategic plans were put together and it was a really exciting project. We don't do that any more because we don't have any ideological or intellectual arguments about anything, or debates, and it is nothing to do with party politics as such. It is the basic level of interest. Now, we are cursed with a lack of print media but there are an enormous number of organisations which are capable of engendering community feeling and the thing that does impress me is the number of community action groups that are being forced, if you like, to be developed.

They have, because they are often a broad coalition of unlikely people, they actually have more clout. Getting back to the parklands alliance, it is an interesting one because that was pulling together Conservation Council, National Trust, Norwood residents, North Adelaide society and the Parklands Preservation Group. However much the minister said they were a group of lefty ratbags, you looked at them and, you know, they were the matrons of North Adelaide. I mean, it was a ridiculous argument.

If you have broad coalitions of people who come together for an interest, then I think that is a very powerful tool and it is one that can negotiate with political parties and government and gives a real chance of a coordinated action. The problem is that it shouldn't be always people having to fight to preserve something. You actually require a more strategic approach from government so you do actually need government strategists to work out where we are going.

Have the consultation with a broad direction and go back on the detail and then empower local government and local groups to actually have a say. But unless it takes time, it takes money and it takes a different modus operandi from the one we have got now, where every debate is labelled commercial in confidence, we can never actually get the facts. One of the things that shook me about state parliament and I'm an innocent. I've never been there, I haven't got very close to it but I was used to coming from local government where everybody had the facts.

Now, I can't understand how we can have a public debate when only government actually knows what is going on. They won't tell anybody anything and they release media statements. I would feel better about their ability to make a decision if I saw the raw data. Now, how can the raw data on the way we run our state, apart from tender documents, be so confidential that we, the public, are not allowed to see it? I don't

understand it. Why aren't both sides of politics given the courtesy of decent data on which to base their arguments?

What is to be gained about fighting in the dark through media representatives? It is madness so I don't know that that can be changed but it is obviously one of the fortes.

Question: concern about your answer, the question was about the Foundation getting
- - -

Dr Lomax-Smith: I'm sorry, yes.

Question: It's all right. The Foundation about getting dirty out there on the streets.

Dr Lomax-Smith: I think you should get dirty.

Question: Think you should?

Dr Lomax-Smith: Yes.

Question: Good.

Dr Lomax-Smith: I think - it is interesting. I've watched the Hawke and the Dunstan Foundation and Hawke actually puts up some fabulous speakers. They have great activities, great functions. I love them but they are very careful not to be too outrageous. They are very careful to look for their sponsors and not say anything that will offend them. I don't think the Dunstan Foundation should do that. I would like to be offended.

Question:

Dr Lomax-Smith: I think it is really interesting. Obviously I'm - the question was how do you know what their views are and how they vote once they are in parliament, in federal parliament. I'm not a good person to ask because this is a challenge I'm having to address now. Clearly there will be things that they will have to vote for to obey the party discipline that they personally will disagree with. I can't understand why you can't say that the majority of you wanted to support this program.

I personally thought that it was a waste of time. I mean, why shouldn't we say that? It seems quite simple. I may get sacked. Soon. Like next week but I wanted to be in a party and I didn't answer that question why don't I want to be an independent? That was the other question that I get asked so often. I want to be in government. I have no interest in spending my life amending lunacy, arguing against the arrogant and never getting anything done. I only want to be in government because only government can change the way we live.

Question: Talking about retrospect it seems to me one of the fundamental questions one asks today is what kind of duty in some ways when you talked about the longevity of the other thing you touched on is this question it seems to me that we've got an education system that is not to the future and also that it is not encouraging you to face criticism and articulation and all sorts of things and it's an observation made by friends where are the and were are the can you say a little bit about education in a democratic future?

Dr Lomax-Smith: Well, I think that education only has a place if it there for everyone and the problem is that we only educate a minority of our population to the highest level. We also charge for it which I find extraordinary. I have a girl working in my lab who is a medical student. She is the top and she was offered places across Australia and had to choose Adelaide because she didn't have enough money to move but also had to choose Adelaide because she has to stay at home and she will have to work throughout her whole medical course.

Now, that implies that becoming a doctor is not a public good. It is a private advantage for her and I actually think that education should be for everyone. How could someone who is poor, as I was, do medicine? I did medicine. I got a grant which I had to live on. I had a skeleton allowance and I had a book allowance and I lived quite well on it. If I worked, it was just for a few weeks here and there to do something silly or extravagant and I don't know that you should judge medicine as more important than the arts.

But I think that it is outrageous that so many people are excluded from education. I think that is truly an outrage. I have difficulty about saying young people don't argue. My children argue with me all the time. They tell me things are inequitable. They say that I'm unjust. You know, it is this sort of constant arguing so I'm not sure that people are worse

than before. It is very easy for us to say youth is wasted on the young, they don't appreciate it. I look back at my youth and I was idle and feckless.

I went to New York when I was 21 and never went to an art gallery. I mean, I was idle and I think you can allow idleness in the young. The worry is that our active youths may turn into inactive older people and get burnt out. I don't know what the data is to say that young people are a waste of time. I can't - I'm not sure it is true. It must be that we are getting old but I do believe that the education system has failed us because even public schools have significant funding requirements from parents.

There is an incentive not to stay at school because it costs money and I don't want my children to be an elite amongst a class of under privileged people who don't have opportunities and I am enraged that we are destroying the future of so many people by our lack of support for education. I am enraged that our state government is only interested in funding education strategies to bring foreign students who are fee paying. I am enraged that our federal government will give easy access to resident status for people who are full fee paying overseas students who have come here to do a course that we need a student in.

What about our own students? I am enraged about all these things and I think that I don't blame young people. I think that they have a lack of a future. They have been sold down the river and it is our age group that have done it.

Question: The problem is that if you continue with the by the universities that stop students when they sort of take away you find more debate with the young people.

Dr Lomax-Smith: Well, I think the problem is that university teachers now are scared to argue as well. I think that the idea - when I worked for the university - I mean, it shows you how old I am - I was employed for life. I was tenured. That is how long ago it was. Now, I'm not saying everyone in a university should be there for life but there is a real issue with fighting with your employer. There is a real issue about dissent and it is one of the ones that challenges people in any organisational level in universities.

People are scared and the students are very outcome-orientated and they want to know if a topic is examinable. They want to know if there is a job at the end of it and they are

very worried about their futures and I think, again, it is not their fault. It is the environment they are in.

Michelle White: It does not look like there are any more questions? No? Can we all thank Jane for her speech? I think one of the reasons we wanted to hold these seminars was because we wanted people to go away with more questions than answers. So hopefully Jane has helped with that today. I might just actually ask Richard Smith from the chapter committee who is going to just give a small gift of thanks to Jane for coming day. Please thank Jane Lomax-Smith again.

Richard Smith: Okay, thank you, Michelle. Luckily Jane said I didn't have to be efficient so I can take a couple of hours over this, so just relax. I thought this was probably the time that I should actually publicly confess that I've been a Jane Lomax-Smith groupie for years and a long time ago, as a very mature-aged student in environmental studies, was one of a member of a group of students who decided they would be brave enough to ask local councillors what they thought of a council in environment policy.

I got this woman called Jane Lomax-Smith who talked to me at length in what I thought were very sensible ideas and I thought, well, I hope politics sees a lot of this woman, that I'm glad that it is going to and I hope it sees a lot more of her in the future but this is a non-partisan organisation so I mustn't go on about that and say thank you to Jane for reminding us about lots of important things. The importance of language, of questions and answers, of consultation and I guess most of all involvement. Thank you for that, Jane, and we will try and do it all.