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Full transcript of an interview with

BRIAN HURN

in May 2006

by David Armstrong

for the

NURIOOTPA PUBLIC LIBRARY ORAL
HISTORY PROJECT

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Interview with Mr Brian Hurn recorded by David Armstrong at, South Australia, on May 2006 for the State Library of South Australia's Nuriootpa Public Library Oral History Project.

TAPE 1 SIDE A

Okay, we're recording now, Brian. Today I'm interviewing Brian Hurn. Brian was born at Angaston, he's a farmer, a noted sportsperson and a contributor to many of the district activities. He is currently the Mayor of the Barossa District Council, a position he's held since the formation of the Council in 1996, and prior to that was Chairperson of the Angaston District Council. Brian's well-qualified to talk about the district and changes that have occurred over the past half-century, so I'll pass over to him and let him talk about his experiences in Angaston.

Well, I guess, David, as a fourth-generation farmer, we came from Bath in Somerset in 1850. Great-great-grandfather William came out here, it was a specific request from George Fife Angas, the founder of the Barossa, because he was looking for a confidant who could just help him, and I've got letters there from the Archbishop of Canterbury and those people who recommended Grandpa, and so we came out there. He worked for George Fife Angas for some three years, and then bought eighty acres here, just opposite what is Lindsay Park Stud, which was formerly the property of George Fife Angas, and I understand it was much the same time that Yalumba was purchased. But anyway, we've moved on from there and through the next three generations we've now increased our property considerably and I run sheep and cattle and my son William's home on the farm running – basically he does the winery part of it, in other words the grapes; I just like the end use of it, I think. (laughter) Although I don't mind helping him on the good, warm summer days now.

David, I'm not sure where you'd like me to start, but as a youngster I lived just off Hurn's Road which is just south of Angaston, and there was the Sibleys and the Barretts and the Trescowthicks and the Zeunerts that were close by there. And we used to walk to school, every morning until I was in grade seven; sometimes we'd go this way and sometimes we'd go that way and sometimes we'd go through the middle of the paddocks from Hurn's Road past behind Yalumba, we'd come out now where Brian Miles's is and the Good Shepherd Primary School and we'd walk down there. And I think many a time we were a tiny bit late for school (laughs) because there were all sorts of things of interest. I remember one particular day four or five of us

got chased by a hive of bees because we decided that we would wake these bees up and we didn't know the dangers of them. And so we started whacking these hives and (laughs) the bees started to chase us, and of course we ended up home pretty sick that day. As a matter of fact, today if I get stung with a bee I've got to go straight to hospital, I'm that bad. But they were the days – they were the salad days, I guess – where one just took their time and strolling, and then we had to walk home because I can remember when we first started up that main road that's out in front of me here three and a half miles out of Angaston on the Eden Valley Road it was just metal and it was only bituminised I reckon when I was late primary school, in 1951. So we had very good days and those sort of thing, I don't think there was the pressure, there are many, many things that we just enjoyed – you know, country boys: rabbiting and just going around the properties and looking at things and helping Mum and Dad on the farm where we could and [playing with] friends. There was no sport until such time – or we played against other primary school sides of Nuri and Freeling and Tanunda when we were in grade six and seven; otherwise, I was not involved in sport then but my father and uncles Lacey and Ross, they were very proficient in their sports. Uncle Lacey was a brilliant footballer, as was Uncle Ross. They were also in the administration side, I think Uncle Lacey was the President of the Barossa and Light Association for about fourteen years or thereabouts. My father played cricket and golf. I think Uncle Ross still holds the highest score by an individual here: 292 not out. I've got a little cutting there that Auntie Patsy gave me one day. So I guess that our family was always sporting. There was an Uncle Tom, he was my grandfather's brother, and he was invited to play for South Australia but he wasn't allowed to do that because he had to milk 40 cows every morning and night and that was the way they were.

So I guess that through my life we went on through to the high school, I was there at high school for two years, we had some good fun there and made our own enjoyment. We used to have to walk down from the middle of Hurns Road down to the Eden Valley Corner and old Joe Doddridge's bus and it was an ancient old bus then, (laughter) and he picked up all the kids – I think he went from Keyneton to Eden Valley and then down to Nuri, we didn't pick up any kids in Angaston on the way as they do now, but I think there must have been thirty or forty of us on the bus there. Then we'd walk home and we used to just stroll home looking at all manner of

things, you know: it was just those lazy days as kids, it didn't seem so – we didn't have these Nintendos or all of those sort of things, we had to make our own fun. And I think the other thing is that when I got home, from those early days, that we had chores to do. Mum would say, 'Go and get a bit of kindling' or you had to feed the chooks or these sort of things, and I was in a family with four boys and one girl and we all had our little things that we just did to help, I suppose. I often wonder about, nowadays, without being critical, that sometimes I see some of my grandkids get chased out of the house because they come straight off the bus and they're straight into the television or they're into these Nintendos and these games and all of these sort of things, and I know my two sons, they chase them out into a bit of sunshine, 'You've got to go out there and have a bit of fresh air and a bit of fun.'

From there I went to Prince Alfred College for three years as a boarder and very grateful to my parents for allowing me to do that because that opened my eyes there was a bigger world. Then I went right through to the Leaving Honours in all of those days, I did that twice because Dad sent me back to school, in the last year I did Leaving Honours twice – – –. (telephone rings) We don't want to know about that, do we? No, leave it. Okay, that was the phone. (laughter) We thought that we'd unplugged it.

And I went back there for cricket and just to finish off because I think that I was seventeen and Dad wanted me to – I think it was too young to come home on the farm and he didn't need me there at that stage. So they sent me back there for another year, and from there I started on the farm and of course I got interested in playing cricket for Kensington for 29 years I think that I ended up going down there to play there, and I was very fortunate to play State cricket in the Sheffield Shield side, extremely honoured to play with fellows like Gary Sobers and Ian McLachlan, Les Farrell was our captain, John Little[?], Rex Sellers[?], Neil Hawke, Ken Cunningham, Neil Dansie, a lot of brilliant players and of course I played against a lot of the top players. In those days most of the Test players played a lot of the Shield games too, not like they do now. And to me playing against teams like New South Wales where you had Simpson and Davidson and Benaud and all of those Test players and then you get to Victoria and you play against Bill Lawrey and co, it was a real experience, that. But it was an honour and we won the Sheffield Shield in 1963–64, which was a huge honour for a young country boy like me. But anyway, I

enjoyed my time there and you saw a lot of places. I think one of the things that I was very lucky – I got told off, actually, I got into dire strife – but we went to Woomera, I think they wanted to see some of the Shield people up there to have a game of cricket, and for some reason or other we got up there, and I guess it was other people it might have been that had some influence in there, cut a long story short we were shown into one of the rockets, the Blue Streak, and Gary Sobers and I said, ‘What’s this door?’ And we happened to walk into it. And I don’t know whether he was a colonel or a general or a major-general or whatever, he said, ‘Go on, you two, get the hell out of there.’ We were actually standing in that Blue Streak that went off at five o’clock in the morning, the first Blue Streak. (laughter) They took us up in the gantry, right up the top, and he was explaining it all, and they said, ‘Don’t you move, you people.’ Sobers and I took this – it was only a step, like a door, like into a lift – and there was all these things and we were looking around there. ‘Get out of there!’ We found out that the bloody thing went off at five o’clock next morning and it was a huge success.

Well, that’s unique.

So I don’t know whether that was good luck or whatever, and I can’t remember what it even looked like now, but it was there.

It’s a unique experience.

Yes. But they were great days, we used to do that in those days, go out into the countryside. I think they’re trying to do that again.

I’m not sure where I am now, David. Otherwise I enjoyed my time at Kensington, I was lucky to be a captain–coach there, won five Premierships down there with the lads. Met many, many, many people and thoroughly enjoyed the time down there. I often wake up now and think, ‘How did I, three to four times a week, get up in the morning and go round the sheep in the paddocks on a hot day and then decide at three o’clock in the afternoon I had to go down there to cricket practice?’ And some of the times it was just a waste of time because they’d watered the wickets or the wickets had been wet and you virtually couldn’t bowl or you couldn’t bat. I’m talking about turf wickets. So you just did a bit of fielding practice and came home. But I often wonder when some of these young guys go down there now, like William when he was going down to football for Central Districts three times a week, just drive down

there and back – although Central Districts wasn't so bad. But I guess you did that in those younger days because you enjoyed it. Probably wore out three Holdens doing it, but nevertheless it was good fun.

And eventually from there – and in the meantime I was always interested on the farm, doing a lot of work on the farm, *et cetera* – young and fit in those days.

What sort of changes did you see in the town? What was the town like in the '50s compared to now?

Oh, I think it's totally different. I think if you had a look at the main street of Angaston now there's different little shops, the whole setup is completely different. When you look at the – I guess you could start at the Barossa Garage. Right up the top, the Bank of Adelaide was one of the main banks that was going then; then you had, I can remember Artie Doddridge, the blacksmith, he was still very strong then, a lot of people did a lot of work there.

Was there a lot of horses around in those days?

Yes, there were still horses around in my young days. And then you come down to where the police station is, that was a new thing. Where the new – what is it, is it Junipers? –

Yes.

– that was Eric Thorn's hardware store then, he was there. In Barry Chinner's book you see a lot of that. And then you had the State Bank now, that was in the same shape as the old marble that's in the National Bank and in the Town Hall, but that was pulled down and put to that cream brick thing, all that sort of thing, so I suppose town planning has changed as well. But you had that there, and then I think that the next door, where the Bistro is, that's where Lindsay Porter's father had a garage, that was the other garage down there, apart from Fiebiger's right down the other side by the children's reserve.

Was the flour mill still operational?

The flour mill was still going, yes, I remember that from when I was at primary school. I don't know when it stopped, David, but it must have been – it was early in my life when I came home from school, I'm sure; but no, it was still going when I was a kid at school. And then of course you went down then where the ANZ Bank is

now, there was Merton's and they were electrical goods and knickknacks and all the rest of that there. Then you had the bank, then you had Graham Keightley's place there and next door was Vaughans – do you know Neville and Malcolm that are here? That was their parents' store. Actually it was interesting because I think three days a week, when I was at primary school and when my two brothers were there, I had to gather them and we'd have to march down there and they would set up and we'd have to go into the rooms and sit down there and we either had a pie or a pasty for lunch on a plate with a knife and fork, which is the way my parents wanted it to be, and I know it cost them threepence apiece. So then we had to march down there and then march back.

That's the sort of story we're looking for because that's what the *real* changes are, in that type of lifestyle, really.

Well, we used to have our bit of a lunchbox, but three days a week we had to march down there and do that and I reckon that went almost right through my primary school days then. Then you had old Fred Thamm – where Brian Teakle's sports store is now, where the vet is now, there was Coles brothers there and then Elder's came later, but there was little Freddie Thamm – no, not Freddie Thamm, Ali Thamm: he was the saddler, I think was the word. Of course, then you had the old post office was down the other side of the street, down the end towards the children's reserve. All of those sort of things. But I reckon you walked down the street and you knew everybody. We had a policeman there or several of them: they knew exactly what they were doing and they were almost 'communicators', we would call them nowadays, they would walk down, 'G'day, boys,' and that sort of thing and they would say, 'Let me have a look at your bike.' They'd ring your bell, the little bell on the bike, and if that didn't [work] he said, 'You get that fixed when you get home, you young hoon. If you don't I'll tell your father.' (laughs) And of course in those days – and I guess many people will tell you – if the policeman ticked you off for doing something and he really ticked you off and felt like giving you a little clip around the ears, you got another one when you got home. (laughs)

That's true. That's a significant change, isn't it.

My word it is. Well, I can remember getting some hidings from my father and they weren't vicious or anything, but they made those toasting forks – they were almost

like Neptune's trident – out of this 8-gauge black wire that they use in the fences and just twisted it around and put a little thing and we used to toast all those sort of things: I reckon that had a little bit of whip in it, around the tail. And I'll tell you what, he only hit you once – and I don't think it was ever vicious, I can't remember it being vicious – but, by hell, you didn't do that again. But you always found something else to go wrong.

And got in trouble again, yes.

But I think the change came when I came home from Prince Alfred, there were a lot of new people in the district. You used to be able to go down the street and say, 'Hello, Mr or Mrs' and say, 'G'day, Tom, Dick or Harry' – there was a lot of that missing. And now, I suppose because of my position, I still know a lot of people but there's a lot of people that I don't know even though you say, 'G'day, how are you' and all the rest of it. But it was more of a very close-knit community, you knew a lot of people and all those sort of things and it was far easier going.

There was a big change in facilities, too, wasn't there in the '60s with sporting facilities, *et cetera*.

Oh, yes. I think that the old Angaston Football and Cricket Club, there was fellows like Lance O'Neil and Owen Guyatt and John Carrieson[?] and a lot of those people, they were instrumental – a bit like they are now, innovative: they used to go up to the Show Hall and shower then with one of those old chip wood heaters for the fire and they used to put it in a bucket over the top there with a big, you know those sieves and it was almost like a lavatory chain, you used to pull it and you'd have your shower and that was it. And those guys built the back of the changerooms and put those electric ones in there and I reckon that was in about the very early '50s when they did that. And of course then we kept on, I suppose, when Neville Smith and I and two or three of us thought that we wanted somewhere, our own football clubrooms, because we used to go into the changerooms and what we used to do is kick all our boots and your jockstraps and everything aside like that and, 'Come on, girls, come in and have a drink with us,' and that was the way it was. That's when if you decided you wanted a social that's what you did and all of the liniment tables and those, they were put on, that's how you had your function. So we decided that we'd build that and build that clubrooms and we were well-treated by the Council: we

went and saw Mr Wray Goodchild, who was the Chairman of the Council then, and and Colin Angas was the Deputy Chairman in those days and they were guarantors for us borrowing forty thousand dollars from the bank and I think we'd had thirty thousand we'd saved for it, we made it a goal, we saved for it over five or six years and I think we had twenty-five thousand dollars, and so we ended up by building that clubrooms there for nearly seventy thousand dollars, all dressed up and that, so that was a huge achievement and of course now – and then, a couple of years after that, we put those lights in around the park. But a lot of the sporting facilities are upgraded tremendously. I remember that the Angaston Park at the northern end of those goals there used to be a drop of about twenty feet because there was a gully there, there was a creek right around the eastern side of the oval, where there is now terracing, and there used to be a croquet club there where they played croquet. The Netball and Tennis Club courts were the children's playground up there, there was none of those courts there. And that was put there in 1972 and then the girls – the netballers, particularly – had a prefab there for about five years and then for the Centenary year of the Angas Recreation Park we decided to build the Centenary Building and the netball girls and the tennis people, they put a considerable amount of money into that, as did the local council, and that's where that facility came there. So there's huge changes there.

I can remember as a young kid going in and practising – when my father and Uncle Ross and Lacey went in there to practise, that oval was cut with an old horse and mechanical mower and I think they took us in there – whilst I suppose Dad was child minding a bit, they took us in there because there was these stooks or bundles around, round bundles of hay on the oval, and every time the batsman hit a ball and it went into there we were the ones that had to go in and find the bloody ball and get it back there. And I can distinctly remember that, and I can distinctly remember them at some times they used to take that hay off and then they'd light it and burn it off so that there was a bit more of an oval rather than that, and I think they used to – there was no water there, of course, in those days, apart from going into some of the buildings – and they used to wait for a shower of rain before they could because some of them And I can remember Mr Jack Batten and Colin Angas and others with the surrounds around the park there, they used to take their

tractors and hay balers and we'd bale the hay there, they didn't cut it like they do now, they'd cut it and bale it and take it away and all those sort of things.

So if there was that big drop on the oval, what happened? Did people get together to move the earth?

Oh, yes, they filled it in. There was a slope on that oval of eleven feet, from the southern end to the northern end going down there, in my early days; and then in 1956, I think it was, they decided that they would try and level it out and they had a fellow called Griffiths there with an old International, TD4 International – it's surprising how you remember these things, as you said – and I think they took about three or four feet off and they put all of that down over the, just pushed it down over the other end. And then from there – that took about five feet off, I think, or thereabouts – and then that's when, soon after that, they put the rail around the oval, because there used to be a bike track around the oval and they put that piping around the oval. And then I forget when it was, but it was in the mid-1960s when I was Chairman of the Park Committee – they dubbed the young blokes on those days – and we had a huge volunteer effort where we put two and a half thousand – actually, it was two thousand, six hundred and thirty-eight, I'll never forget the number of tons – of Moppa sand, we got it from Moppa, and we had volunteers like the Linkes and the Miltons and all of the truck owners and private trucks, the tip trucks and all those sort of things, they moved that from about six o'clock in the morning till about seven o'clock at night or thereabouts and we ended up with a big barbecue. David Linke's contractors down there, they took their big machinery out to the Moppa somewhere, I can't recall where it was, but they were the ones that dug it up and loaded all the trucks there, and there was a constant stream of trucks all day long and we had a lot of volunteers, you know, with the barbecues at lunchtime and a bit of –

Sustenance.

– well, yes; but no, we totally vetoed any alcohol because things could go awry there, but there were ladies there making cups of tea – they were more tea than, I guess, than coffee. And then we had a lot of the farmers in there with their ploughs and their little tractors going around and round trying to level it out –

Consolidate it, yes.

– oh, the Council had their big grader there. And then they seeded it there and that's what happened then and – – –.

And that was all done voluntary.

All done voluntary and we weren't charged a cent from any of those people that I'm aware of. The Council in those days were very good, I believe that they had a big petrol tanker there – it could have been diesel, I can't recall, in those days – but you were allowed to have so much there so the Council did that, recognising that these people voluntarily gave their time and their implements and plant. So that was a very proud day for the community, I reckon, we did those sort of things and it was a terrific day, because in a lot of my early football days there we played in mud, six inches, eight inches, absolutely thick: you'd kick the ball and it would just go plop, and I can remember some of those, they were really wet years and not like it is now. We've put a lot of drainage in, underground water of course and all those sort of things. But life has changed a lot, David. I think that there's a lot more pressure, we seem to be on the go all the time.

A lot of the surrounds, the immediate surrounds of Angaston, had a lot of fruit trees on it, there were huge amounts of fruit trees – apricots and pears and peaches and all of those stone fruits – but they seem to have gone now, like Jim Ellis is basically the last bastion, if you like, of the apricot district. My Uncle Lacey and Ross, they used to grow about five ton of dried apricots. When I first came home I grew up to two and a half ton but that's all gone now and they're all under vines, there's just a few trees left for our own, make a bit of jam and a bit of preserves, but that's about all. And we had, where the Angaston Primary School, where the brand new one is over there, you had Crowe and Newcombe[?], and then you went to Angas Park with Bernie Mattiske, there was there; and then of course right on that corner you had Mr Walter Holmes who had all of his horses and his big drays and he was the carrier, then. I can still remember all those days. And the railway station was still open, we used to get all of our super[phosphate] in bags from Adelaide, that would come up to Angaston and we would then have to go in a lorry and get it there and bring it out in a bag. And they were the days of lumping a hundred and eighty-six pounds on your back, picking it up from the ground and putting it on your knee

and then up there and then into the little super spreader and those sort of things, so you had to be fit in those days.

Where the Radford Road going around the park and around the [Housing] Trust homes there, they were put there basically I think when the cement works started in about 1950-odd, my father used to grow about five hundred prime lambs and the fellow from Metro [Meat] used to come up and he would buy the lambs on the property and say, 'Righto, Mr Hurn, I'd like those on the train next week,' and so that was our job, (laughs) and I think Dad used to round up two or three helpers and us kids and we'd take all his lambs and anyone that knows sheep with lambs, they'll just go anywhere, they're like uncontrolled kids.

So you drove them down to the [station]?

We drove them down, walked them down. And the Bald Hill, as you would know it, going down that side of Radford Road there was a big hill, that had a little raceway which was bituminised and then on the two sides was just dirt – it was built up like a pyramid and on the top, like the bank of a dam, that's where the cars went then there was a wire fence down there, but on either side there was just ordinary track, and the lambs used to go everywhere. And then, to cut a long story short, in the end we just had to give it away because of traffic, all of that up Radford Road. There was no houses up there, save perhaps one or two. And then Elder Smith's, where Hage's are now, and then Washington Street and then down into the opposite where the Council Chambers there now, and that's where we used to run all these lambs and some of them would end up in the main street, more or less. So we had to give that away, it just became too dangerous and all the rest and it was too inconvenient, and of course things moved on. But they were the exciting days, they really were.

Different.

Different, yes.

So then, later on, you became – well, you've done a lot of things. I know you've been a member of the Vintage Festival Committee and lots of other associations but principally the Council. How did the amalgamation go, what was the history and the success of that?

The amalgamation of the councils, I think it was inevitable. The five councils, which included the Truro councils, they worked together with what they call a Barossa

Community Services Board. And they did that for two reasons: (a) as a lobbying group for the whole of the district, if you like, which included Truro and Kapunda, there was Freeling over there, there was the old Tanunda Council, Angaston Council and the old Barossa Council; and the other one was a service agency. Most of the councils only had enough work for a part-time planner, a part-time health inspector and a part-time building inspector, *et cetera, et cetera*, all of those sort of things, and so we became – that Barossa Community Services Board – became the service agency and it allocated out, on the determination of how many full-time hours a council needed, they would allocate that out and in fact our first time we had a computer we worked with the Barossa Community Services Board – I’m talking about the old Angaston Council and Mallala. And we used to do all of that, and then Angaston became a little bit bigger because, as you might know, when I first started, became a councillor, it was on the strength of Colin Angas who decided to retire and he approached me and said I would be the person to do this and I said, ‘Well, I’ll give it a go,’ and he’s been a great mentor of mine, as is Clive LePage and a lot of people around the town, they’re very supportive and always helpful in a lot of things. But, to cut a long story short, the old Council was where the Angas Park – you know the old red-brick building here, just by where the old fire station was? – and we had a long table there and I think that’s where Mrs Jones first started, she started there, and there was another one out here, Elizabeth Kroehn, and they were the two girls that were in the office with Mr Clive LePage and we would have a great big long table with all the councillors there that were ward councillors from Stockwell, Moculta, South Ward out here, the Town Ward and the two Nuriootpa Wards, *et cetera*, and we’d do all our work there. The town planner used to come up from Adelaide on a needs basis and all of those sort of things because there was no what you’d call a real plan, not a development plan, and all those rules as we know them now. And I can remember at lunchtime we used to put all of our gear, put all our papers together and put them on the floor there and somebody would put the sandwiches or this, that and the other in there, and a fellow called Colin Koch, sometimes he’d bring us up a mornay or a stew and that sort of thing in the middle of winter; and then, when we’d finished lunch, we’d sweep all the crumbs off and we’d go back then. And they were the days when we started at ten o’clock and sat till about seven o’clock at night. But then I think the elder statesman, if you like, of the Council in those days, Dr Margaret Rutter was one

of the main ones, I think, with Colin Angas, Graham Anderson – my predecessor and a great mate of mine, we used to knock around at school and went our different ways when I went to college and he went his way, but we got back together – and of course the Chairman, Wray Goodchild, and that sort of thing, we had to expand because we needed these officers on a full-time basis. So we went into that. And that's when they built those current Council Chambers there now, in 1980 I think it was: it was a stinking hot day, it was about a hundred and ten [degrees] when Councillor Goodchild, the Chairman, opened that thing. It was built for twenty-four people, for twenty-four staff, it's now got fifty-six people in there. Occ[upational] health and safety, no wonder we have to either build on or move, but that's a different story.

But they were the days when I think there was – whilst there were rules, I think, David, it was more of a common sense thing: in other words, you didn't put the sawmill in amongst a residential area and all of those sort of thing, but if a person wanted to do this and it didn't seem that it would interfere, it would be okay. This idea, if you like, of the – 'Not in my backyard, build it somewhere not in my backyard' – people now are becoming far more protective of their area, of their lifestyle, of their living standard and their lifestyle – and I don't blame them, they want to do that – and that's one of the hardest things in planning. But that's where we virtually went from there.

Getting back to the Community Services Board and your question – that's a long, that's almost a bloody politician's answer, isn't it? We started amalgamation talks in 1987. When Graham Anderson gave it away and I became the Chairman and Judy Jones became the – well, she was the Clerk in those days, until 1996 when we further amalgamated – and we decided that we'd consolidate. That was when local government was talking about 'resource sharing': how could we use our plant and our human resources and our finances a lot better. And I guess it was just an evolution of time that that happened, and I can remember gathering all of the people together and they were saying, 'You're not talking about amalgamations?' And of course we backed off like ---. (laughter) 'We're not doing that, we're talking about why should we have a – a bit like a farmer or a truck company that's got a three hundred thousand dollar header and you use it once a year.' So that's why we were looking at the graders and the plant and equipment, and from there that spread where, through the time of – for instance, three or four councils got together and said, 'These

are all the roads that we're going to bituminise this year or resurface,' and all of the gangs from the different councils got together and they all did it and they sort of did it in two weeks. We still use that practice because it's common sense: instead of our little gang doing a little bit here and taking a long time, you get it done and gone and finished.

And it gradually evolved that, you know, like a scale from going from here and you gradually got there, and the scales tipped over where everybody was saying, 'Well, look, we're all doing this together, we've got five clerks and we've got five of this and five of that, and can we use our money more effectively and more efficiently?' and that sort of thing. And I think it was also hastened, if you like, because when the vine pull came I know Robert Homburg and I got together on his initiative because there was this concern in the Tanunda area that there was this patchwork quilt of vines that were being pulled out and there was a lot of the realtors and real estate agents going there and saying, 'Hey, can we cut this up and put five houses on it and five houses there,' all on the valley floor. And that's when we got together and we then implored the – that's the Angaston Council and the Tanunda Council principally – we got together and asked the Minister to put a freeze on it and then we did our development plan, the Barossa Development Plan, the blueprint for the future – and that involved the four councils then because Truro had decided to move on, down into Sedan and Cambrai. And we'd worked all together then, and I think from there that was almost a catalyst to push us over that line, the balance of scales, and we then said, 'Well, look: we will look at amalgamation. How can we do this? We'll go to the community.' So we went through a whole process, if you like, with our officers and then the State Government, and then of course the Premier, then Dean Brown, came out and said, 'There shall be voluntary amalgamations of councils,' and that followed because the year before – it wasn't Jeff Kennett, who was it? (snaps fingers)

Bannon.

The Premier of Victoria. He said, 'Thou shalt,' and he *made* the councils, he said that you have to amalgamate and become a bigger, more viable entity. So I think that also helped our minds here, because we had a lot of people who were prepared to look at the whole of the region, a bigger in not just our own. Whilst you have to

be very mindful and look after your own area, there is that outer and wider scale of things. Anyway, that's where we got to. And six months prior to Dean Brown announcing that the councils will start this amalgamation process, he selected my predecessor, Graham Anderson, who had retired in '87 when I took over from him, he and several other prominent people in local government were given the job of looking as to how we could; but it was done on a community basis of common interests. And of course we've got Angaston,, Nuri, Lyndoch, Williamstown, we're all in there together, and to me it was a lot easier, was just a matter of formally doing it. So it was a matter of not 'should we', it was a matter of 'when', and so we did that, basically started it off six months before and we were one of the first in there.

The pity of it is, and I say this in all sincerity and honesty, is that the Light and the Kapunda Councils I think almost spoilt the process because they went to Minister Olsen at that stage and said, 'We would like to amalgamate,' and I think the Minister was looking for a political tick and he said yes. And that's why – and so good on them, they did that – but to me I think it is a tragedy that I think has to be overcome and must be overcome in the future, to my mind, that Greenock, Marananga, Seppeltsfield, Peter Lehmann's Wines, is very much part and parcel of the heritage and the culture of the Valley, and it has to be part of our scene. We try to work as well as we can in planning in a lot of – in traffic control and management and especially residential and industrial development, but it would be far better if it was us. So to me that was a tragedy. The Federal Government gave us a considerable amount of money to be able to do that, but the Light Council didn't want to do that because I think, in all honesty, they would disappear because the Freeling–Kapunda would virtually go to Hamley Bridge, Wasleys over there to Mallala and up there, where there is the broadacre cropping and farming, they'd be all totally different to what we're here, and I think that if you took away that, and even that town of Hewett – you know where that is, down in Gawler – the Light Council would not be viable and they would virtually disappear. But I know I've written – they asked me to write a little screed, one of the service clubs asked me to, it's opposite, in the Angaston little garden there that we've got there, that little reserve – the Rotary Club – they asked me to do that. And they said, 'What do you think that it will be like in fifty years' time?' And I put in there, I said, 'I hope that the Barossa is all in

one there.’ You’ve got all the wine-growing area and I think that we’ve taken note of the – what do they call it? – the winegrowers, they put a line around the Barossa for –

That’s right.

– for what should be the Barossa region.

For the wine district, yes.

And quite frankly I think that it certainly wouldn’t hurt us to have Keyneton in there and even Truro because Henschke’s Winery is well-noted for their wonderful wine and basically they are in the western shadow of the hills and let the Mallee, if you like, down there, I think that’s a great dividing line there that should be. So you’ve got commonality of interests. But I think that that was a great pity that that didn’t happen. So in all amongst that it was a matter of when we should do it, not should we, and that’s when we decided that we would do that, after two or three consultative meetings with the public. There was basically no objection to it. A lot of people thought their rates were going to go down but they didn’t because, whilst in the first year I believe we saved fifteen per cent in operational costs alone, we decided that there was so much that we had to do that was not being done that they would leave the rates where they were and leave the same income there, or not rise it up a lot, so that we could do those works. And we’re almost to that position now, if you can jump from ’96 to 2006, where we’ve done a lot of inventory work and a lot of work where a lot of our infrastructure, particularly our roads, they were built in the ’40s and the ’50s and the ’60s, after the War, and they haven’t been resealed and it’s a bit like buying a home or buying a car: sooner or later you’ve either got to paint it or you’ve got to service it, otherwise it’ll run out. And given the rapid expansion in that last ten years – it’s been wonderful for the Valley – and the huge lift, if you like, in the plant and equipment that’s around – I mean it’s no longer the farmer with his three- and four-ton truck going to the winery and back; when you look at these big tankers with thirty, forty and fifty thousand litres, huge, huge, heavy mass vehicles rumbling through our streets and all those sort of things we’ve got a lot of those things to do. Of course, we’ve got our office accommodation that we’ve got to get up there for occ health and safety, it’s got to be a lot of things like that.

And I digress now, because in that amalgamation, had a building of the Angaston Council size been in Tanunda, that’s where we would have moved there, right there

and then, because that was in the centre of it. The only reason they came to Angaston was because we had that building there and we were able to do that; but as the government devolved more and more responsibilities to us, without a lot of finances, that's why we've got people down in the 'dungeon' and up in the top and out the back.

Yes. It's been a popular opinion; if there was any dissent it was about the areas that got left out, the ones you mentioned: Seppeltsfield, Greenock and those sort of areas should have been in it.

Marananga especially, and all of those. But I think there are still economies of scale that we can get. We're still looking at seeing how we could be more effective and more efficient in the spending of the money that we get in. We certainly realise that people are really struggling with some of their finances and we have to be mindful of that. One of the things that we're at a disadvantage here in the Valley, and many people will tell you, particularly some councillors, that we believe that we generate a tremendous amount of income, capital and taxes, especially through the wine area – although I firmly believe that we're *not* a monoculture, that the wine industry and the tourism industry is without a shadow of doubt the first two and they are the most important; but we've got the cement works and the Borals and Clipsals and all of those – they've got new names now but they're still the same – so there is a diversity of industry here with the soda products taking out a million tonnes of soda ash every year and all those sort of things, and then you've got the broadacre farming, if you like, so we are a diverse community; but the Federal Government, our financial assistance grants that the Federal Government gives to us say that because your valuations are so high you're able to generate a lot of your own finances, and for the last ten years we've gone back a lot. For instance – let me put it this way – had the four and a half, or the three and a half councils if you take in Mount Pleasant – had they not amalgamated they would have had a total sum of about one point five million dollars of federal monies given to them each year, unencumbered, unfettered, so they could spend at they liked; the amalgamated council is getting three hundred and thirty-eight thousand dollars. (interviewer gasps) And that's going down. And the State Government, as you know, they're virtually not putting anything in here. They've certainly helped with the Swan Reach pipeline here that's given us clean, fresh water; they've helped some other things there; but some of the roads that need

to be done up and other things – although they helped Faith School very well, Faith have got to pay a lot of that off, but – so the Federal and the State Governments haven't been overly kind to this district and we would appreciate a little bit more.

Yes, we're generating too much of our own wealth, are we?

Well, that's the Grants Commission who decide on these things on a *per capita* and on a road length basis: they are the two criteria. And there are many an argument that – whilst I've got friends and I worked up there for a while around Hawker and Quorn, they've got huge lengths of roads there, they've got a hundred k's of road but there's only three tracks on them; we've now got, between Orlando at Rowland Flat and Richmond Grove just north of Tanunda, we've got a hundred and five thousand truck movements per year. And that's the one going just around Tanunda. Now, they need that for their business. People who say 'Shut the wineries down' or do this, that and the other, we'd have an unemployment from here to Gawler and back again. So there has to be a balance, David, and this is where you argue with some of these people in Canberra and in Adelaide and all the rest of it and say, 'Well, we realise that those people need a reasonable road up there, but five trucks per week as against six or seven hundred or more per week on two miles of road, there is a huge difference.' And quite frankly the local community shouldn't have to put up with that because there's a lot of through traffic and all the rest of it and I don't think that we should have to put up with that.

Well, there's a lot of angst about it at the moment in the news and the papers.

Well, I forget – Mrs Ann Angas rang me not so long ago where I think she had a thought and she sat there in the main street of Angaston and I think she said there were four hundred trucks in the morning that went through there – in the day; but I don't think the day was that long, it only went till about two o'clock because I think she got tired of it. But the people are telling me now that on good days, when they should be like in the French Riviera or even in Hutt Street in Adelaide where you've got your little coffee tables out on the veranda or on the footpath and having a look, some of those people are losing patronage because of the trucks that are bouncing through the place, and it's spoiling the amenity of the area and that's why we've got to look at these bypasses. And of course that gives the Council always a lot of problems because we want to get them out of the town and everyone wants to get

them out of the town but then they don't want them to go past their place. But I think there's a realisation that you have to do those sort of things for the good.

And it's changed a lot: it's a lot quicker, it's more complex. A lot of our time now is taken up with occ health and safety, with risk management, with pre-planning, strategic plans; the environment is now well and truly in front of the Council's minds with the biodiversities and the ecosystems of the district, they're very concerned about those. All of our surface water from the and the and what's the other – and then the Para, of course: all of them are being over-harvested, the big wineries. I guess you've been out there and That was a lot of my father's property out there and you can see that they're not wine lakes, they're water lakes, and that means that any water that goes past Eden Valley and down to Cambrai and those sort of things, it's just not getting there like it used to. And that's why, I guess, some of the grape growers have bought the, something with that pipeline here. And so we're looking at the whole lot of those sort of things, but our officers who are with that Natural Resources Management out there, especially out there at Mount Pleasant, are doing a marvellous, marvellous job and helping to educate people on the land, and particularly those people who have shifted out here. The district has changed a lot. I would think that particularly in Mount Pleasant area and in the Concordia–Rosedale area and Cockatoo Valley, there's a lot of people that have come out from Adelaide and they've bought their twenty- and thirty-acre property, they want to retire out there, they use it as a retirement place, and I can imagine that there'll be a lot of people that will continue to commute and particularly if this Federal Government from Truro to Port Wakefield, that new, two-way lane highway – is going to be almost like a freeway – that's going to go from Nuri or just the northern side of Nuri virtually near Truro down there, people will commute, a bit like the autobahn in Germany where they just get in there and get in their BMWs at a hundred and eighty k's, work in just twenty minutes and twenty minutes home. But then they've got the lifestyle here, particularly with Daylight Saving as they've got it and the weekends and all the rest of it.

That's our future.

Yes.

That's fantastic. You've taken an hour all but seventeen seconds, which is great. Precisely what we wanted.

I'll tell you, I reckon I was – I was thinking to myself, 'You're waffling, Brian.'

No.

END OF RECORDING.