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Full transcript of
an interview with:

Greg Crafter

Conducted on: 19 March 2019

Interviewer: **Allison Murchie**

Transcribed by: Deborah Gard

For:

The Don Dunstan Foundation

20th Anniversary Oral History Project

DON DUNSTAN FOUNDATION
inspiring action for a fairer world

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NOTES TO THE TRANSCRIPT

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A series of dots, ... indicates an untranscribable word or phrase.

A dash, – indicates a pause or a digression as occurs in informal conversation.

Sentences that were left unfinished in the normal manner of conversation are shown ending in three dashes, - - -

Spelling: Wherever possible the spelling of proper names and unusual terms has been verified. A parenthesised question mark (?) indicates a word that has not been possible to verify to date.

Typeface: The interviewer's questions are shown in **bold print.**

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This is the Don Dunstan Foundation 20th anniversary oral history project. It's Allison Murchie interviewing Greg Crafter at the State Library on 19th March 2019. Thank you very much for agreeing to come along today Greg and I'm really looking forward to hearing your story, which is quite critical to the setting up of the foundation. Firstly, perhaps you could just talk for a few minutes about your work history – not so much your education and childhood and establishing who you are but what your involvement was working, particularly with the ALP. I should get your full details first. It's Greg - - -

Gregory John Crafter.

And where and when were you born?

I was born in Mount Barker on 16th September 1944.

Perhaps just a potted history which is a little bit hard for someone with your experience!

I grew up on farms as a young person, firstly on a horse stud and mixed farm at Blakiston in the Adelaide Hills where my father managed that farm. Then we went to another farm between Smithfield and One Tree Hill where my father worked with horses and a mixed farm as well. However, the land was soon purchased for Elizabeth to be built and whilst we stayed on the farm and later in the farmhouse alone for a number of years, my father went off to work at W.R.E. [Weapons Research Establishment] at Salisbury. He learnt a trade in his 40s and stayed there until he retired. We moved down to the beach at Taperoo at the end of 1959. I went to Woodville High School and left school after my 11th year and started work in the State Public Service – firstly in the Harvest Board at Port Adelaide for about nine months or so, waiting for a vacancy to come into the court house where I really wanted to work. I got a job in the court house as a trainee clerk of court.

I joined a local youth group in our Catholic church parish, the Young Christian Workers' Movement and got involved in that youth group and became the president eventually after a couple of years. In 1965 I was asked to work full-time for Wes W, as a full-time youth worker. Interestingly enough, that was the year there was a change in government in South Australia at the end of the Playford period – they'd had a very long period of government of Sir Thomas Playford. I became involved in the Youth Council of South Australia, and the National Fitness Council provided some funding for us. We had a house up in the Adelaide Hills at Stirling and we had training progress with youth leadership.

It was a very active organisation and it taught me skills in public speaking and conducting meetings and organising training programs. I went off to national leadership programs and learnt a variety of skills that were necessary but also it gave me an interesting grounding, I

guess, in what these days is called policy formulation but we were concerned about budgeting for young people, about road safety, about working conditions, about apprenticeships, about preparation for marriage, and so on – all the issues of the day. I could see that many young people were missing out, many young people did not have an enjoyable youth period of their lives, many young people were exploited in the workplace and so on. I spent three years in Adelaide, Port Pirie and Wilcannia-Forbes diocese – that includes Broken Hill. Then our chaplain, Father Faulkner, was made the Bishop of Townsville and so I spent two years in north Queensland in Rockhampton and Townsville diocese working as a full-time youth worker for the Catholic Church.

I think that's probably where I became more radicalised, if I could use that word, or I guess just very, very concerned about what was happening to young people, particularly in that remote area of Australia. There was a lot of hardship, a lot of geographic isolation and a lot of inability to access what is taken for granted in the big cities, particularly by way of education and training in employment opportunities. There was a harshness about society as well that impacted on young people and their attitude to life.

I came back to Adelaide in 1970 and began a law degree. I had taken an economics subject by correspondence out of Brisbane University and had really enjoyed that so I thought I knew I could handle tertiary studies. I found myself first of all at Flinders doing an Arts degree because I'd applied for Law and didn't get into the Law School as a mature age student but someone dropped out at Easter time of that year, 1970. The Law School rang me and said, 'We've got a place for you if you want to start a bit late.' So I got into Law and decided I'd study full-time. I worked in the Osborne Hotel, a pretty rough, tough pub down on Le Fevre Peninsula.

It's a good Port Adelaide pub!

It is, so I did that and in the holiday period that year I got a credit and two passes. I thought if I could win a Commonwealth scholarship to pay my fees – I'd had to raise money to pay fees; borrow money under the Fees Concession Scheme – because in my five years of working for the Church I'd only really received a stipend, just enough to live on really, during those years, so I came out without anything materially. I got a vacation job as well; in those days university students could get a job in the government. I got a job in the Hospitals Department, in Rundle Street in those days, doing payrolls for doctors and nurses in the Hospitals Department. I received a phone call – it was in January of 1971 – saying would I come to the Premier's Office for an interview for a position in the Premier's Office. By that stage, Don Dunstan had become Premier. He had succeeded Frank Walsh in 1967 as Premier but survived only a short period of time until Steele Hall was elected as the Premier. Then in the subsequent election Don

Dunstan won. It was fought over the Chowilla Dam, the River Murray, and Don was elected Premier. So when I was called into that office Don had been Premier again for less than a year. A guy interviewed me – I'll tell the story even though it's a little long but I think it's relevant to what we're going to say.

Please do.

A guy call Doug Claessen - - -

Sorry, who - - -

Claessen (C-L-A-E-S-S-E-N) – he is recently deceased. Doug interviewed me and said, 'You'll be looking after the Premier's constituents that come into his office and helping out in his electorate with constituents who come to him with problems. You'll be dealing with those. You don't need to worry about his personal finances because there will be an accountant to do that, but you'll have contact with his family,' and so on. I looked at this guy and said, 'My name is Greg Crafter and I'm a law student. I haven't applied for a job; I think you've got the wrong person.' He said, 'You don't apply for these jobs.' He explained to me that Don was willing to put someone on and I was a law student – he thought that was appropriate – and that this position was a political position, it was a ministerial position as we called them and you are there for the period of the government, not as a public servant. Then he took me in to meet the head of the department, John White, who was a very distinguished man. He had a huge office – I don't think I'd ever been in an office in my life as large. He was very pleasant and we chatted and he said, 'Now, the Premier is waiting to see you.' He took me in to meet Don Dunstan.

All of this was on the same day.

The same day. I went in and Don was sitting there with his sun glasses on and sort of rolling his wrists, as he did. He was always reasonably agitated and had so much happening. He said, 'Sport' – he used to use that word quite often. He said, 'Sport, you'll enjoy this. We've got a great team here. I need some help and I'll support you on whatever you're wanting to do.' It was a very welcoming discussion. I went outside and I said to John White, the head of the department, 'This is all a bit of a surprise for me. I've been working two jobs in a pub and in the public service and I've been studying. If I'm going to start I'll need just a little bit of a break to sort of get my act together.' He said, 'No, Don wants you to start on Monday,' and this was on the Thursday. I looked at him and said, 'I really want to be a lawyer; I've started studying law.' He said, 'That's OK, the government will pay your fees.' I thought that was better than a Commonwealth scholarship actually. He said, 'You'll have time off to go down to your lectures and tutorials.' So that was fine, then I said to him, 'How do you know that I can actually do

this job? It didn't seem to be a merit-based appointment.' He said, 'We'll review it after a year and see how you're going.'

First of all I went and sat in the back of St Francis Xavier's Cathedral and I said to myself, what have I got myself into now? Can I still be a lawyer? What does this mean? I wasn't a member of the Labor Party because I couldn't be when I was working for the Church. Is this an opportunity to get involved in changing things? I wasn't so much interested in the political process but more in it as an agent of change for the better. I went home – I was living at home – and I said to my parents - - -

How old were you?

I was 25.

That's quite young.

Yes, I said to my parents, 'I've been offered a job in the Premier's Department.' My dad said, 'Is it a public service job?' I said, 'No, it's a political position.' He said, 'Anything would be better than working for the Church.' I said to them this is what my duties would be and this is what I'm doing. He said, 'What will your salary be?' I said, 'I forgot to ask them.' He said, 'You forgot to ask them about your salary. You *have* been working for the Church too long!'
So I went in on the Monday and started. During the day I saw John White, the head of the department, and I'd been allocated a large office. It was the office in the previous Steele Hall Government of Sir Alwyn Barker who was the head of the Economic Development Board. So I had this glorious office and sat there with nothing on the desk and not knowing really what my job description was.

Anyway, I saw John White and said, 'Would you be able to tell me what my salary is?' He said, 'I'm really sorry, I should have found that out for you but it's a new position that Don has created and I'll get the Public Service Board to declare a salary for you during the day.' He came back and said, 'I've spoken to Ken Tillett,' who was the Public Service Board commissioner in those days, and he said, 'Your salary,' – I think it was about $8000 a year and an overtime allowance of about another $2000. He said, 'You'll have to work nights and weekends as required.'

I went home and said, 'This is my salary.' My father said, 'That's more than I've ever earned in my life.' So that was the beginning of my work and I got involved in all sorts of things in the office. I reflect back on why was I chosen for this, and I've never found out who it was that recommended me. In 1967 I was appointed to a committee through the Youth Council of South Australia that Don actually chaired the early stages of before he was Premier and he was

Minister of Community Welfare and Attorney-General – it might have been in 1966 actually, yes 1966 it was. We were building youth centres and we built the youth centre at St Clair on Woodville Road where my old high school was, and a number of other centres were planned as well. Don had got some ideas from Lee Kuan Yew – he was a close friend of Lee Kuan Yew in those days – this was like the youth centres that had been established throughout Singapore. I went off a National Fitness grant to spend some time in Asia. I'd been elected by the National Youth Council of Australia to represent Australia – there were three of us at a World Assembly of Youth meeting in Tokyo in Japan in 1966.

Don said to me when I was on that committee – I told him I was going and he said to me, 'You should go and see my friend, Harry Lee. He'll make sure you get a look at all these youth centres and you'll get some ideas from there.' The Israelis were actually building them and developing the programs and there was a semi-military component to these things as well. It was quite interesting actually – a bit scary as well. Anyway, that all eventuated.

1968 and 1969 I spent in north Queensland. Before I went, I went and saw Don and said to him I had this association with that committee he had set up previously and that I was now going to north Queensland. He said to me, 'I'll give you a couple of people's names, friends of mine, who you can always call on if you need help, you'll be up there by yourself.' One of them was Senator Jim Keith from Townsville. He said, 'If you want to ring up your family or anything like that, Jim will be there. He'll help you out.'

Anyway, I was very conscious of not getting involved in politics because in the Church it's dynamite to do that. It would be contrary, particularly in north Queensland, which was so conservative – in those days the Bjelke-Petersen Government was scary, really. I did go to Jim and I got to know him a few times but I was very careful about all of that. I got invited to a party once in Townsville where Gough Whitlam had come. I went and I remember sort of getting chastised a bit for getting too political.

Anyway, in 1970 I was back here studying Law and got this job in the Premier's Department. About a week after I'd started I get a phone call from David Combe. David said, 'I'm the secretary of the Labor Party; would you like to have a coffee and have a chat and see how you're going in the job?' That began a long friendship with David.

You were rising very quickly as a young man, weren't you?

Yes, so David said, 'Have you thought of joining the Party?' I said, 'Well, obviously I have now because of what I'm involved in. I'm inclined to be a Labor supporter anyway, despite my rural upbringing, because I'm about change and I think the Labor Party is the Party of change and

identifies with the poor and workers and young people who are having difficulties,' and so on. So he joined me up.

I wouldn't imagine too many people have been signed up by David Combe!

No! And David's involvement in the foundation has been great as well over the years. I went on and worked for Don for a couple of years and then Len King, the Attorney-General, came to me after Cabinet one day and said, 'Greg, I want you to come and work with me over in the Attorney's Office. I've got a pretty big workload at the moment.' He was really the workhorse of the Cabinet for Don. There was a massive legislative program in the '70s. He had portfolios of Attorney-General, Community Welfare, Aboriginal Affairs, he had censorship in those days, he had companies, he had light liquor licensing, and all with big agendas for reform. He said, 'I'd like you to be my private secretary but it will involve doing my press work and helping me with my electorate and generally with the legislative program.' He said, 'It will be great; you can keep studying Law and have access to the Crown Law Library and we'll all help you.'

Did you speak to Don about leaving?

He said, 'There's only one problem. I've spoken to Don and he said you can't go.'

I anticipated that!

I went and saw Don and had a talk to him and he said, 'I don't want to stand in your way because you do need to get your Law degree. That's a good place to do it and Len is a good mentor for you.' So over I went. I worked for Len – he went to the bench in 1975 and later became the Chief Justice. Then for a brief period Don was the Attorney again, then Don Banfield was the Attorney for a while and then Peter Duncan became the Attorney - - -

And you stayed on.

I stayed on with all of those and in 1978 I finished my degree and was admitted to the bar in '78. I went across to the Companies Office – in those days they had a Prosecution Corporate Affairs Department. John Sulan, later a Supreme Court judge, was the head of that office and I became a prosecutor in corporate fraud matters. We worked with the police and with a team of accountants there. It was a very interesting experience. I'd run for parliament in 1977 in the seat of Coles, which was previously Len King's seat. Des Corcoran was part of that – it had been divided up on a boundary redistribution. I lost that by 300 votes to Jennifer Adamson, or in those days Jennifer Cashmore. We had a good fight and she had more money than me! In a way I'm grateful that I didn't win because the following year I would have lost it.

In the meantime Don had resigned at the beginning of 1979 and I was asked by his son, actually, Andrew, who asked me, 'Would you put your name forward for preselection for Norwood?' There were five names that went forward chosen by the State Executive because of the nature of the by-election, and I got the nod for Norwood and then ran in the subsequent election which was in March of '79 and I won the seat. Des Corcoran in September of '79 called a snap election. He wanted to get a mandate – Des Corcoran suffered from arthritis very badly. He had not done polling and little preparation had been put into the election, and we lost the election. Everything went wrong – there were bus strikes and it rained and - - -

I don't want to proceed with your political career here because that is going to take hours but I hope to do that at another time.

I'll just finish off that bit.

Yes, finish off that bit and then – so you immediately went into Opposition.

Yes. We fought a Court of Disputed Returns. Roma Mitchell was the judge and it went for nearly five weeks in the Supreme Court, and the judge held that the election was null and void and there was a by-election called. It was my third election in 11 months which I subsequently won. So that was the beginning of my political career. Don had occupied that seat for 26 years and he was 52 when he resigned through ill-health. Then I fought seven elections in Norwood and held the seat for 14 and a half years.

During that period Don had a tough life, actually, when he left politics and I managed to keep in regular contact with Don when he was in Melbourne as head of the Tourism Department. He had suffered health-wise but also politically he was on the outer, in a way, with the government. He was the previous Premier and such a dominant figure that there were some issues there, but the longer he was really out of parliament the more popular he became. In 1999 his health was failing.

He was back in Adelaide at that stage. Were you in regular contact with him?

I was. He lived in Clara Street in Norwood just near to where I lived and I would pop in and see him but also Mary O'Kane, who was the vice-chancellor of Adelaide University, was his neighbour. Mary was very close to Don and she helped him – she didn't nurse him as such, but was certainly a great support to Don during that last year of his life.

Who was living with him and looking after him at the time – was Steven [Cheng] doing most of it?

Yes, and his family as well, of course, were in touch with him and supportive. Don was an independent person. It was interesting in those years, when he wasn't well – I was really busy;

I was a minister and at the end of my political career. He was then off and wanted a yarn and to have a drink and I had to go off to some meeting and couldn't spend a lot of time with him. He was often chatting about current matters and matters past but was also a good mentor to me and advisor. Ironically, when he was actually Premier he was very difficult to talk to and relate to. He was so, I guess, preoccupied with the issues and he was such a dominant leader. In the earlier period of his Premiership he had very little support in his Cabinet, then he managed to get Len King and Hugh Hudson and these guys around him – Geoff Virgo and Des Corcoran and Glen Broomhill – these really very talented men – Don Hopgood, and so on, later, that really gave that Cabinet a great strength.

When I look back, I challenge have we had a better Cabinet?

No, probably not.

It was such a strong Cabinet and so capable.

It was the only Labor state government when Whitlam was elected in 1983 and so Dunstan and Whitlam, although they had their differences, worked very closely to get great deals for South Australia. The sale of the Railways Agreement was the excuse really to pour some cash into South Australia for many of the social programs that Don was putting into place here. The '70s to work in those offices was a really exciting time in my career, and gave me an insight into what a reforming government really looks like, and the workload of ministers in those reforming governments and their staff - - -

We've never had a reforming government like it since, have we?

No, we haven't, but then to be the local member I understood from so many of Don's constituents what a good local member [he was]. Don was constantly out door-knocking and acting in his electorate. Because of his legal skills he could pick up issues and envisage how they might be remedied in the future by way of either legislation or some administrative program. His interests around consumer law reform, criminal law reform, law reform around civil liberties and rights, liquor licensing reform, the reform of community welfare and services for the poor and disadvantaged, Aboriginal legal rights issues, land rights and so on with the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act and the beginning of the Land Rights Movement. He had been involved back in the '50s and '60s in the Aboriginal Advancement League and was National President – and his interest in the Arts.

I met all those people in the electorate. You'd be talking to someone and it would ring a bell and you'd say, that's where he got that idea from and that's what he did for these people. These people would tell me the stories – there was a fight about a fence line and the Fences Act was

reformed. The planning laws were reformed – there were horse stables in Kensington and there were flies and everything else. There was a story on all these things. So, in 1999 Don was very, very ill.

Did you know how close to death he was?

Yes, we all knew and there were lots and lots of discussions around this. We'd organised - - -

Do you remember how you heard – of course you would remember, how you heard about his death?

Yes, I was overseas and I was ringing in and got the phone call to say that Don had died. I spoke to Mary O'Kane and to Bronwen Dunstan. My wife was home and I spoke to her. I was the President of the International Baccalaureate Organisation and there was quite a crisis in the organisation that I was trying to manage. We had to put the director-general on gardening leave and a few things. I came home, however, for the funeral I couldn't be there. There was a big service in the Festival Theatre - - -

I was lucky enough to go.

I was in Sydney on that day chairing an executive committee meeting of the International Baccalaureate. We'd brought everyone from around the globe who were on the committee to a meeting in Sydney at this time. It was such an intensive meeting that I could not avoid it so I didn't actually get to the funeral either.

I know there were several close friends that couldn't make it that had similar commitments. Those sorts of things you can't change – you were addressing an international meeting.

Ironically, I just wasn't there, but in the lead-up to Don's death Mary O'Kane spoke to me about Don's wish to set up a foundation – we're now starting!

No, you've led into it absolutely perfectly.

Mary said that Don had a vision for a body to continue the work that he had been engaged in during his career, and he had used the words, there's much yet to be done. It wasn't about him, it wasn't to perpetuate his image or personality but it was to perpetuate a set of values. Those values he actually articulated himself and they are encompassed in the values of the foundation. The Hawke Foundation had actually been established at that time as well and whilst the Hawke Foundation had some similarities it was clearly of a different genre altogether.

[Taping pauses momentarily]

Mary said that also Don had indicated the people he wanted to be trustees of the foundation as well. They were the who's who of Australia, really.

I've got a list from the Don Dunstan Foundation website and it is a who's who.

Trying to chair a meeting consisting of Dame Roma Mitchell, who corrected every minute error in the trust deed, and Barry Jones and Jenny George, the President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, Noel Pearson, Phillip Adams and Bronwen - - -

Bronwen was on right from the start?

Yes, I'm pretty sure, and I'm sure there were others, but to chair - - -

So you were the initial chair.

Yes, trying to chair meetings of those people was impossible. They all wanted to speak and they all knew everything, of course, about every topic.

That's probably why he put them on!

What we decided to do after a few meetings – their time is so valuable and they are such great people we didn't want to involve them in the minutiae of this – we asked if they would be patrons and we would form, if you like, a working board. The trustees actually became the two universities, Flinders and Adelaide, who were the place of the foundation in an academic setting - - -

Don was quite clear he wanted it in that academic setting?

He did, yes. He had been an adjunct professor at Adelaide and was close to Mary O'Kane, the vice-chancellor, and so that worked. The Brown Government was in office and they contributed $250,000 cash to kick it off. There was the agreement with Adelaide University initially and then Flinders came in to it and the state government were involved. It really took off in an exceptional way. It was pretty clear that there was great affection for Don and respect for him wherever you went. We had quite a presence in Queensland and Victoria but in Sydney as well, and branches there were formed. A lot of money was raised by way of donations and people were very generous, so that enabled the foundation to be set up. The University of Adelaide provided one staff member and the state government provided a director's position. The university provided the office and wherewithal.

Where was the initial office?

The initial office was in the North Terrace building of the university where the radio station was.

5UV.

I must say that I think in the very early stages it was actually in the administration building over here but it soon got pushed over into a proper setting over there. Adrian Graves was the guy in the university's administration who really helped set it up and went off to Cambridge or Oxford after that in his career. It was quite an extraordinary period. There was a lot of emotion, a lot of support and goodwill, to see this happen.

At that time Mary O'Kane and the chancellor, Webb his name was – he was the former director of the Mines Department – Mary came to see me one day and said, 'We would like you to chair the Dunstan Foundation board of trustees. We would like you to sit on the university council – there is one position on the university council which is chosen by the council itself rather than by election, and we'd like you to chair the Alumni Association.' Harry Medlin had chaired it and there was great concern in the university about the state of the Alumni Association. It was a small number of members who paid a fee and it was very much aligned with the staff union. Harry had terrorised the university – dear Harry – for many years and it was an opportunity for a new beginning.

It wasn't helpful for me that I was seen as a friend of Harry's and a former Labor minister MP, so the university feared they were going to get more of the same. That didn't happen and through the great support of Mary O'Kane we managed to abolish membership fees making sure that every student and every member of staff, whether the student had graduated or not, they all were alumni of Adelaide University. We got the Alumni Association to be connected with the mainstream of the university, really, and to support various faculties. It eventually took on quite a strong fundraising campaign and raising of the university in the eyes of its alumni, and building up those relationships. We did a lot of work with our overseas graduates in the UK and in the South-East Asian region particularly. In the days before perhaps Chinese students were so voluminous - - -

I guess my only association with them is receiving the newsletters, but I always read them. I just think it is a really good organisation and just to find out what's happening, I think they do a really good job.

I think it was maybe six years that I chaired the Alumni Association, and today I know there's something like 160,000 accurate names and addresses of graduates. The university raises – when I last heard it was probably about $5 million a year from its alumni in one way or another. It's very sophisticated fundraising and - - -

They gave you an award recently too, didn't they?

They did.

I'll talk about that another time but it was a pretty impressive address they gave.

What that really gave me was an insight into the Adelaide University and it gave me status with Flinders as well. When Mary O'Kane left the university I was concerned about both the alumni and the Dunstan Foundation. Robert Champion de Crespigny was then the chancellor. He got in an acting – he wasn't acting, he was actually appointed the vice-chancellor, a guy called Cliff Blake who had been the vice-chancellor at Charles Sturt University. Cliff came in, as Robert described to me, like a bull in a china shop and made some pretty disastrous decisions. One was to defund both the Dunstan Foundation and the Alumni Association. He just took advice from I think some senior staff who had not realised what we were trying to do with either of those two organisations, and saw them as probably left wing and obstructionist. One of the academics told me that the funds from the Dunstan Foundation when closed down should just be passed back to the university. They had no concept of the role of a policy institute like that in the life of the university. At the annual general meeting of the Alumni Association when Cliff Blake announced he was going to defund it I've never been present when such a bold sort of statement was made without any rationale.

I rang Robert de Crespigny and said to him, 'You've got to help me.' I had a good working relationship with him. When I had explained to him he said, 'I'll ring Blake and you can sort out the alumni, but I'll tell him that he must sort it out with you.' Then he said, 'You and I will go and see the Premier,' who was Mike Rann, 'and we'll sort out how we are going to support the Dunstan Foundation and put it on a good steady basis.' Next thing I had a phone call from Cliff Blake saying, 'Come to lunch tomorrow.' At 12.30 at his office I arrived and he said, 'I've booked a table at the Adelaide Club.' I'm sure he thought he was going to put down a Labor person by taking me to the Adelaide Club. I got to the Adelaide Club with him and there's an anteroom there where you have a drink before lunch. I'd been to the Adelaide Club many times and I was able to introduce him to most of the people in the room. Then we went into the dining room and a couple of the Supreme Court judges came over and had a chat and Rick Allert and his brother Clive, who I had worked with in the racing industry when I was Minister for Racing and we had a chat. Cliff just looked at me and said, 'What do you want?' I said, 'I want you to continue funding the Alumni Association as the university has in the past.' He said, 'You get the file and I'll sign it. Let's have lunch.'

Then Robert and I went and saw Mike Rann and Mike said, 'I want both Flinders and Adelaide to be involved in the Dunstan Foundation.' He said he would approach Flinders and that he was aware of the great support Adelaide had given us and he said that the government would continue to provide the support we had as an executive office of director of the senior person from the Premier's Department would be seconded. He noted the support that the Brown Government had given – I think it was Brown and Olsen governments at that stage – and the

contact with the Premier's Department would be assured. So the Hawke Foundation and the Dunstan Foundation would be complementary for South Australia and the Dunstan Foundation would have a secure financial supportive basis.

Afterwards, just a side story, de Crespigny was a complex character. He'd been paid out an enormity by this stage – he received about $180 million in his settlement. I would meet up for lunch with him and had drinks with him a number of times - - -

Not at the Adelaide Club!

No! He'd say, 'Where do you drink?' So we would go out and he always wanted to know something about how to deal with the government or who he was dealing with and so on, which I was pleased to always help him with. He would always buy the lunch or the drinks or whatever it was. We went across to Parlamento and I said, 'Rob, today I'll buy the coffee.' He said, 'At last, here's a politician who is buying something for someone else.' Anyway, we had a long conversation and we worked out how to manage all this and we had two cups of coffee each. I went over to pay, walked over to the counter with him. They all know me there and they said, 'Greg, no charge for you.' Rob said, 'You bastard – you're always on the take, you politicians!'

Well, isn't Parlamento just an extension of Parliament House?

Anyway, that was Robert. We managed to secure the funding. The trustees became the vice-chancellor of Adelaide and the vice-chancellor of Flinders, Bronwen Dohnt and the director and myself. For nearly 10 years I chaired the trustees; we had a separate board which did the day-to-day work. The good and the great, the original trustees, became really patrons to the organisation. Phillip Adams was the person that I kept in touch with most closely and I'd visit him quite often in Sydney, and he'd come to Adelaide too for the Festival of Ideas and other events.

He often chaired the Lowitja O'Donoghue talk as well.

David Combe too – he was close to Don and worked with Don when Don was Attorney-General.

So it wasn't just a name only; they were genuine.

No, David was very close to Don, and David is a talented guy – St Peter's College as well. He had the spat with Hawke and the royal commission and got really beaten up pretty badly but he was then later appointed to the Australian Trade Commissioner for Canada and - - -

He continued to be successful afterwards.

He went to Hong Kong I think after that and came back. He sat on company boards and had a pretty good career really. I've lost a little of touch with him in the last couple of years, but a great guy, David. I very much admire Chris Sumner who gave evidence in the royal commission on his behalf about his character and so on. The foundation, as all these do, I think it takes a decade or so to get these things on the ground. Our branches, as much as we tried, I think – we had a great dinner once with Kevin Rudd speaking in Brisbane. Kym [Mayes] probably tells the story a lot better.

I've actually got a copy of the speech now.

Rudd was so rude to me. At my own expense I flew up to Brisbane for the lunch and so on – he didn't really want to talk to me.

Why not?

He was with some business people – obviously, he was into this before he was Prime Minister. His wife was the driving force and the funds raised were to go to a charity that she was involved in which was a literacy program for Aboriginal kids, which is great. It just shows the pulling power that Don had really, across Australia. People rallied – a very big cross-section of people to - - -

They raised I think Kym said $120,000 at a lunch.

Yes. Then in Sydney there were people like Len Amadio and the O'Reillys who were constituents of Don's and academics – a whole lot of people, Robyn Archer and others who were wanting to have a presence in Sydney, a number of politicians that had worked with Don. In Victoria it was John Cain, the former Premier, who had worked with Don as well, and many others in Victoria, particularly in the Chinese community. Barry Jones was very active, Jenny George and others. The difficulty we had is, with just an office and so few staff, how would you actually manage it all? Even to keep a database – people were wanting to give us mementos and things. How do you curate that?

You had no room, did you?

No, it was just a real dilemma and the important thing was just to keep afloat really, and to keep a schedule of events functioning as well. In this last 10 years it's really matured to a very large extent and taken on the Thinkers in Residence program and those very meaty programs – it's called business. It has developed its relationships within the universities; the work that John Spoehr did has been developed – the books. There's just a myriad of stories that come out of this period. One involves Gough Whitlam – Gough and Don, as I mentioned earlier,

sparred a lot but they had great respect for each other. There are two stories I'll just tell: Zita Nalty was Don's stenographer. She - - -

Could you spell that?

Z-I-T-A N-A-L-T-Y. She was a spinster, this beautiful lady, a very devout Roman Catholic, her brother was a priest. She had beautiful coiffure and so on. Don would ring her at five o'clock in the morning and say, 'Zita, I'm in the office. Would you be able to come in and take some dictation? I'll send a taxi out for you.' It would take Zita quite a while to do her hair, let alone come in in the taxi. She was such a loyal person. She typed everything on her typewriter in triplicate and she ended up with terrible arthritis. I was quite close to Zita when I worked in the office. One morning Zita came out and said to me that she'd been up early, Don had been giving her dictation – she took shorthand. She said, 'Don was writing a letter to Gough Whitlam and he was talking about Billy McMahon. This is the word he used to describe Billy McMahon. He spelled it out to me because I didn't know what it was but I've looked in the dictionary and here it is.' It was an insect only found in the Antarctic! They had this sort of intellectual sparring contest about who could use the most amazing words to describe things. This was the joy of working in the office with Don, of course.

I can just see the two of them sparring at 10 paces!

The very first day I arrived in the electorate office after I was elected in the March of 1999 there was a letter on the desk from St Peter's College saying, Dear Don, Would you be so kind as to once again adjudicate the annual debate in Latin? I had to find a reason why I wasn't able to do that. This was the sort of guy that we had. He was a renaissance man. When he died there were some bequests about his library: some were to go to his children, some were to go to the Barr Smith Library and some to the Murray Library at St Mark's College where he was a student. The remainder of the books went to the foundation and we deposited them in Flinders University. Many of those books are first editions signed by the authors to Don. They also tell his interest in the classics – languages, literature and so on. He had a very classical education.

Years ago a group I'm involved in, the Oral History Association, we were organised for a tour of the Don Dunstan Collection at Flinders and we were given access to that library and to all the memorabilia that was there. I think most of us just walked around for about an hour or so. The extent of what was there was quite gobsmacking.

It was so lucky too that Don was able to do that. He had a literary executor as well.

And what was that role?

That was to look after his intellectual property rights in his books and in his authorships of speeches and so on, and his art collection.

What happened to his art collection?

It's still in his house. We tried to acquire the house for public purposes but we haven't succeeded and the foundation was involved in that. So it's 40 years this month since Don resigned from parliament.

I just can't get my head around that.

It's 40 years since I went into parliament and it's 25 years since I left parliament. When you think of Don in parliament for 26 years and out at 52, so half his life in parliament – often people are starting their political career at 52. Dame Roma was 78 when she was made governor, and a very successful governor too. The second Gough Whitlam story was, Gough came to Adelaide to launch – he was quite frail, he was in his 80s I suspect – to launch a book that we had prepared of Don Dunstan's articles in *The Adelaide Review* magazine. We put them into a book [*Politics and Passion*] and Gough had written the forward for it. It was the time of the Wik and Mabo controversy and I think Wik had just been brought down and Kim Beazley was the Leader of the Opposition.

Gough rang me a couple of times and said, 'I'm pretty frail these days. I'm bringing my driver with me,' because then you had to walk down the steps at the airport. He said, 'I just need a bit of help,' and he said, 'I won't say anything; I'll just come.' I said, 'That's fine, it will just be lovely to have you.' I said, 'We've got a lunch prepared.' Maggie Beer had that restaurant in Ebenezer Place then and I said, 'We've got it upstairs and we'll keep the media away and then we'll go downstairs and we'll do the book launch.' Anyway, he arrives and we've got him up there and his staff had rung me and said, 'Whatever you do, keep him off the booze and don't feed him very much because we're just trying to control his diet at the moment.' So he sits down and me too at the table and Natasha Stott Despoja was there, Mike Rann I think. It was a really good - - -

The who's who of Adelaide.

Yes, and he said, 'This is Maggie Beer's restaurant? You wouldn't have any oysters, would you?' They said, 'Yes, sure, we've got oysters.' So they bring out some oysters and he gets stuck into lunch and has a few wines. We said, 'We're going to have some speeches now, Gough. Would you like to say something?' He said, 'Oh, I'll say a few words.'

I know what Gough's few words is!

Yes, so he gets up and he pulls out the Railways Agreement and he pulls out – we'd all heard it before but he went through it again for anyone who hadn't heard it for about 45 minutes. He sat down, pretty proud of all of that and then we go downstairs and *The Sydney Morning Herald* was there and *The Age*. Everyone was wanting to get these comments about Wik and Mabo. He said, 'If I say something Beazley will kill me,' because it was really controversial about whether you're going to extinguish rights and all these things. Gough had his own views on all of this, of course. He said, 'What I'm going to do, I'm going to get up and I'm going to say I wrote the foreword for this book and I recommend it to everyone. I'm really happy to sign copies. I'll sit at the table and do that, and that's it.' I said, 'That's fine. You get up and say that.' He said, 'Just keep the press away from me.' So for the next hour and a half he signed books and then he walked around with his head in the air, so no-one was talking but none of the press could actually get to him, so they were all pissed off. They said to me, 'We've all come here to get a line and Gough is normally open about this. Can you help us just get a line?'

Anyway, I'm putting Gough in the car to go to the airport and I said, 'Gough, thanks very much for coming. It's really been great for us to have you here and we really appreciate it and realise just what a challenge it is for you to do all of this.' He said, 'Oh comrade, it's a pleasure.' I said, 'Gough, the press are wanting to get a line from you. Can I give them a line? Is there something you might like to say?' He said, 'Comrade, the press, they want a line?' I said, 'Yes, just a line.' He said, 'Comrade, I'll give you a line. Tell them to get fucked!' (laughter). He's good isn't he? There's a guy right on top of it in his 80s and he was wonderful. There are so many stories really.

As Don's health was failing he decided he'd speak out on a number of issues. One – this was prior to the foundation being formed, but one which we, I guess, cling to was his speech that he gave eventually at the Entertainment Centre about - - -

Wasn't it magnificent.

Once again, I was away somewhere for that. I was overseas again, I think.

I was lucky, I got there. I have a copy of it. I presume you've got one anyway.

Yes, which was really a warning about privatisation. He meticulously prepared that speech and wrote it himself. It was to be in the Norwood Town Hall originally, and then it went to I think somewhere in the city, the Adelaide Town Hall - - -

That's what they were looking at as a second option.

I think there were about 6000 people - - -

Six to 7000 I think was the quote.

It was an indication that - - -

I must just interrupt you there. Gaby Hummel, who you would be aware of, she was a university student at that time. She'd heard of Don Dunstan, she was just a young woman. She actually worked at the Entertainment Centre showing people to their seats and fell in love with Don through his speech. I just think that's a lovely story that she's ended up at the foundation.

And there were really so many people that came to Adelaide in the '70s because of Don, and they are still here. Some returned but many have stayed and I've met dozens of those people who were involved in the Arts or in the Law, or the public service, and so on, who brought their skills here and wanted to be part of what was going on here. It was such an exciting time. Some of the people who helped us too, Ian Kowulick who was the head of the Premier's Department in the Olsen/Brown period, was close to Mary O'Kane and he was the person who really helped us to get the state government funding and the continuing state government support. Ian and I then served on Adelaide University Council for many years. He was another key person. Bob Bakewell, who had been head of the Premier's Department, was also a great supporter of ours. There was Rob Kerin – I remember when he became Premier I went and saw Rob and said would he continue to support the foundation? He said he certainly would and if he was re-elected in government he'd give that undertaking as well. They are some of the people.

We had a dinner for Don in that sort of latter period too when he was failing. We had 150 or so people in Maggie Beer's restaurant again as a fundraiser really for Don. What had happened is that his restaurant had gone badly and there was a fight between his partner, Steven, and Steven's brother, Chilly Cheng. They really lost everything in the restaurant venture. Don, I could tell, was not travelling well financially and emotionally, so the dinner was sort of twofold: one, it was to raise his spirits a little with a whole lot of his former employees, but also it was a bit of a fundraiser as well to provide a bit of financial support for him. His medical bills were extensive and his lifestyle – there were always people around there.

We might wind up here. I haven't had to ask the questions, because you knew exactly what I wanted. I thank you for that, and then we'll talk about a few things perhaps off tape.