

FOREWORD TO THE UPDATED HISTORY

This addition to the original book, A History of Woodville (1977), owes as much as did the first edition to the encouragement of Mr. Doug Hamilton and the interested support of Woodville Council and staff. At the instigation of Mr. Hamilton, shortly before his retirement as Town Clerk, Council engaged me to research and write an historical account of Woodville in the decade since the publication of the book.

This was in line with the Council's encouragement of local history and its commitment in general to reinforcing residents' sense of identity within the locality. There have also been some major events of recent years, notably the completion of West Lakes' development, the withdrawal of General Motors-Holden's Limited and the settlement of Indo-Chinese refugees, which have had a pronounced effect on Woodville.

Since 1977 popular interest in local and South Australian history has grown apace. In 1975 when I first started to write there were few good, recent South Australian histories - local, general or on specific relevant topics. Since then much has changed. During the Jubilee 150 year (1986) especially, an avalanche of histories tumbled off the presses.

Most of those works focus upon the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries so they were not relevant to this work. However, many contribute to a general understanding, or indeed provide specific information about Woodville during that earlier historical period.

For that reason I have provided two Bibliographies with this updated history. The first gives references for works used in the 1976-1986 history while the second is an Annotated Bibliography of histories (and related works) published since 1976 which are relevant to the Woodville Council area.

CHARLES STURT
LIBRARY SERVICE

Apart from the Mayor, Mr. John Dyer, and the former Town Clerk, Mr. Doug Hamilton, I should like to thank staff members Ms. Carol Hannaford and Mr. Mike Newton. My sister, Alexandra Marsden, again provided welcome research assistance at the start of the project and the Woodville Library loaned - and tolerated long overdue - a number of useful local reference works.

A number of people willingly granted me interviews and provided other evidence. Their names are included as oral sources in the first Bibliography. In particular, I should like to thank Mrs. Marianne Martin of the Delfin Group and, at GMH (Elizabeth), Mr. John Barlow and Mr. Geoff Weatherley. I wrote to all the schools in Woodville asking for students' observations on recent local history. I received a response from one, Sienna College at Findon, and I am grateful to Mr. Brian Mooney for his interest and for the collection of comments prepared by his year 10 to 12 students.

As I write, my youngest child, Zoe (...) cheerfully plays beside me. As a final acknowledgement, then, I should like to thank my husband Michael Szwarcbord and our children, Samuel and Zoe (...), for his support and their patience as I worked.

SUSAN MARSDEN

JUNE 1987

CHAPTER 11

LIVING IN THE NEXT DECADE: WOODVILLE'S PEOPLE, 1976 TO 1986
INTRODUCTION

Ten years on, the Woodville population once again celebrated its past. In 1986 the sesquicentenary of formal British settlement in South Australia was widely celebrated as the "Jubilee 150". In suburban and country districts throughout the State, new greeted old, past was mixed enthusiastically with present: men strutted in nineteenth century suits and twentieth century boots; women bustled in long rustling dresses beneath herring boned poke bonnets; bush bands played against the wind whistling in their microphones, and typically modern crowds of Australian children - Aboriginal, European and Asian - pranced about resurrected maypoles. The costumes and customs of olden style, many of their settings were quite new.

Nowhere was this contradiction more apparent than in the "Port Misery Re-enactment", Woodville's main Jubilee 150 Celebration. On a sunny, windblown Sunday in March 4,000 people watched "Colonel Light" being rowed ashore, observed the commemorative cairn built by Delfin and listened to songs and speeches. Councillors, visitors and descendants of district pioneers mingled in period dress at the original site of Port Adelaide, now a place which bears no similarity to old "Port Misery" in any shape or form.

Ten years ago river reach and mangrove swamp were already obliterated, swept aside in the first stage of the West Lakes project. The site, then simply an empty expanse of reclaimed land at the edge of a brand new lake, now boasts roads and houses, lawn and trees.

The following two Chapters will explore these and other transformations in the Woodville community at large in the decade since 1976.

THE POPULATION: YOUNG AND OLD

Ten years on, the mixture of peoples which makes up the population of Woodville is even greater than it was. There are residents of direct descent from nineteenth century settlers, and others who moved to the new suburbs of the 1920s or the 1950s: such people have spent lifetimes here, and form stable, ageing and mostly working class communities. There are also many temporary residents, mostly young or recent migrant arrivals, who shift from one rented house or flat to another. There are migrants from all parts of the world. Many are now themselves settled within longstanding ethnic communities. Others are still establishing households just beyond the Pennington Migrant Centre.

When Woodville Council's "Neighbourhood and Voluntary Care" programme was started in 1983, it took only a few months of close contact with local people to discover which changes taking place around them were having the most traumatic effect. All of those changes were social and economic: most were related to what may be called demographic changes, that is in the characteristics of the Woodville population. These were: changes in economic and employment patterns; experienced by many through unemployment; changes in the age pattern, resulting in a rising average community age and increasing numbers of elderly people; changes in cultural patterns being brought about by the presence of the ethnic communities, and affecting both Australian born and migrant families, and changes in family patterns seen in such forms as single parent families and new male/female roles. (1)

(1) Report on Neighbourhood and Voluntary Care meeting, October 1983, Appendix A, in Council Reports, 1983.

Since 1971 Woodville's population growth has dropped from the dramatic rates of the postwar years to very modest increases. Between 1976 and 1984 there was a rise from about 77,090 to an estimated 80,310. That increase obscured wide variations between suburbs within this large and diverse district. In the oldest suburbs, such as those along the Port Road, there was a decline in numbers: an ageing population meant fewer members of households, while continued commercial and industrial expansion locally further reduced numbers by destroying housing stock.

On the other hand, the population of newly developing areas, especially West Lakes, leapt as young and growing families moved there in their thousands. West Lakes growth has been largely responsible for the total increase in Woodville. This may be seen by a comparison with other council districts of similar size and age, such as West Torrens and Unley, which suffered static or slightly declining populations during the same period.

Woodville has more young adults than Adelaide overall yet even more of the elderly. At the 1981 Census (the most recent Census figures available) Woodville was the council with the largest number of people aged 65 and over in South Australia with a total of 9,426. This was 12.1 percent of the population, also higher than average.

In 1983, when the total numbers of people on age pensions and unemployment benefits were ranked according to size, the Department of Social Security found that Woodville came first in the State.

Both young and old face serious problems in their daily existence, which in turn places increasing stress on other residents and local organisations.

The problems posed by an ageing population are likely to increase even further during the next decade. During the 1980s people aged 65 and over became part of the fastest growing segment in the total population in Australia. The growth rate was double that of

the total population, and while expected to drop in the 1990s, it will still be higher than that of the total population. (2)

Graeme Hugo, in a paper on social and economic trends Australia-wide, spelt out some of the implications for urban planners. In the 1980s and 1990s the fastest rate of growth will be of the very oldest people, aged 75 and more. They make the greatest demands on services and are heavily concentrated in particular urban areas. In Adelaide, the highest proportion (more than 15 percent of the population) live in central and inner suburbs where most of the old housing (and more than half the city's nursing homes) are located. The "middle" suburbs have up to 14 percent of their population aged 65 and over, and have the fastest growing aged population as the people who settled then as young couples in the 1940s and 1950s enter their retirement years. That includes many migrant couples.

Mr. Con Marinos, of Addison Road, Pennington, who was awarded the Order of Australia medal in 1985 for services to the Greek/Australian community, was reported as saying that the problems faced by that community had changed since the 1950s. He had been only 17 when he emigrated from Cyprus in 1950, but now the Greek population was ageing, and there was a great need for homes for the elderly. Mr. Marinos could speak English on arrival and had decided to help others who found the transition more difficult.

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- (2) G.J. Hugo, "Macro-Demographic and Social Trends in Australia: their implications for urban development and management", in Urban Australia: living in the next decade, Australian Institute of Urban Studies (Canberra, 1984), p.31. In the chapter heading the phrase "living in the next decade" is from that publication, which comprises papers presented at a symposium on Macro-Economic and social trends in Australia held in 1983.

He had remained with his family in a working class suburb because "the people round here need me - they know where to find me". (3)

More than 60 languages are spoken in Australia: other non-English speakers may not be so fortunate as the Marinos' compatriots. Many migrants who arrived after World War Two learnt enough English to get by on the job or with friends, but as they retire and age, mixing less with English speakers, they revert to their native languages. For those who are elderly on arrival, learning a new language is almost impossible. As yet, few of the specialized services provided for old people are equipped to meet such language demands, let alone other cultural needs.

As labour recruitment was the main aim of Australia's large post-war immigration programme, most people admitted were aged between 20 and 40. Now that large group is aged between 50 and 70. As they were also required to be of good health on selection, many will reach a greater age than the average life span of other Australians. Their numbers have been augmented by recent immigration programmes in which approximately a quarter of migrants have come under the Family Reunion Scheme, which includes aged parents and grand parents as well as the young.

By 1983 it was apparent that the growth of overseas-born non-British aged populations was more than four times that of the Australian-born aged, and that this difference would accelerate during the 1980s.

A detailed report was made to Woodville Council in 1983 concerning the "aged ethnic problem". Woodville had 15 percent of South Australia's ethnic aged people, with significant numbers born in Italy and Poland. By far the highest overall number of old people from non-English speaking countries lived in the Woodville Council area (4,401), compared with the next highest number in the adjoining Enfield area (3,497).

(3) Portside, 19 June 1985

Problems arising from their particular needs in communication, cultural familiarity, transport and aged-care facilities are becoming acute. The districts' aged population is no longer simply Australian-born or British. As an Australian-Ukrainian student at Findon High School wrote:

"Old Polish Woman
Why look so sad?
Is it so bad in your new country?
Is it the people?

.....

Old Polish Woman,
Put a smile on your face
And show Australia that
You are part of her."

Part of Australia, yet also different. Both the European Migrants of the 1950s and 1960s and the Indo-Chinese of the late 1970s and 1980s came from societies where kinship was the basis of the social and even the economic life of each individual, and where the aged played a commanding role in that kinship network. Most of the older migrant residents of Woodville came also from small, rural-based European towns and villages, where community and kin were almost one and the same:

"Mum came from a little town called Tufara Valley .. Mum finds life harder here. She misses her home town, the close community living where people were not so concerned with material things. She is torn between her homeland and the place that her children call home." (5)

(4) Melanie, "Old Polish Woman", Mosaic, Findon High School - Community Media Association, 1983, p.52

(5) Gianna Penso's account, in Mosaic, pp. 24,25

These are but two of the many crucial differences between the original and the adopted society, as older people all too uneasily observe about them. As the Council report of 1983 commented:

"In order to understand the situation of the ethnic aged, their cultural heritage and the values it encompasses must be considered. Personal characteristics resulting from the migration process which involves a wrenching away from all that is familiar to an environment which is alien and unfamiliar, and subsequent settlement experiences must also be considered."

"Consideration of cultural background factors should be viewed as being vital to the understanding of not only the ethnic aged but the migrant communities in general."

Such an understanding is especially important in Woodville given its ethnic diversity.

IMMIGRANTS OLD AND NEW

"As a child I heard a lot about this new continent which offered such a lot of opportunities; so one day I decided to emigrate. After arriving here I realised that I had to do the heaviest work available... To get used to a new country was not an easy thing to do. With a lot of sacrifices we were able to build a home. Now at the height of our contentment we find that our son is unemployed... we are in the third generation of immigration, are we going ahead or are we going backwards?"

(6)

This Italian woman's statement, recorded at a speak-out for immigrant and refugee women of South Australia in 1983, expresses at a personal level the other major demographic changes within Woodville in recent years. By the 1970s the impact of post war and non-British immigration was more than apparent. At the 1981 Census over half the population in Adelaide as a whole was born overseas or had at least one overseas-born parent. Almost half of those born overseas were from non-English speaking countries, Italians being the most numerous.

(6) Migrant Workers' Advisory Committee, "Speak-out for immigrant and refugee women of S.A. ...", p.86

The Woodville district is amongst the most ethnically diverse in South Australia, as it provides a combination of low-cost housing, industrial employment, access to many facilities and closeness to the city centre. Historically, a further attraction was the Torrens floodplain, where many Italians established market gardens.

The 1981 Census figures have been used to create a "social atlas" of Adelaide, in which the various social and economic features of the population are shown in map form. At a glance, Woodville can be seen as an area where there are some high densities of non-British migrants, as well as one where there are many people on low incomes, in blue-collar jobs, with high unemployment rates and a lack of formal education; as Forster comments, these associations show that many migrants are still struggling to gain prosperity or even economic security in Australian society.

In the 1960s and 1970s many Italian families moved into the new housing areas that were developed on the subdivided market garden land. Even today, glasshouses and vegetable plots may be glimpsed behind the new houses, and summer weekends will bring out old women in black, who watch over stalls of tomatoes and buckets of flowers for sale to passing drivers along such bland suburban routes as Grange and Tapleys Hill Roads.

Jeff, Australian-born, writes of his Italian father in Mosaic:

"When they came out in 1960, there were very few houses. My dad's family lived in Findon Road which was then a wide dirt road. Coles New World wasn't built and all around was bush and bare land. Out the back of my grandma's house there was, and still is, an olive orchard."

By 1981 the Italians formed six percent of Woodville's population, though they were but one of a great variety of ethnic groups living in the area.

A "social atlas" of Adelaide, showing the results of the 1981 Census in a series of maps, reveals Woodville as an area with high densities of non-British migrants as well as one of low-income earners, high unemployment rates and a lack of formal education.

This combination of social and economic features shows that many migrants are still struggling to gain economic security. (7)

Gianna comments in Mosaic:

"Dad thinks that life at the beginning in Australia was hard, and only after 30 years has started to feel secure."

At the 1981 Census unemployment rates varied greatly between migrant communities, usually being lowest for those such as Italians and Greeks, who have lived longest in Australia, and highest for those, such as Vietnamese and Lebanese, who are more recent arrivals. As in the population at large, unemployment was usually highest amongst women, although again there were wide differences between ethnic groups.

Unemployment rates for Italian women (5.3 percent) and Greek women (6.5 percent) were actually less than for Australian-born and British women (7.6 percent and 8.8 percent). By contrast, South American women (14.6 percent) and Lebanese women (18.7 percent) suffered much high rates of unemployment, while a staggering 45.4 percent of Vietnamese women were without paid employment.

At the "Speak-out for immigrant and refugee women", a Vietnamese woman declared:

"Sometimes I feel very sorry for myself and my people. I believe that we come here to work as Australians and we try our best to build up Australia. So please don't blame us for unemployment or anything like that. Please Australia!"

This plea for acceptance derives from the harsh experiences of war, flight, imprisonment and adaptation faced by Australia's most recent immigrants, the Indo-Chinese refugees.

(7) Adelaide ... a social atlas. 1981 Census. Produced by the Division of National Mapping and the Australian Bureau of Statistics, with commentaries by Clive Forster (Canberra, 1984), p.16

From the late 1960s to the mid 1970s immigration to Australia was reduced to very low levels, then suddenly increased. By 1981 the number of arrivals was much greater than for 1976. The people who arrived were quite different to those of earlier periods. In 1976, 64 percent of recent arrivals were from Britain, compared with 10 percent from Asia and 4 percent from New Zealand. By 1981 30 percent were from Britain, 30 percent from Asia and 11 percent were from New Zealand. This was a direct result of the change in immigration policies which favoured refugees and family reunions (and New Zealanders). Half of the Asian arrivals were Vietnamese, and all of them were refugees.

In the history of migration to Australia, political and religious refugees have formed a significant part of successive groups of migrants. As we have seen, in South Australia as early as 1838, German Lutherans came to escape religious persecution, as well as to improve their economic opportunities. After World War Two, many European anti-communist refugees arrived.

In Mosaic, Sonia recalls her mother's childhood as a refugee, as being one of constant flight and containment, from Poland to Byelorussia, to Germany, Italy, finally to South Australia, where the family was again kept for years in camps before buying a house at Flinders Park.

"My mother spent all her childhood in refugee camps. It wasn't a happy childhood .. If my mother didn't have to grow up through the war and in refugee camps she would have studied. She is very aware that a good education would have given her more opportunities. She could not plan or dream in those camps. Her hopes now are for my sisters and I. It is important for us to continue our studies so that we will have better job opportunities, so that we will have better things from life."

In recent years, refugees have included - besides the Indo-Chinese - Chileans, Lebanese and Poles. Some of these people have also settled in Woodville. Mosaic includes several representative stories. Tong Vu, 15 years old, recounts an epic of family farewell and secret departure from Vietnam. With his uncle, he was one of 38 people who put to sea one night in a boat 12 metres long and 3 metres wide. Their excitement at sighting their first ship at sea turned to bitter disappointment then growing despair as further ships passed them by.

"I did not understand how they could see us on our little boat without rescuing us or even giving us some food, water or information. Were we not humans on that boat or did we just look like some sort of animals to them?"

They made for the Philippines, living on a daily ration of a can of water and two bowls of rice. Strong winds blew up huge waves which threatened to wreck the boat. The boy thought it was the end of the world as, about him, people prayed, shouted or cried. The wind died but, in the heat of the next day everyone suffered thirst as water supplies dwindled. Finally, on the fifth night they met a Philippino fishing boat, whose crew gave them food, water and directions. The next morning they landed at a city near Manila. After nine months living in Palawan Refugee Camp, Tong Vue and his uncle were sponsored by another uncle living in Australia, and they arrived in Adelaide in February, 1983.

"Our nightmare journey was over, and at last we were free."

Even those dangers at sea pale beside the experiences of Cambodian refugees, who endured terrible deprivation under the Pol Pot regime and further dislocation when the Vietnamese invaded. Then they faced bombs, robbers and minefields to travel overland into Thailand, where they were herded into camps. Kheng, Cambodian-born, describes those experiences in Mosaic: four years of harsh work with little food, clothing or shelter; reunion with his family when the Pol Pot's soldiers were scattered by the Vietnamese; and then a 300 kilometre trek to Thailand.

"Bombs were exploding and rockets were flying over our heads. We walked through the jungle and swam some of the way. We did not sleep or eat."

In Thailand they were kept in camps for three years, guarded and being treated with great cruelty.

"Life in the camp was terrible. I felt unhappy and bored because there was nowhere to go. All I could see were the small huts and the barbed wire that surrounded us. We felt like animals in a cage. I had no education for these three years. There was no T.V., radio or newspapers to find out about the outside world.

At last we got a letter from the Department of Immigration in Australia. It said that my family was allowed to settle in Australia. We were very happy."

Between 1975 and 1982 close to two million Indo-Chinese left their countries, half of them seeking resettlement abroad. Some, such as Kheng's family travelled by land to border camps in Thailand, others crossed into China or took to the sea. These "boat people" made landfall at countries throughout South East Asia, even as far as Darwin, where the first boat landed in April 1976.

"In this way, Australia, a traditional country for refugee resettlement also became a country of first asylum for refugees." (8)

While much publicity centred upon the boat people, only about three percent of the Indo-Chinese accepted were those who had sailed directly to Australia. A total of 2,067 refugees travelled aboard 53 boats, the last one arriving late in 1979. (9) However, many boat people, who had landed in Malaysia or other countries (as in Tong Vu's case) were also accepted by Australia.

Overall the numbers of Indo-Chinese refugees accepted for resettlement in Australia rose from 691 in 1974-75 to a peak of 15,004 in 1980-81. (10)

By the end of 1982, 57,770 refugees from Vietnam had entered Australia, along with 12,107 from Kampuchea (Cambodia) and Laos. Amongst the Vietnamese there are two major ethnic groups, the ethnic Vietnamese and the ethnic Chinese, who are completely separate ethnic groups and have settled as distinctly separate communities. In South Australia about half the Indo-Chinese are ethnic Chinese. In all about 0.4 percent of the South Australian population (1981) was born in China.

The 1981 Census figures do not reflect the continuing high rates of immigration in the early 1980s. However, by 1981, the Vietnamese alone formed 0.3 percent of the Australian population, 1.3 percent of the South Australian population, and 4.2 percent of Woodville's population. The total numbers of Indo-Chinese in Woodville at that time were 895 Vietnamese, 80 Kampuchean (Cambodian) and 15 Laotian, their actual numbers being somewhat higher as these figures do not include the Australian-born children. This represented almost a quarter of the Indo-Chinese living in South Australia, and the proportion since then has been maintained, or even increased.

(8) Nancy Viviani, The long journey. Vietnamese migration and settlement in Australia (Melbourne 1984,) p.69

(9) The Signpost, November 1983, pp. 6-7

(10) Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Table reproduced in Australian Senate, Daily Hansard 9 May 1984

"The Vietnamese, despite their visibility, are a rather small group, living mostly in state capitals, who, on arrival in Australia, faced a number of problems. First, there is a high proportion of dependants in schools, and a higher proportion (mostly unskilled by Australian standards) seeking work... Second, there are bound to be problems with split families seeking family reunion, significant numbers of males without families, and few elderly persons to provide stability in the community." (11)

One response to these problems has come from within the ethnic groups themselves. Each group has rapidly established its own organisation. In South Australia most have their headquarters in the Woodville district or nearby. In 1978 the Vietnamese Association of South Australia was created to assist refugees in resettlement, as does also the Indo-Chinese Australian Women's Association Inc.

This is a "voluntary, non-sectarian, non-political organisation, primarily concerned with the resettlement of Indo-Chinese women and their families." It started in 1978 with the formation of several activity groups planned by Sister Elizabeth Nghia, a Vietnamese teacher, Doctor My, a Vietnamese doctor, Mrs. Heather Hazel, a Health Education Officer and Miss Jenny Leak, a Community and School Health Nurse. The association moved from Hindmarsh to Woodville North in 1980 and then to its present site on Torrens Road, Woodville. There is much activity there with women dropping in, clinics for mothers and babies, English conversation, sewing and book lending.

(11) Viviani, p. 135

President of the Association is Sister Mary Elizabeth Bui-Thi Nghia, who came from North Vietnam to Australia in 1976, herself a refugee. She was bereft of family, friends and country, and spoke no English but is now recognised as an active and accomplished member of the Indo-Chinese community, a social work government advisor and Ethnic Affairs Commissioner. Sister Elizabeth was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1984, accepting that and subsequent awards as "recognition of the Vietnamese community and our work."
(12)

The Cambodian Australian Association was also set up to help refugees, exclusively Cambodian refugees who have arrived in Australia since 1980, although their numbers are far fewer than the Vietnamese.

All Indo-Chinese refugees are offered assistance by the Indo-China Refugee Association (S.A.) Inc. (I.C.R.A.), which was established in 1975 by Australians seeking to provide help to the refugees. The Welfare Director, Mr. Kevin Liston, describes I.C.R.A. as "the voice of concern of Australia." That concern was first voiced by Father Jeffries Foale, who was responsible for forming the association and keeping it going. He is still President, "a focus for continuity and stability."

According to Mr. Liston, I.C.R.A. sees itself as a bridge between the Indo-Chinese communities and Australian organisations. Australian and Indo-Chinese employees and mainly Australian volunteers carry out the numerous activities. Initially, work concentrated on hosting, material aid and advocacy on behalf of refugees in Australia and in camps in South East Asia.

(12) Advertiser, 27 November 1985

Many refugees arriving in South Australia with nothing in their pockets and no relatives awaiting them had immediate material needs, and a need for accommodation and practical information. Hosting, which mixes new arrivals with Australian families, answered some of those needs and also helped break down ignorance on both sides. Mr. Liston pointed out that most new arrivals now get their immediate needs met by family members already living here. He said I.C.R.A. now deals with wider social and cultural needs and problems which develop over time, such as unemployment, youth problems and family break up, with more emphasis on counselling, social support and cultural development.

"Most refugees thought they'd be here a short time and wanted to return to Vietnam or Cambodia. This is a major comparison with other migrants. They have to come to terms with the fact that they can't go back and this causes many problems."

Mr. Liston's view of the Indo-Chinese in Australia is optimistic. He believes there is increasing racial tolerance, suggesting that the very lack of a long-lived Australian identity contributes to Australians' adaptability to newcomers, that, and the consciousness that almost everyone has migrant origins. While many Indo-Chinese have settled in the low-cost western suburbs, there is no particular street or block of concentrated residences, unlike some suburbs in Sydney and Melbourne, and he believes this has also helped avert serious racial confrontation or stereotyping.

Mr. Thorl Un, a Cambodian who works for I.C.R.A., came to Australia in 1983 from a refugee camp in Thailand. He would have preferred America, where his daughter is living with his brother's family, but it was easier and quicker to get to Australia. There was no choice as to where in Australia he might go. He and his wife and sons came with a group of 140 Cambodians who all arrived on the same day. His first impression, looking down upon Adelaide from the plane, was how the houses with gardens looked like Cambodia, but the realities of profound difference soon intruded: the weather was very cold, they were concerned about getting and cooking rice, and about not having the English to cope.

"I have no relatives, no friends. Some people when they just arrived didn't know anything."

I.C.R.A. was most helpful assisting with his family's move from the Pennington Hostel to a rented house. He went to work voluntarily at I.C.R.A. and also in the Cambodian Association. He found that I.C.R.A. was important as a first point of call but the Cambodian Association has become more helpful in recent years as refugees are helped by people of their own language. (*language is the correct word as written by the historian*)

Mr. Un also mentioned the problem of unemployment, especially for the parents of young children. He dismissed incidents of racism as the actions of "uneducated people", who don't even recognise the difference between Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians. Very few Australians are likely to do so. Yet most accept with little comment signs of the growing impact of the different Indo-Chinese communities on established suburbs. A walk or drive about the Woodville - Woodville North area reveals a modest proliferation of restaurants, and shops including a restaurant near the Woodville Council offices, housed in a typical late nineteenth century Adelaide Villa.

While modest in appearance, one of the most remarkable places is the building which houses Adelaide's Vietnamese Buddhist community, the beginnings of a complex to be constructed as South Australia's first Buddhist temple.

On the chilly, open ground at the back of Pennington Centre, facing Butler Avenue, near Pennington Primary School stands a plain new red brick building with yellow verandah posts and a plot of bright flowers in front. Apart from these unusual touches of colour the building is distinctive only because of its vivid red and yellow signs which, written in Vietnamese, introduce visitors to the Phap Hoa Buddhist Hall. The congregation first met in a vacant garage behind the former I.C.R.A. office at Addison Road, Pennington. That was in 1978 and 1979 reported on by the Sunday Mail, of 27 July 1980, as a "garage" temple.

Buddha was enshrined on a makeshift altar and "the scent of incense and the murmurings of prayer frequently drift out across the inner suburban street." From 1979 to 1985 a house was used in the same street. In 1984 the present site, former police station land, was bought from the Department of Lands. Vietnamese architect Nguyen Cong Duyet voluntarily prepared the design for a temple linked by two halls to a service building (the present temporary temple) and obtained building materials. The foundation stone was laid on 23 May 1985 and the hall was built by volunteer labour - Vietnamese, Chinese and Australian - in nine months. The temple being built in front of the hall has some government funding.

The new premises meant that the Association could expand its service to members, as described in a letter to the Woodville Council, 24 February 1984:

Residence for a monk; place of worship; welfare services (accommodation, used furniture); family counselling; meditation and Zen; teaching young, unaccompanied youth discipline and honest for the new life; Saturday afternoon meetings and celebration of the annual ceremonies of full moon, Buddha's birthday and the lunar new year. "Most activities are quiet and silence."

Prayer is celebrated here each Saturday and Sunday. Between 50 and 100 people attend, mostly Vietnamese and some Chinese and Cambodians. Besides the religious ceremonies and social services, school classes teach the children Vietnamese culture and Buddhism.

The monk in residence is Ven Thich Nhu Hue, who also blesses people in their new homes. He is South Australia's only Buddhist monk (there are about 20 in Australia, most in Sydney). Through an interpreter, volunteer worker Mr. Dai Ha Tran, he described leaving Vietnam for Japan, before coming to Australia, where he has lived for about five years.

As an expression of self-help in an alien country, and as a symbol of cultural identity, these associations and various buildings are not unusual. All migrant groups, whether British, Germans or Moslems in the nineteenth century, or Greeks, Italians or Yugoslavs in the mid twentieth century, have formed distinct cultural associations and have raised churches, halls and business premises using their own labour and techniques. Typical examples have been described throughout the Woodville history.

What is unusual is the speed with which the most recent developments have occurred, especially in comparison with the last great phase of immigration after World War Two. There would seem to be two major reasons for this, one being the nature of the most recent migrants themselves, and the other reason being due to changes in attitude towards migrants and to cultural diversity within established Australian society.

While most are neither highly skilled nor wealthy by Australian standards, the Vietnamese are, in Vietnamese terms, relatively skilled, well-educated and affluent. Viviani found that the Vietnamese community she surveyed was probably similar to that in Australia generally as one derived largely from the economic, civil and military middle class of Vietnam. In part because of that background and also because the loss of status and income in transition to Australia breeds frustration, many have turned to establishing and voluntarily working in ethnic organisations within Australia.

The attitudes of Australians towards migrant settlement have changed over time. The arrival of the first Indo-Chinese refugees coincided with a general debate about migration and cultural diversity within Australia. The settlement of new Asian ethnic groups simply intensified that debate, adding considerations of race to the arguments and hastening change in formal policies.

Until as recently as the early 1970's both government and community expected migrants to assimilate as quickly as possible, or at least to make such cultural adjustments as to become integrated with Australian society. As established migrant groups became more vocal the emphasis shifted to the multi-cultural nature of modern Australian society within which different cultures and languages should be retained and fostered. A series of national inquiries, including inquiry into Poverty in Australia (1975) and the Galbally Report on migrant services and programmes (1978) raised the problems of employment and other settlement difficulties endured by migrants and recommended major increases in Federal Government support for migrant resettlement.

The Commonwealth then expanded its range of services greatly from the traditional ones of providing hostel accommodation and English classes, by way of new arrival programmes, migrant resource centres, multi-cultural education in schools and "ethnic" radio and television. State Governments followed suit. In South Australia an Ethnic Affairs Branch was created in 1977 to help improve the position of ethnic communities. At about the same time other services included a State interpreter service, translation of government publications into various languages and the provision of welfare grants to ethnic organisations.

These organisations were also used to channel some Commonwealth funds for such purposes as housing. Somewhat belatedly by the late 1970s there was formal recognition that Australia had become a multi-cultural nation.

The big migrant hostels themselves, relics of the immediate post-war era, were more slowly changed. At least two generations of migrant experience find expression in the description by Polish-born immigrant Mark Kaziniec of the Pennington Migrant Centre in 1982:

"Concentration Camp or Hostel?"

"... The Hostel looked so bad my mum started to cry ... My parents and I and some other people went through hell the next day as the temperature rose to 39 degrees and I lay on my bed feeling only half alive. What made it worse was that in Europe, where we had come from, it was winter, and we had come to Australia where they had put us in iron houses like big tins without any fans or air conditioning ..."

"All my dreams of Australia being a beautiful country were destroyed by the look and smell of the Adelaide Hostel." (13)

The Centre's Immigration Resettlement Committee made what changes it could within the existing facilities, promoting community involvement with open days and allowing use of the premises, for example in teaching of Cambodian dance, and overseeing the creation of a residents' committee. From considering the immediate needs of refugees the Committee became concerned with the broader needs of refugee immigrants.

In August 1985 the Minister, Chris Hurford, publicly signalled the end of the era of the big, institutional migrant centres. He acknowledged that they were costly to run and unpopular with residents. Cafeteria food was unsatisfactory for the different nationalities and security was a problem because of the outside laundries and ablution blocks (there were some unhappy incidents at Pennington, which worsened migrant families' dismay). These conditions prompted migrants to move out as quickly as they could, before essential orientation was undertaken, creating subsequent settlement problems. The Pennington Hostel and another in Brisbane were the first centres in which the old buildings would be replaced by self-contained units with their own bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms and laundries.

(13) Mosaic, p. 50

Planned to cost \$2.46 million and to accommodate 150 people,

"The beauty of the new style centres is that they will pay for themselves. Savings on operating costs, and selling land and assets tied up in the big, old centres will fully offset the cost of conversions. The new centres will be flexible, inexpensive and capable of being used for other purposes if demand for migrant centre accommodation falls."

"The old centre was emptied and closed in December 1985. Between 80,000 and 100,000 people had passed through since it had been built in 1946, with 2,500 living there at the height of post-war immigration. (14)

The Settlement Committee expressed some concern at the possible loss of existing services, such as the health services. However, residents should reap greater benefits from such services as health care, child care, English classes and employment advice by being encouraged to stay longer than in the past, for six months.

Tariff rates were to be less than the old rates (although food costs would be higher). In September 1986 thirty modern two to four bedroom units were opened in place of old barracks-style and communal accommodation. It remains to be seen what part the new centre plays, as claimed by Mr. Hurford in his opening speech, in introducing migrants "to the real Australia" and making "their integration smoother". (15)

(14) Advertiser, 3 November, 1986

(15) Advertiser, 3 November, 1986

Other agencies and organisations have also established services to assist migrants on their arrival and settlement. Amongst local government authorities in South Australia, Woodville Council has been one of the most active in this regard. Despite the high level of need, reinforced by high unemployment and low incomes, the district has been described as

"characterized by a comprehensive range of information services in most community languages ... The migrant communities in Woodville and the adjacent LGA's are the best serviced in the metropolitan area". (16)

ORGANISING COMMUNITIES: SEATON

In the community at large, institutions and organisations waxed and waned. Increasingly they have come under the aegis of large, permanent institutions and with government or local government support. Also increasingly, many new services are attempts to provide substitutes for services and pursuits which were once provided within the family circle or as a part of close-knit local communities.

The experience of two community groups formed in succession at Seaton during the 1970s provides a good example. Firstly, it shows the problems of developing a genuine sense of community in a physically diffuse, socially disparate slice of suburbia which Seaton represents. Secondly, it reveals the processes by which formal State and local agencies become involved in providing the required community resources and facilities. Both groups were concerned with the Seaton community as a whole, unlike the more usual cultural or recreational organisation which caters for people of specific origins, age or interests.

(16) "Review of Locations of Migrant Resource Centres", prepared for the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 1984, filed with Woodville Migrant Resource Centre reports at Woodville Council, A 080.005.

The Seaton Neighbourhood Community Centre Committee was formed in 1975 when the Principal of Seaton High School, John Pederson,

"became aware of a distinct lack of public recreational facilities available in the immediate area round the school." (17)

A local founding committee obtained Australian Assistance Plan funding to research people's needs with the "Seaton Community Report 1976" being duly produced by David Mathews. The report was but one end product of the project.

"Those intangible aspects of the Committee's work in developing community awareness is at times imperceptible in its progress and further results will depend upon the Committee's ability to tackle programmes which can be seen by residents to bear results."

The report itself pointed out the problems the Committee would face simply in maintaining its own membership, let alone improving community facilities. Even identifying the study area was difficult as there is no Seaton "community" in the traditional sense of a homogenous group within a defined area.

Seaton blends physically with other suburbs and is divided into cultural groupings - Italians, Slavs, British and Australian-born. A further division lies between the one third of housing built in the early 1950s by the South Australian Housing Trust - rented to factory workers who are mostly Australian and now ageing - and the privately developed area, more recently built up on former market gardens and occupied mostly by Italians and Yugoslavs. In the 1950s, when families were young, and children provided a contact point, there was much community activity, although the organised community centre failed when taken over by a group who were unpopular. Those contacts died as families aged, with a large proportion of the population now being aged more than 50. The 20-30 age group, housed mostly in flats, are only transitory residents.

(17) Seaton Community Report, 1976, prepared by David Mathews, Foreword. Council Records.

Seaton's socio-economic status was low, its residents working in factories, at home retired or housekeeping, or unemployed. Many people were dependent on inadequate internal public transport, and lacked suitable local meeting places, with few reserves, only a handful of local clubs and limited access to school facilities. A survey of leisure behaviour showed that television, visiting friends and "just mucking about" at home were the main leisure activities, which "in many cases indicated that there was really nothing to do around Seaton".

Both the first and the second Seaton communities boasted some major achievements, but the most enduring of these were services and facilities which resulted from their lobbying and negotiation with other formal bodies, such as the State Government and Woodville Council. There was not sufficient sense of local identity for the committees themselves to survive. The first committee declined, due to a large number of resignations and the failure to enlist new local members and disbanded in September, 1976.

A successor, the Seaton Community Group, formed in 1978 with encouragement from the "Community Development Team" of the Department for Community Welfare's (DCW) Woodville office. Its objects were similar to the first: improving and co-ordinating services and facilities in Seaton and fostering community spirit and contact between residents. It succeeded in improving some of these but failed as a group for the same reasons as the first, and, more positively, as the immediate needs of its affiliate organisations had been met.

A report to Council in 1981 described the group's successes. The group encouraged Council to start a community bus service in the City of Woodville. A playgroup was started but moved to Alberton due to lack of co-operation by local schools. (A government-funded Child Care centre was opened at Seaton North in 1985.) Support was given to a submission to employ a youth worker in the Seaton and Findon area. This was made by another community-based group, the Seaton Youth Project, which was formed in 1980 and obtained funding from DCW and an office and funds for running costs from Woodville Council. Susie Omelcsuk was employed from 1981 at first as a part-time youth worker, forming contacts with young local people as a streetworker. She dealt with a variety of problems, many of them stemming from unemployment, loss of motivation, having nothing to do and little money. (18)

The Seaton Community Group helped other groups obtain funds by providing information on funding sources and help in preparing submissions. The group had contacts or access to DCW, Local Government Assistance funds and the South Australian Schools Commission, amongst others.

The group also promoted consumer affairs, leisure activities and a Seaton Party celebration. The Council's report concluded however that the group was defunct, as its activist members had resigned or left the district:

"this highlights one of the major problems with Seaton (which is) so culturally and socially backward, that it does not have a great holding power for active people".

There was, besides, the problem of lack of a perception of community as whole. Factions within the area, such as ethnic groups and the aged, were little help in this respect. The group tried to involve the mainly Italian migrant population but the Italians, as a tightly knit community in themselves, had little interest in the community as a whole. This was considered "rather limiting when one is dealing with the needs of a given district".

(18) Weekly Times, 18 May 1983

At the other extreme, lack of identity, apathy and shifting residence prevented the development of local women's self-help groups. The Seaton Community Group was very concerned with the problems of single mothers as there was a high proportion living in Housing Trust homes. The Trust, unlike several of the other formal bodies, also resisted efforts to involve it in the provision of facilities in this long established Housing Trust area, in contrast to its involvement at the nearby Semaphore Park development at West Lakes.

ORGANISING COMMUNITIES: WEST LAKES

West Lakes in all respects showed a marked contrast with Seaton. A blossoming of social and recreational associations and facilities followed the completion of the physical development.

"The hard thinking that preceded development at West Lakes came up with water sports as a major recreational feature for the area ..."

"The Delfin Property Group makes the point that its provision of community facilities has kept pace with the growth of the West Lakes population ..."

"Constant liaison between Delfin and Community Organisations was considered essential and resulted in land being made available for Schools, Churches and Sporting groups".

"Service Clubs and other organisations were encouraged".

"An aquatic centre was built on the lake's edge".

"The S.A. Rowing Association established its headquarters beside the lake, using the lake's Olympic - Standard rowing course ..."

"And as the population grew, communication stepped up. A 'residents' newsletter was started and, later a community newspaper (Lakeside) was printed and distributed. (19)

(19) Advertiser, November 13, 1984, advertising feature, "Ten Years of West Lakes".

As an illustration of architecture affecting activities, many of the new institutions built at West Lakes were designed and then operated as integral parts of the surrounding community. The West Lakes United Parish Church, opened in 1978, was the first of its kind in South Australia. Jointly owned and used by the West Lakes Uniting Church parish and the Catholic Church, it was also located near the Bartley Terrace shopping centre, and has become very much part of local life. Unlike some of the established Seaton Schools, the new West Lakes School and kindergarten were opened to residents.

West Lakes Shore Primary School was opened in 1978 with an enrolment of 254 pupils, three years after the opening of Semaphore Park Primary School. The new High School was built in 1971 as the Royal Park High School, just beyond West Lakes, the name being changed to West Lakes High School in 1978.

West Lakes Cub Pack was formed in 1978.

The West Lakes Senior Citizens Club was formed in 1981 and first met in the Football and Community Clubrooms on Bartley Terrace with provision made in the community room for the members to meet. Subsequently the Senior Citizens Club became part of the new West Lakes Community Club on Hawkesbury Reserve (later Jubilee Park) which included the Men and Ladies Bowling Club (Lawn Bowls), Tennis, Croquet and Bridge Clubs.

The activities hall at Woodbridge North opened in 1982. Woodbridge is a retirement village developed by "Lakeside Villages Inc". A non-profit organisation formed in 1980 by West Lakes Ltd. and the Port Adelaide Central Mission, following the successful completion and sale of McCuthcheon Grove retirement Village.

On a tour of West Lakes provided by Ms Marianne Martin, of the Delfin Group she acknowledged that, while there was a sense of immediate community in some streets at West Lakes, the layout especially on Delfin Island, fostered privacy, and that there were few social focal points in most neighbourhoods. Officers at Woodville Council recalled, criticising the lack of Community Centres despite Delfin's support for social activities, such as sport and shopping. Ms Martin commented that Delfin was aware of the criticism and is doing differently in its development at Golden Grove, where it is planning to provide Community houses.

The use of Bower Cottages as a community centre arose from a perception of precisely that need. Again by contract with nearby Seaton, it was the Housing Trust which initiated moves in this direction as shown in the following letter to Woodville Council's Planning Officer. Dated 26 February 1976 and signed by J.L. Crichton, then Manager (Estates), it reads:

"As you are already aware, the Trust is building a major innovative housing estate at Semaphore Park, West Lakes. It now seems desirable that responsible and interested parties discuss in greater detail the subject of support facilities (recreational, cultural, social etc.) in and around this development so that present and future community needs and aspirations can be met in the most rational manner".

"The Trust is committed to renovate the Bower Cottages for some such purpose and would prefer to consider this project in the context of the total needs of the area so that the best choices of siting and function can be made".

"The new Semaphore Park Primary School has been planned as a focal point of the Trust housing and has been designed for use by the community in out of school hours. It is proposed to hold a meeting at this school ... in order to discuss in broad terms a planning strategy for such facilities and you ... are cordially invited to attend this meeting".

From that meeting in 1976 a group emerged called the West Lakes - Semaphore Park Community Development Coordinating Committee, which, as its name suggests, was mainly concerned with encouraging coordination between the individual organisations responsible for community development. Rev. John Watt of the Uniting Church was elected Chairman and John Travers, Principal of Semaphore Park Primary School, as secretary. The Committee met at about two monthly intervals for about four years, its members including representatives from Woodville Council, the Department of Community Welfare, West Lakes Rotary Club and Royal Park High School.

In 1977 Rev. Watt presented a working paper which drew attention to some basic sociological characteristics of West Lakes. He wrote that "the southern end of West Lakes contained no significantly different groups of residents, merging evenly with neighbouring suburbs." The area is upper middle class suggesting the probable emergence of a good community of interests, ideals and behaviour patterns." However, at the northern end there were three markedly different groups each living within a clearly defined geographical area. There was old Semaphore Park, working-class and sometimes depressed but well established. Secondly, there was the Housing Trust estate which was visually distinct because of its unique "Radburn" layout and occupied by renters rather than home-owners. The third group included Northpoint. Consisting of estates sold by West Lakes Ltd. and purchased War Service homes; in "class structure this area grades from upper middle down to middle."

"It is quite clear even at this early stage that the three groups show little potential for becoming an integrated total community. Indeed, early indication suggest the emergence of three quite distinct and separate communities ... there is therefore an inbuilt possibility of mutual suspicion and antagonism (with) major implications for the future well-being of the community."

Rev. Watt recommended that, to promote integration and mutual understanding, planning decisions should be conveyed to all groups, with their involvement that community organisations should be encouraged, and that services - school, churches and so on - "should be strategically sited so that no group is self contained ... but that residents must mix with residents of other groups". Key sites included the school and Bower Cottages in the Trust area, United Parish Centre (which also provided social worker services, Mothers and Babies' clinics and a day-care centre) at Northpoint and the Rotary Club site at the boundary of the Trust area and Lakeside Units.

Neither Brian Martin (General Manager of West Lakes Ltd) nor Jim Crichton (Housing Trust) were pleased with attention being drawn to divisions between Housing Trust and other West Lakes communities, but they were prepared to make efforts to promote cooperation. The Committee itself was used as a forum for exchanging information between the organisations involved in the area with a view to orderly community development. Topics discussed included swimming enclosures in the lake, an aquatic sports centre and library facilities with representatives from agencies such as the State Department of Education or local leaders being involved as required.

As a Woodville Council report noted, by late 1977 the Committee had been instrumental in the establishment of a pre-school centre, designing and finding users for the Bower Cottages and establishing youth group activities. "By far the most useful aspect of its existence is the liaison and co-ordination achieved between the organisations represented."

The Committee met with the Chairman of the Libraries Board. This was timely as he spoke about discussions which were proceeding with Councils for improved library facilities in the West region. The "West" had long been deprived of good, local library services, and public agitation, led by the humorous, but determined C.R.O.W.'s ("Concerned Residents of the West") stimulated a profound change at State library level to a direct involvement with local libraries. The most dramatic period of expansion in public library services, provided in co-operation with Councils, was between 1977-1979 when 10 new

services came into operation in the Western region, three of these in Woodville. Woodville Central (in the former Institute) the Mobile Library and West Lakes library in the Mall were established in 1978, with a fourth branch library opened part-time at Findon in 1981 and full-time in 1983.

The West Lakes library was an outstanding success as after a slow start record loans were reported month by month.

The other facilities discussed so earnestly by Committee members were also completed or started at about the same time; a residents' newsletter Lakeside, being printed by West Lakes Ltd; the lake itself being finally filled in 1977 and Bower Cottages Community Centre opening in 1978.

A single edition of Lakeside (Number 12, 1981) reveals the diversity of other emerging community activities, reporting good responses to the establishment of a West Lakes Bowling and Citizens Club (350 founding members), a Contract Bridge Club, and overwhelming response to the formation of a West Lakes Tennis Club, with 80 founding member families and the offer of two courts from West Lakes Ltd; "Contact" a drop-in Centre for women and children; a hive of activity at the library during school holidays; new courts and play equipment at Semaphore Park Primary School for students' and community use; improved bus services, including the opening of the Council's community bus line; fetes, boat races, the West Lakes Lifesaving Club, an annual garden competition, and the expansion of West Lakes Kindergarten to include other early childhood services. At the northern end of the lake an Aquatic Centre was built in 1986 through a Government unemployment scheme and also BMX Bicycle track. All reflected the youth - of the population and of the new flexible local institutions - the active involvement of the developers and other organisations, and that of the middle class residents who provided leadership through Jaycees and Rotary of the West Lakes - Semaphore Park Committee.

The need for that Committee lessened as its objectives were gained, and it was quietly disbanded at the end of 1980. (20)

Sales promotion aside, West Lakes Ltd. had good reason to quote residents' satisfied comments. "The area has everything going for it and we don't often feel the need to go outside it for anything we want." (21)

INVENTING COMMUNITIES

There are some social needs which are greater than the resources of a single community or more widespread. The increasing need for services for the aged is an example. Geographer Graeme Hugo argues that the demographic pressures of the ageing (alone) will change the traditional provision of services.

In Woodville such changes in providing services have already begun. Some services have themselves venerable histories. Reference has already been made in the earlier part of the history to the formation of local senior citizens clubs. Specific housing built for rental to old people was constructed first in South Australia at Seaton in 1954 by the South Australian Housing Trust. During the 1980s, as it became aware of demographic trends, the Trust greatly increased construction of "Cottage flats". By 1984 these represented a third of all its new dwellings, under construction. (22)

(20) References to the West Lakes - Semaphore Park Community Development Co-ordinating Committee are derived from the file of that name in Council records, and include committee minutes and reports.

(21) Mrs Fran Trinne, Lakeside. no. 9, 1979

(22) S. Marsden, Business, Charity and Sentiment. The South Australian Housing Trust 1936-1986 Adelaide 1986, p. 403

During 1985 the Trust had under construction between 700 and 900 units for the elderly, with about 260 being built in Woodville, the largest groups (more than 50) being at Fulham and Seaton. As a joint venture with the Trust, the Woodville Council built 12 rental and 12 owner-funded units at Hendon on land adjacent to Council;s Acacia Court known as Waratah Close.

The Housing Trust has also been faced with the housing needs of increasing numbers of single parent families and with the new phenomenon of homeless youth. The youth homelessness problem first became generally recognised in about 1980. The Trust devised a system to let houses directly to groups of young people in the "50 houses Direct Lease Scheme". Within the district, the first response to the crisis was the formation of the Woodville Youth Accommodation Committee Inc, which set up a short term emergency hostel in a house provided by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, at Belmore Terrace, Woodville. Another house was later provided at Woodville West and further youth housing was set up in Trust houses by the Port Adelaide Central mission at Cheltenham and by Adelaide Kids Shelter at Kilkenny. Rent relief provided by Commonwealth and State Governments also helped young people and others on benefits to afford private flats or share houses, although some landlords responded by increasing rents.

Even the provision of metropolitan-wide or State-wide social services has however been influenced by the concern to promote local communities. Large public and private organisations have, since the 1970s, promoted decentralisation of their services, setting up a series of local branches or small, community based centres rather than expanding single large institutions.

At State Government level, the pioneer in this development was the Department for Community Welfare. This succeeded the old Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department under the first Dunstan government and was itself re-named and re-organised in the early 1970s, becoming "decentralised around geographical service delivery units, with regional structures supporting a group of local offices based upon local communities. It was planned that each local office would eventually become a Community Welfare Centre which would act as a hub for local services and community-integrating functions". (23)

The Community Welfare Act of 1972 recognised the State's responsibility to provide considerable welfare support but was also based on a philosophy which aimed to encourage communities to accept some responsibility for their own members, and aimed to further their capacity to do so. That philosophy was reinforced following the promotion of the Australian Assistance Plan by the Whitlam Federal Labour government during its term in office between 1972 and 1975, although Federal Government support for the program itself was withdrawn in 1977. (Some continuity of local projects was maintained in 1977 when the State Government provided \$250,000 to the Western Adelaide Regional Council for Social Development to allow projects previously funded under the A.A.P. to proceed.)

Local community welfare workers, and those employed in projects originally funded through the A.A.P., have been involved in initiating or supporting very many of the community groups and activities which have started in Woodville during the past decade.

(23) Rod Oxenberry "Community Welfare", in Andrew Parking and Allan Patience, eds., The Dunstan Decade Longman Cheshire, Melbourne 19812 p.59

One example was a project co-ordinated by Louise Portway who worked at the Community Media Association in Norman Street Woodville, which was funded initially through the A.A.P. as a regionally based centre providing resources, skills and advice to further community information services. Ms Portway co-ordinated the work of the Western Adelaide Human Services Directory Working Party which, in 1977, completed a regional directory. This directory, the first of its kind in South Australia, contained information about more than 1,200 bodies which provided services for people in the western metropolitan region.

Another major State authority was decentralised in 1981. This was the South Australian Health Commission - created in 1977 to co-ordinate health services - which was reorganised into western, central and southern sectors.

That move also confirmed the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's commitment to providing varied health services in its "own" Western metropolitan region. Apart from a new Emergency Service (Casualty) Wing, described as a "mini hospital" when opened in 1980 there has been no further major physical expansion at the hospital site. Rather, since the mid 1970s the main feature of the hospital's history has been its extension into the surrounding community in to numerous existing houses to provide specialised community services. "Tenterden" was one of the houses acquired, bought in 1979 for short term accommodation for country out-patients and relatives and for other uses, including the independent, Rape Crisis Centre, run by a co-operative of volunteer and paid-worker women.

Another large health-related institution which also ceased to expand its headquarters and began to decentralise its services was the Woodville Spastic Centre, run by the S.A. Spastic Paralysis Welfare Association Inc. on Woodville Road. Having duly constructed its large new centre at that site (see Chapter Ten), from 1982 the Association decided to expand that Centre no further. Two smaller centres were acquired at Christies Beach and at Ingle Farm to serve the southern and north-eastern suburbs of Adelaide.

Locally, perhaps the greatest change during the decade, in terms of diversification of services, particularly in the provision of community services has been in the Woodville Council.

A COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In September 1985, the Community Services Association of South Australia, the Local Government Association and the Metropolitan Town Clerk's Association organised a seminar on "what Local Government is Doing" in the "Human Services" area. Many services were described, including care of the aged, community transport, local housing schemes and children's services. In opening the seminar, the Minister of Local Government, Ms. Barbara Wiese, also summed up the changing nature and increasing extent of Councils' involvement in human services over the previous 10 years:

... "Human Services is a rather grand title for what can be seen as an extension of many traditional Council functions. Community health services build on Councils' longstanding support for mothers and babies groups; or for community hospitals. Services for the aged are an extension of support for Senior Citizens' Centres, and youth programs support true traditional assistance for youth clubs, scouts and guides and so on."

".. In many respects the current growth in human service responsibilities represents a third wave in Local Government development - in the early years councils developed primarily as providers of physical infrastructure and services, in the 1970s they developed as planning and development control authorities; in the 1980s I believe they will become significant service organisations as well."

Federal and State governments have supported and sometimes pushed councils into assuming these responsibilities. An ideal view of that encouragement is in the Minister's words that this "is consistent with a view of Local Government as a full partner in the system of government - with broad ranging powers and responsibilities to respond to the full range of needs within local communities... "

Less ideally, rising social expectations of government - provided services having coincided with general economic recession and contracting public funds, have made State and Federal government's more than willing to share responsibility or to shed responsibility for local community services."

Mr Doug Hamilton commented in an interview as Woodville's Town Clerk, "... When you become involved in a joint venture with a government department one must always be wary because the Government, at a stroke of a pen, can withdraw, then you suddenly get the whole lot." Woodville Council, certainly is also aware of the "grey areas" in responsibility for what are described as Welfare services, although what exactly is "Welfare" (and therefore not Council's responsibility) is equally grey.

However these services are defined, Woodville Council has quite clearly enlarged its range of community services and extended its support to an even greater span of social services and pursuits. As Ms. Wiese pointed out, while Governments are particularly concerned with the potential role of councils as direct providers of services, councils extend their roles by providing significant support for local and voluntary groups, by providing administrative support, premises and financial assistance, and co-ordinating local services. During the past decade the Woodville Council has extended its community development role by each of these means, but it would be reasonable to conclude that the preferred roles are the last two, in which the Council fosters rather than assumes community initiative.

In the beginning, it was easiest to expand established services. By the 1970s the Council had well-established interests in recreation (particularly sport) and senior citizens' welfare. This was reflected at a personal level by the award, in 1979 of an O.A.M. to the Mayor, Mr William Sutherland, for his community service on Council for 18 years, and his voluntary work with Senior Citizens and Sports Clubs. "Scan" Sutherland considered one of his best efforts was inaugurating the garden party for the elderly, which is held at St. Clair gardens every March. (24)

(24) Weekly Times 31 January 1979

The number of Senior Citizens Clubs has steadily increased to ten and the Council has encouraged co-ordination between Clubs. Its direct support for the aged was greatly expanded from the mid 1970s by the provision of housing. "Casuarina Lodge" was the first, comprising 25 units for donorship or rent opened at Woodville West in 1976; "Acacia Court", opened at Hendon in 1983 is a major development and the most complex, with 40 nursing beds, 70 hostel units, a day care centre and a library depot. As its first joint venture with the South Australian Housing Trust, "Waratah Close" at Hendon was opened in 1986 with a further like project at "Palm Grove" Hughes Street, Woodville. The Commonwealth and State Governments provided subsidies.

A District Recreational Complex was established in the 1980s at Valetta Road, Fulham Gardens in a fastly developing residential area and named Collins Reserve. This area was previously market gardens operated by the Collins family. It comprised two sports fields, soccer pitch, clubrooms, tennis courts, lake and an area for public recreation.

The existing support given some recreation pursuits - notably sport, "passive recreation" (reserves), senior citizens' centres and some traditional cultural groups - was extended by an enthusiastic purchase and conversion of several properties as local community centres. These were usually existing community buildings such as old, moribund progress association halls and Churches, for example St. Andrews, in Woodville Road and the Norman Memorial Congregational Church at Kilkenny. This Church has been converted by the Council to a gallery, which is used by the local Traditional Art Club.

There are now about 10 such centres, Mr. Hamilton's aim having been for local people to "have the use of local community clubs rather than having the larger single buildings serving a number of areas."

Mr. Hamilton described the Council's new functions as a logical progression from the days when all efforts had to be directed towards providing public facilities, firstly for the burgeoning post-war suburbs and then for West Lakes. Certainly, by the mid-1970s, it seemed that the Council had accomplished its major public works, and that it would probably expand into serving more general social needs. (See Chapter Ten). And obviously, similar changes have occurred within other Councils, reinforced by changes at other levels of government. But at Woodville, these external factors have combined with local factors to produce one of the most rapid changes in Council role and a distinctive set of services. The most important of those local factors would seem to be; first, a widespread recognition which emerged during the 1970s of the Western region's social and economic problems and its lack of services as basic as local transport or libraries; second, some particular demographic feature as the highly visible populations of youth, migrants and old people; third, Woodville's own size and sizeable population, and fourth, a certain combination of people operating at the Council; a new Mayor a new Town Clerk and some new members of staff in newly-created positions.

Mr Sutherland was succeeded as Mayor in July, 1979 by Mr. John Dyer. First elected to Council in 1970 he had gained a keen awareness not only of the Council's existing functions but also of its changing roles. As the local Weekly Times reported on 11 July 1979, the Mayor announced in his first speech that he and the Council "must accept the challenge of reassessing and restructuring ... to keep ahead of community needs ... " Good advice was needed from well-qualified Council officers, advice "that is not only in tune with our city electorate but which can predict the future of State and National influences on our community." As legislators, Councillors faced the challenge of the "idle hands situation" residents were being forced into by unemployment and shorter working periods, while the energy crisis, "possibly restricting travel will mean more residents will be looking to local recreational occupational facilities." Rate revenue must be contained yet more community facilities and services supplied. "Council has to be adaptable to be effective. In this changing local government field, I will accept the challenge".

The new Mayor also mentioned the "fact that we are considering restructuring Council format . . .," and this was duly carried out in that same month. Council resolved that there should be five permanent committees to provide separately for the management of properties and finance, public works, people, parks and recreation, and administration. A new permanent committee was created, Health and Community Services, which was to be concerned not only with the traditional public health services but also with making recommendations to Council as follows, on: caring for the aged; domiciliary care; welfare for those in need, based on council and other funds available and the continuing survey of the general welfare needs of residents; providing facilities for cultural activities, such as arts, crafts and music; promoting the local tourist attractions and "potential" of the district and liaising with the history committee and Woodville Historical Society "in respect of areas of buildings of historic nature."

The new Town Clerk was Mr. Doug Hamilton, who succeeded Mr. Robert Kerr in December 1978. Mr Kerr devoted most of his working life to the council and Mr. Hamilton his entire working life, both having started in 1936. Both also followed similar careers to the "executive suite" as accountant city treasurer and deputy town clerk. The two officers had enjoyed a long association yet they were quite unlike as people and this in turn influenced their styles of administration and the roles and responsibilities of Council which they favoured and recommended. Mr. Hamilton has a strong personal interest in local community life, expressed by way of his own membership of sports, religious, charitable, business and historical groups: "My philosophy has been to visit as many clubs as possible so it was seen the executive was moving amongst the people... " He promoted the Council's move towards expanded community services and as back-up for new social and cultural groups, such as the Woodville Historical Society (successfully formed in 1975), the Friends of the Woodville Library (1981) and the City of Woodville Concert Band. Councillor Lyall Aird (who was also founding President of the Historical Society), the Mayor and the Town Clerk were keen to create a concert band as part of an eventual "Academy of Arts, Dancing and Music." They held a public meeting in 1982 at which it was agreed to

form a band, Woodville's first. The Council provided funds and paid for a professional Musical director Mr. Anthony Crosse - in return, the band performing at many of the Council's public functions. Early band practices were held at the new Woodville High School Music Centre. The founders' aimed to enable both older musicians to return to music and to create an opportunity for students to continue their pursuits.

As a direct Council responsibility for community services, a big step forward was made when it appointed its first community Services Officer, in 1980. Mr. Hamilton saw the need for a Council Officer to liaise with the recreational clubs and centres, as well as the "ethnic associations," and then "also the Director of Local Government asked me would I have an officer supervise a local information centre." As the originating motive was recreational, the first officer appointed was Mr. Mike Newton, who had that experience, having been formerly a teacher and then recreation officer at Marion Council. He found the Woodville position offered a wider range of responsibilities than simply recreation officer or offering suggestions for community development, and that the Council also expected services to be carried out. Council was very supportive of his suggestions, provided his arguments were sound, and was prepared to take risks on the same grounds.

The first large project involved the establishment of the Woodville Information Service. The speed of change, the range of services provided and the loss of local information networks has created the need for yet another formal service, community information centres. In South Australia these have already a venerable history as the nation's first, the Adelaide Citizen's Advice Bureau, was founded in 1958. Local information services were started during the 1970s. In the Woodville district, these were directed at non-English speaking residents who had the additional barriers of language and cultural unfamiliarity to access to available services. A Migrant Information Centre, operated at Kilkenny by the Migrant Action Committee, opened in 1975 and a similar centre, operated by the Italian Catholic Federation, opened at Findon in 1976.

When direct Federal Government funding was run down, the State's Local Government Department asked the Council to assume the role of coordinating the operation of the services, with State Government support. The Council agreed to take over these services, expanded to provide an overall Information Service. Agreement was reached in 1980, the new service operating at the Council offices from 1981 as part of its Community Services section. In Mr. Newton's words, "... the Council office should be the place for people to turn to for any information they need. The Town Clerk wanted to see the council office as the hub." And the Town Clerk observed with satisfaction the great increase in numbers of people visiting the offices. Interpreters were employed, and it was found that "The majority of callers had difficulty in relating using the English language." Most users have been over 40, most calls concerning income maintenance and housing, main nationalities being Italian, Australian born and Greek, in that order. (25)

In the same year the Council started operating a Community bus service, "Woodville Community bus". Although passenger numbers grew only slowly at first, the service was much needed in a city in which most public transport still by-passes local destinations to converge on the Centre of Adelaide.

Community services was expanded into a whole department in 1983, and in that year the Council embarked upon the Town Clerk's most idiosyncratic, idealistic and ambitious community development programme, called Neighbourhood and Voluntary Care.

Both Mayor and Town Clerk were concerned to "bring the Town Hall to the public" by promoting local centres, and at the same time to "encourage neighbourly sharing and caring at the very local or street level." (26)

(25) Report for the ordinary meeting of the Community Services Committee, 10 March 1986, Council records.

(26) Signpost, November 1983, published by the Parks Community Residents Committee

The programme is an interesting formal response to the perceived decline of voluntarism and neighbourliness, in part due to the loss (to the permanent workforce) of the married women who have always done the lion's share of voluntary work. In effect the Council is attempting to rekindle such local networks by providing the forum for local residents to meet each other, and by giving them assistance with meeting places, newsletters and other activities.

Setting up the first group, at Athol Park/Woodville North took a good six months, with John Rees coordinating Council's efforts. Mike Newton explained that the programme had developed from the belief that people related to each other within neighbourhoods. "We took the attitude that the City was too big to have an identity in its own right, so we divided it into 10 areas of about 7,000 to 8,000 people each." People were first contacted in Woodville North and, at meetings and workshops the various local concerns were aired - such as communication, ethnic needs, aged day care, after school child care and the inadequacy of public meeting places. A Woodville North Neighbourhood Resource Centre was then established at the W.G. Sparrow Reserve.

Altogether there are about five such groups now operating with Council help, including the employment of the coordinator. The Council's support is not wholly altruistic, as it accords with the belief that welfare services should be shared by the Community, and answers several existing demands on Council's time: for example, from those looking for volunteer work and those asking for help, and for extended assistance to aged people living in their own homes.

The programme has certainly attracted some response from residents, and has stimulated some informal neighbourhood events such as street parties held at Christmas time.

On the other hand, people seem to be less ready or less able to make a regular or sustained commitment as volunteers. As described in Rev. Ivan Kilvert's Baptist Church "Community Services report" in 1985, the Woodville Council Community aids programme, incorporating Neighbourhood and Voluntary Care and the new Woodville North Neighbourhood Resource Centre, badly needed volunteer workers for transport and other tasks, as well as greater financial assistance. General observations were that it was very difficult to get people motivated to do something concrete and reliably and that people seemed to worry only about themselves; to get "lonely people to come forward is almost impossible unless a neighbour shows some interest." There was also the problem of becoming known, and simply getting going: more advertising was needed, and the opinion expressed that, "If this project could just 'get off the ground', it would succeed." The same report canvassed other services and support groups in Woodville North. It is of interest that even the new large elaborate and widely publicised Parks Community Centre, which was opened nearby in Angle Park (Enfield Council), encountered initial resistance by the local community, with surprisingly low use of most of the facilities for the first three years. (27)

In sum, since the late 1970s, the Woodville Council has operated effectively as a community development Council. The State Government promoted the setting up of local Community Development Boards and a combined Woodville - Hindmarsh Board, originally based at Woodville was replaced in 1980 by a separate Hindmarsh Board. This supposedly left Woodville without, but, in response to Government pressure, the Council responded that it was already acting as a community development area.

"The Council has established a Community Services Department as part of the Town Clerk's Department which has the responsibility for ensuring the proper and adequate planning, administration and co-ordination of many services to the residents ... the duties include recreation; aged; welfare (other than as provided by the Federal and State

(27) Kilvert "Community Services report", July 1985 pp 46, 47, 48

Governments); culture; tourism; community development and information. In addressing these many issues, the Council has been actively involved in the calling of public meetings at which residents could become involved with the particular issues at hand. The Council is satisfied that this approach has resulted in the community becoming involved in addressing various issues without placing the responsibility of administration entirely on the community.

".. It is considered that the methods currently employed by Council in attending to such community issues as the establishment of concert bands, choral groups, community bus service, community information service and blue light discos has been more appropriate and less bureaucratic than handing over the responsibility for community development to a body which is elected on a less democratic basis than is required for normal Council elections. Councillors ... as the elected representatives of their particular communities have raised matters of concern ... and the Council has responded ... The exciting process results in community issues being addressed within a very short period of time ... It is considered that the existing approach to the City of Woodville towards matters of community development has been and is very effective." (28)

(28) Community Services Committee Report no. C.S. 8/33 pp 4-5,
Council records

CHAPTER 12 PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES, 1976 TO 1986

SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Suburban development has a very long history indeed in the Woodville district, dating from the earliest years of European settlement in South Australia. A reading of the earlier chapters of Woodville's history would suggest that by the mid 1970s there was little space left for new housing and that any further development would mean infill of the few remaining vacant blocks, or demolition to make way for shops, factories and flats.

By the mid 1970s, the last remaining area of vacant blocks (apart from West Lakes) was in the market gardening districts of Kidman Park, Fulham Gardens, and Seaton. The Council's land division files for 1979 to 1985 record approximately 50 subdivision proposals. More than half of these were at West Lakes - Semaphore Park but almost all the remainder were in Fulham Gardens, Seaton and Kidman Park. These represented a mixture of public and private housing development, with the Housing Trust being particularly active in 1982-83 in Seaton and Fulham Gardens.

Students at Sienna College, Findon, when asked to write about the historical changes they had observed in the past few years, noted the buildup of housing, traffic, shops and other amenities in the area. Susie Mazzarolo, Tania Innocente, Angelina Laurendi, Lorraine Ponzo and Julie Schievenin also included copies of the street directory maps of Kidman Park for 1976 and 1986, which showed at a glance subdivision during that decade. They commented favourably on the provision of traffic lights at the Findon Road - Valetta Road intersection especially as the area was notorious for its congestion during peak hours. In common with several other students, they also praised as a major change the redevelopment of the River Torrens as part of the metropolitan Linear Park programme.

"A few years back the Council decided to change the surroundings of the River Torrens, to a much more pleasant and scenic riverbank. The Council lay down bike paths, constructed bridges, planted foliage, built playgrounds, and

generally improved the conditions. The result was that of successfully accomplishing what they had set out to do. A vast majority of the Kidman Park population and surrounding areas often occupy the River Torrens (park) for Sunday strolls or bike trips. It is a relaxing and often picturesque sight and has greatly improved the Kidman Park Area." (1)

The Linear Park concept - recently promoted as a Jubilee 150 project - stemmed in part from the flood mitigation concerns of the late 1970s. In 1980, consultants, Hassell and Partners Pty Ltd presented the River Torrens Study, its objectives including preserving and upgrading the river and riverside, both its natural environment and for recreational use. Premier David Tonkin opened the Kidman Park section of the Flood Mitigation Scheme in 1982.

While it lags a long way behind Salisbury Council in its tree-planting, Woodville Council has promoted the "beautification" of its district. This was even written into the 1979 manual of administration for the Finance committee which, amongst other roles, oversees City Planning: making recommendations which included "research and review for an aesthetically pleasing community environment" and administering the planning regulations "for zoning, orderly re-development, preservation of areas for recreational reserves, tree preservation ... "

Redevelopment in the old suburbs is not always as orderly as intended: established commercial and industrial uses have conflicted with residential uses in some areas, especially along Rosetta Street, West Croydon and Burleigh Avenue, Cheltenham, where greatly increased traffic threatened residents' peace and safety. Some established housing was also threatened by the actual construction of roads, such as the extension of West Lakes Boulevard, to connect with Port Road. On the other hand, a huge sigh of relief went up from the Western Councils when the State Government finally decided in 1983 against building a north-south freeway. This traffic corridor was

(1) Contribution from a collection of pieces prepared by years 10-12 at Sienna College for their teacher, Mr. Brian Mooney. This was the only response to letters sent to all Woodville schools by Susan Marsden in 1986.

first proposed in the 1962 Report on the metropolitan area of Adelaide, designated as an eight-to-ten lane freeway in the 1971 Supplementary Development Plan. From 1968 a total of 600 properties were bought along the route, causing a severe urban blight, particularly within the old inner suburbs of Hindmarsh and Thebarton.

Adelaide's population was forecast to be 1.06 million by 1981 and 1.36 million by 1991. Population growth actually slowed, the 1981 population of Adelaide reaching only .094 million, the forecast for 1991 being revised to 1.02 million. Before 1975 the growth of total traffic in Adelaide was 4 percent per annum, but this fell below 1 per cent for the next seven years. So, after years of uncertainty, the Government decided that traffic demands could be met by improvements in the existing network.

Woodville Council, less drastically threatened by the old proposals than its neighbours, still welcomed the changes, although at the same time, as a council report noted in 1983, " ... with the abolition of the freeway proposal, monies could now be available for alternative routes that may relieve congestion in the inner suburbs." In 1984, Council was asked by the Minister for Environment and Planning to comment on a wider set of transport issues than the simple deletion of the north-south freeway, as presented in a draft Supplementary Plan. The proposals which affected Woodville included the extension of Marion Road northwards through Beverley and Woodville Park to Hanson Road; construction of the Gillman Highway, parallel with Grand Junction Road, running from Port Adelaide to Port Wakefield Road and linking with both South and Hanson Roads; the extension of Grand Junction Road to Bower Road causeway (which has been carried out), and the upgrading of Manton Street (Hindmarsh) to improve traffic flow along Grange Road to the city. The Council approved the proposed arterial roads in the draft Plan.

At a broader level, Council's support of the new South Australian Planning Act, which was introduced in 1982, is much less enthusiastic. Administration is described as being easier under the 1970s Interim Development Control and the Planning Regulations-Zoning which were finally introduced in the Woodville Development Plan in 1981. The new Act requires more administrative procedures, partly as residents have been given more opportunity to influence decisions.

At a regional level, the Council has criticised also the by-passing of Woodville's major shopping centres at Westfield (formerly Arndale) and West Lakes, and the regional services centre along Woodville Road by the State Government's promotion of Port Adelaide as a regional "Centre". In recent years the Mayor and Town Clerk have worked assiduously to further promote Woodville Road and environs as a regional centre for Government and Local Government Services, with some success, even if it has meant the Council has even provided premises, such as for the State Government's new Children's Services Office in Bower Street, Woodville.

During the decade, by far the most publicised of the Council's conflicts in City Planning terms was the controversy over the Football Park lights. The Woodville Council, West Lakes Ltd. and West Lakes Residents' Action Committee confronted the South Australian National Football League (S.A.N.F.L.), two successive State Governments and a Royal Commission over the issue of floodlighting Football Park at West Lakes. The issue was not so much the floodlighting itself, as this was recognised as a major metropolitan facility, but the size of the light towers and intensity of light was proposed.

Football Park is on lease by the League from what was West Lakes Ltd. from 1974 for 99 years. In 1978 when S.A.N.F.L. proposed to erect four towers of more than 70 metres height (about four times the height of the grandstand) opposition was aroused from and on behalf of the West Lakes residents to the potentially disruptive sight, brilliant night lighting and problems of car parking in the surrounding streets. The controversy took more than five years to resolved and included a Royal Commission (in 1979), Parliamentary Select Committees, Court cases and meetings.

In the November 1979, issue of the West Lakes Ltd. newspaper, Lakeside, Brian Martin, the Director and General Manager, published an open letter to residents, which is unusual, as it balances the customary self-praise with candid acknowledgement of some current problems specifically, the general economic downturn and the lighting at Football Park.

"We believe that with careful consideration ... a development plan for Football Park including lighting can be evolved which will ensure that there will not be any adverse impact on our area. We must remain totally opposed to the system of permanent high mast lighting proposed by the League."

"Residents who have invested in West Lakes have undertaken legal agreements in the form of property encumbrances in order to protect their investment and overall development standards for the area. Similar control provisions are included in our lease document with the Football League and contracts with other commercial bodies."

"We believe that a solution must evolve through genuine discussion without the need for a Government to interfere with the property rights of residents and this Company and the powers of the Corporation of Woodville through imperious legislation."

(As an historical aside, it is of interest to note that, the 1969 Indenture itself, by placing planning control initially with the Company rather than the Council, might also be described as "imperious legislation")."

The letter concluded:

"We stress that in this matter we have an obligation to ensure that any solution fits within reasonable standards for our area, and we will continue to use all of our resources to bring about a satisfactory conclusion."

Accordingly in 1980 the Company issued a Supreme Court writ to restrain the State Government from enacting legislation to bypass the Indenture with a new lease agreement with S.A.N.F.L., arguing that any works not in accordance with the existing master plan or regulations not be made unless agreement was reached.

Agreement was finally reached. In November 1983 the Council gave formal approval in accordance with the Building Act and West Lakes Planning Regulations for the erection of four 50 metre towers at a lesser illumination than first proposed. The S.A.N.F.L. agreed to all the conditions of use of the stadium with appropriate legislation to be amended and a separate agreement prepared. Work started almost at once, official "light up" was made in March, 1984, and - despite all the publicity - almost no-one complained.

Sienna College Students, Marlene Casey, Rachael Power, Anna Reiter and Joanne Wassall, chose to write about the episode in their description of recent local history, concluding:

"I feel that the new lights at Football Park have been a great success for both West Lakes and the surrounding businesses. Because of these night games, the public is able to attend the football matches, since it is out of working hours."

"I think that the decision for the lights to be shut off at 10.30 pm is a reasonable one, so it will not affect many people's sleeping habits."

THE SUCCESS OF WEST LAKES

"West Lakes ... became a profitable, fashionable and affluent enclave." This description was given by the authors of an essay on "Urban policy and metropolitan Adelaide," published in The Dunstan decade in 1981. (2) That social transformation, as much as the physical completion is the most commented-upon feature of West Lakes over the past ten years. An Advertiser feature, of 13 April 1983, made much of that transformation and of the "doubting Thomases of the eastern suburbs" who were now reputedly competing for the last lakefront blocks. Instead of working class families who bought blocks in the 1970s, most new arrivals were described as "mature business or professional people buying their second or third homes. Many are from other States, passing through on the way to career heights".

Brian Martin, "who has been with West Lakes from when it looked like a major gamble", claimed in the same article that present lakefront prices - the last block being for sale at \$93,000 - fostered envy of the existing residents and of the profits being made by the company. Be he explained that for the first several years the company made little profit, at times selling only one block a month, the first of these (in 1970-71) at \$4,000.

"It was a place for first-home buyers ... Prices weren't high. Very favourable special arrangements were made with the few builders who were prepared to take risks of building at West Lakes."

"Most builders wouldn't touch it. Then people started to feel proud of their community. We encouraged landscaping. It was terribly important we, as the developers, gave the lead."

He mentioned scares about the quality of the water and about children getting diseases from the lake.

Indeed, the Council's Health Inspector in 1985 recommended that signs be posted warning residents of the dangers of swimming in polluted lake water, but the Mayor argued that there was lack of epidemiological evidence. (3) A Sienna College Student, Wendy Cavenett, wrote as her historical contribution, a condemnation of the dumping of litter in the lake and of the wrangle over whose responsibility it is to clean it. She observed silt and rubbish: "the lake has lost its clear blue colour and is now a brown/blue". People were refusing to swim and many, she said, were leaving the area. Disease could break out unless the dispute over cleaning was resolved: "the situation has become desperate."

(2) Andrew Parking and Cedric Pugh, in The Dunstan decade, Cds. Andrew Parkin and Allan Patience, Melbourne 1981, p.99

(3) Council agenda, 24 June, 1985.

At the Council, however, Mike Newton commented that there was only a temporary problem caused after high rains. The issue remains one of the few murky areas in an otherwise clean, bright and much-admired development. In the Advertiser article, Brian Martin remarked simply that "West Lakes has stood the test", suggesting also that such "rumours are started by opposing real estate companies and people annoyed they missed out." With complete justification he concluded, "The lakefront homes are collector's items."

West Lakes' rising esteem is illustrated by the take-off in purchase prices. During the decade land and house prices in general rose markedly, but in West Lakes almost twice as much as the average rise. For example, Lakeside in Autumn, 1984, reported that house prices in Adelaide had increased by about 14 per cent between 1982 and 1984, while values at West Lakes had increased up to 30 per cent or more.

"New homes on Delfin Island averaged in 1983 \$122,235 ... which is 50% above the prices achieved only four years ago in 1979, when 'spec' homes averaged \$81,230. Homes purchased in 1978 for \$44,000 in West Lakes Shore today sell from \$85,000 to \$90,000."

"The property value appreciation at West Lakes is well above the Adelaide average, due primarily to the maturation of the highly acclaimed urban scheme, the unique (to Adelaide) aquatic and beachside lifestyle, wide variety of quality housing types, the high standard of public reserves and private gardens and the realisation that vacant home sites are finally running out."

Allotment prices, for example at West Lakes Shore, when first released in 1975 cost an average of \$12,500 with those on the lakefront an average \$23,328. By 1984 these were worth \$80,000. Some idea of the wide variation in house prices within the Woodville district - with West Lakes' new houses being at the highest price end - may be gained from a list of sample prices of houses sold by West Lakes Ltd. The lowest price obtained was \$49,500 for a two bedroomed house in

nearby Royal Park, with a three bedroomed house at Seaton fetching \$76,950. By contrast, the more solidly middle-class and recently-established suburbs of Fulham Gardens and Kidman Park attracted higher prices; at the former suburb, a three bedroomed house with two bathrooms was sold for \$102,500, while at the latter, a three bedroomed house with family room and swimming pool fetched \$100,000. The lowest price given in the list of West Lakes properties was for a "homette" at West Lakes for \$83,000. A beachfront unit at West Lakes Shore reached \$149,500 but the consistently highest prices obtained, were for houses on Delfin Island, including a four bedroomed house with billiard room and family room for \$199,000 and one with similar facilities but three bedrooms for \$165,000. (4)

Eighteen months later in a similar list of "pricing achieved" no West Lakes house was sold for less than \$115,000 and one on Delfin Island lakefront reached \$280,000. This rise was hardly surprising. Delfin Island was a relative late-comer in the development of West Lakes. It was deliberately created to attract an elite, that is, purchasers willing to pay very large sums for exclusivity. When they succeeded beyond all expectations, it was carefully extended so as to provide more building land and more lakefront blocks.

Delfin Island was opened in 1978. It was originally about three kilometres long with a freshwater lake, planned for "prestigious living for 5,000." The extension, Island Point was opened in 1982. It created a record for the sale of subdivisions in South Australia with 70 per cent of the land being sold within the first fortnight, despite prices of up to \$65,000 for private lake frontage sites. (5)

(4) Lakeside no. 16, Autumn 1981

(5) Lakeside, no. 14, Autumn 1982.

At the same time as the creation of Delfin Island and Island Point, a housing development aimed at the other end of the income scale was also proving highly attractive. This was the South Australian Housing Trust's development at the northern end near Semaphore Park. A master plan was published in the Trust's Annual Report, in 1972. This shows the distinctive layout, comprising single unit and cluster rental housing which is set out "Radburn" style, kept apart from passing motor traffic, and linked by walkways. The Advertiser article, of 13 April 1985, described the reactions of one couple who became tenants: "Pat and Ivan Sheppard felt as if they had won a lottery six months ago ... 'We had our names down for four and a half years for a trust house...' Mrs Sheppard said. 'I used to say as we passed this way that we'd never be that lucky.'" The journalist also reported that no-one was aware of any social divisions, and quoted Mrs Sheppard, "'I don't think the other people look down on us. We have friends on Delfin Island.'" Ms Martin passed similar observations in June 1986, although she also commented that the Housing Trust residents were a community in themselves. This may well have been fostered more by the layout than by the income, class or interests of the residents themselves. Lakeside also commented favourably on the Housing Trust development, the autumn 1983 issue describing it (with good reason) as the Trust's most popular in the Western Suburbs due to its design, landscaping and community facilities. By then about 480 houses had been built, some of them sold, with construction of a further 90 starting in 1984 on the easternside of the lake. This is a more conventional development which (to the historian's mind) is set rather incongruously adjacent to the very spot once vilified as Port Misery.

While the subdivision layouts and housing types elsewhere in West Lakes were less radical than in the "Semaphore Park" estate, they were by no means conventional. As Lakeside reported in November 1976:

"A feature of West Lakes is the planned mix of single unit and medium density housing, providing houses for a broad age group. The medium density unit and townhouse sites have

been set aside in carefully selected areas adjacent to reserves and the lake."

This left about 60 per cent of the lakefront accessible by walkways and reserves (only 15 per cent was stipulated in the 1969 Indenture). The road system was constructed so that most houses were built about culs-de-sac or on local roads which discouraged through traffic. Housing was further protected by plantings of native trees and shrubs which have now grown to provide a dense screen. Housing was further protected by plantings of native trees and shrubs which have now grown to provide a dense screen. The company nursery, having served its purpose to supply many of those plants and sell coast-tolerant plants to residents, has been closed. Apart from the main road bridge which carries West Lakes Boulevard, pedestrian bridges have been constructed linking Delfin Island with the mainland.

Energetic promotion by the company attracted a variety of individuals and families of all age groups. In the 1985 Advertiser article, the manager of West Lakes Real Estate described the development as "a very mixed, middle class area, "middle-class being broadly defined to include the 60 per cent of residents he said originally came from the Western suburbs. Parkin and Pugh, in the Dunstan decade also observed that West Lakes "is, incidentally, a favoured address for Labor politicians and union officials anxious both for housing commensurate with their bourgeois salaries and for proletarian connections in a safe Labour seat." (6)

The best-known Labour resident is Federal Minister Mick Young who, as one of the earliest residents, bought his lakefront block for about \$15,000. (7)

(6) Parkin and Pugh, p. 91.

(7) Advertiser, 13 June 1985

Amongst public figures another group which was attracted to West Lakes were sports people. They included footballers Malcolm Blight and Russell Ebert, and football coach, John Cahill.

"We enjoy tennis and other sporting activities as a family and I particularly like the pride everyone in the area takes in their homes and gardens ... We like having everything at our fingertips and not having to travel great distances to do things, - here we can go for a run, a swim, go boating, shopping or whatever we want."

During the decade, one of the most famous of all South Australian athletes was Glynis Nunn, who won the Gold Medal in the Heptathlon at the 1984 Olympic Games held in Los Angeles. A resident of Woodville - she lived at Flinders park, not West Lakes - Woodville Council in honouring her achievement named the Glynis Nunn Drive at St Clair Reserve, Woodville. (A total of five Olympic members in 1984 lived in the Woodville district).

In the Advertiser article, Don Howell also described a wide range of age groups, by comparison with Hackam, a new southern suburb where most residents were under 35. Large numbers of each age group lived at West Lakes, augmented at the eldest level by five retirement villages and some smaller scattered developments for the elderly. Apart from the pleasures of the environment their appreciation was reinforced by access to other facilities, especially shops. West Lakes Mall was extended with the construction of the second stage in 1982 and five smaller neighbourhood shopping centres have been built.

(8) Cahill, quoted in Lakeside, no. 9, November 1979.

Some facilities were also aimed at attracting custom from throughout the metropolitan area (West Lakes Mall had a pronounced effect on retail trading in the Western region) and even international visitors. This was certainly the case with the Lakes Resort Hotel, of which the first stage was opened late in 1985. Owned by Australian Fixed Trusts (a subsidiary of the ANZ Banking Group), the hotel was planned to provide restaurants, conference and function rooms and accommodation for 120 people. Built at the lakeside near West Lakes Mall, the hotel provides the only substantial building of any great height on the West Lakes skyline. The 1979 Royal Commission (on lighting at Football Park) commented on the care taken at West Lakes to ensure a flat profile as well as harmonious house designs and street fittings and attractive reserves. The report noted that there were many characteristics which made the area almost unique in Australia, which obviously held many attractions to residents. For the same reasons some people might find the area unattractive, as "not all people would find the air of conformity which pervades the area conducive (sic) to what they regard as a satisfactory environment in which to live." (9)

However, residents seem well satisfied with the result, so was the State Government, so much so that in 1984 it was announced that Adelaide's major new metropolitan extension to the north east at Golden Grove would be a joint venture between Delfin Management Services Pty. Ltd. and the South Australian Urban Land Trust.

Delfin Management Services is one of several Delfin companies in Australia with the parent company Development Finance Corporation. Hence the name of Delfin Island. Throughout the development of West Lakes, Delfin Management Services was the project manager (as at Golden Grove), with West Lakes Ltd. being formed specifically as the construction company for West Lakes. In the early years, almost all public references were to West Lakes Ltd, which still exists, but from about 1981-82, as West Lakes itself neared completion and other

(9) Royal Commission report, p. 17

projects elsewhere were undertaken, the parent name Delfin (Delfin Property Group Ltd. Delfin Management Services, Delfin Realty Pty. Ltd) was resumed.

At about the same time, in 1982, the founder of Development Finance Corporation, as of West Lakes died. Sir John Marks was a Director of West Lakes Ltd. and Chairman of Directors of Development Finance Corporation, which he started in 1953. He signed the 1969 Indenture which led to the formation of West Lakes Ltd. Sir John established D.F.C. as a merchant bank to build enterprises by mobilising overseas capital: "Using DFC as the capital base, he set up a network of locally owned companies that has been rarely duplicated in Australia. (10) His obituary was duly reproduced in the summer edition of Lakeside.

By 1985 the target population of 20,000 in 6,000 houses was reached. In that year, the site operations office of West Lakes Ltd. was closed, with Delfin moving its site office to Golden Grove. The company threw a party for its employees and Council staff who had supported the project over the past 15 years. From that year, the Council and the Department of Marine and Harbors assumed management of the lake and surrounds from the Delfin Group.

The impact of the West Lakes project has already gone beyond the transformation of the Upper Port Reach. As a headline in Weekly Times of 4 April 1984 boasted, "Prestige projects boost western image." The \$8 million Lakes Resort Hotel was described as "the latest in an explosion of multi-million dollar prestige projects which are changing the poor cousin image of the north-western section of the metropolitan area." Independent development of North Haven, near Outer Harbor, and the upgrading of Central Port Adelaide have also played a major role, but, as emphasized in the article,

"The turnaround in the west's image started with the massive West Lakes Project which has transformed an expanse of coastal swamps into one of Australia's most impressive community developments".

(10) Sydney Morning Herald 23 October, 1982.

TRYING TIMES: THE INDUSTRIAL DECLINE

Unemployment has become a large social problem in Australia since the recession of the mid to late 1970s. Between 1945 and 1969 the rate of unemployment was below 2 per cent of the labour force, which was one of the lowest rates in the world. In 1974-1975 unemployment rose rapidly in Australia, as in other developed countries, reaching almost 5 per cent by 1976 and over 7 per cent by 1980.

This general figure disguises the much higher rates of unemployment amongst particular social groups and in particular localities. Woodville, which houses large numbers of young people, a high proportion of recent immigrants and many working class families, was badly affected by the general recession, and particularly by structural changes in the economy which produced a drastic reduction in manufacturing jobs.

There was a distinct decline of world trade in 1981 and 1982 and a widespread contraction of national economies. World trade then picked up again and the threats of severe recession and general economic collapse receded, although there was no longer any prospect of "a repeat of the cheap oil-driven run of the post-war decades." In his paper on "Macro-Economic and Financial Trends" delivered in 1983, Adrian Fletcher presented some views about where Australia was headed economically in which he expressed some cautious optimism while warning companies to be prepared for stormy weather.

"Translated into business strategies, this means a much more professional, tough and demanding style of management than was generally necessary in the last two decades. We have already seen this happening in both private and public enterprises in many developed countries in the northern hemisphere. It is fairly predictable that many of the companies you will see in the vanguard of growth will be the ones who have had the sense to use the bad times to improve management, cull outdated products and working methods, and invest in up-to-date technology. In many cases this has involved fundamental and fairly traumatic reappraisals of traditional businesses ... the reviving world ... will often be a

much tougher place for Australia to make a living in than it has been in the past." (11) He also pointed out that the recession of the late 1970s and early 1980s forced industries within Australia "to restructure at a faster pace than would have been the case if the easy conditions of the 1950s and 1960s had continued." He was in favour of strongly maintaining the momentum towards a more efficient and internationally competitive industrial structure.

Over the past decade Woodville has experienced all of the trauma, some of the improvements and many of the bitter disappointments connected with that inevitable industrial restructuring. As an area in which some of the State's oldest large industries had concentrated, firstly the general recession and then secondly the need for reappraisal and restructuring has resulted in the loss of some major industrial companies, but the expansion of some others.

Adelaide's western suburbs contain just over a third of South Australia's manufacturing industry. Inevitably with the marked decline in manufacturing activity which has occurred Australia-wide during the past decade, this region has suffered a disproportionately high rate of unemployment. A Weekly Times article, of 11 August 1982, reported on a survey which found that there were 48 unemployed people for every job vacancy in the western region, with unemployment being particularly high among the semi-skilled and those aged under 25. In Woodville, 15.4 per cent of young men between 21 and 24 years old were registered as unemployed. (12)

In 1985 the Western Metropolitan Regional Organisation of Councils commissioned a socio-economic study of the area, led by Dr. Ray Bunker, which described the region's main problems - declining population, unemployment, ageing people and the physical environment - and made recommendations for response. Under the heading "Jobs and Skills", the draft report makes the following observations:

(11) A Fletcher, in Australian Institute of Urban Studies, Urban Australia: living in the next decade, Canberra 1984, p. 19

(12) Advertiser 10 May 1982

"Between one quarter and one third of the manufacturing jobs in the Western Region have been lost over the past ten years. The big losses have been in the manufacture of machinery, equipment, rolling stock, cars: in heavy and light engineering. As in other parts of the World these activities have been hard hit both by recession and changes in the materials used in manufacturing and the kinds of products turned out. There has been little to replace these lost jobs apart from some modest increases in jobs in retailing, presumably a result of the construction of centres at West Lakes, North Haven, and the rebuilding of Port Adelaide. Unemployment is high and would be higher if people were unable to travel extensively to jobs elsewhere in Adelaide."

"Unemployment is severe partly because the Region has large numbers of young and elderly people who find it difficult to get work. Young people lack work experience and if middle-aged or elderly people become redundant they find it difficult to find other jobs. Many of them are not skilled or qualified: some have language difficulties. Nearly two-thirds of those receiving unemployment benefits in the Region have done so for more than six months. This is structural unemployment-loss of basic jobs coupled with a workforce which is not readily able to obtain new skills or attract new enterprises to it. Because the reasons for structural unemployment are many - technological changes, production by multi-national companies, off-shore manufacturing, patterns of overseas trade, among others - the remedies have to be many."

The final report was even more outspoken. Unemployment levels were described as "devastating", with the western suburbs suffering the highest rate in South Australia. The main contributing factor was the closing of numerous local plants and factories.

"Not only has the region lost jobs in recent years but its workforce is less equipped to find work than workers living in other areas."

"The general level of education and proportion of the population with technical professional or academic qualifications is less than in most other places." (13)

Within Woodville, as within the western region overall, some suburban areas were worse affected than others. Generally, these were located near old or declining industrial districts, which once provided much of the local employment to a population which was, at the best of times, semi-skilled and lacking the resources of high incomes, education or mobility. The Woodville North area is typical. A "Community Services Report" prepared by Rev. Kilvert for the Woodville North Baptist Church in 1985, provided an historical outline which reads in part:

"During the recession of the 1970s, many firms left the factories in the area as they consolidated their operations in other capital cities. These factories are still largely empty and are surrounded by large, empty tracts of land ..."

"There are some 82 factories in the area, and they range from huge, war-time munitions factories of darkly-rusted galvanised-iron to houses that have been adapted for industrial use, and modern, custom built, bricks buildings. 18 of the factories, including the largest, sit unused and subject to vandalism."

The survey showed that the population seemed to be split into two groups, of young people (aged below 24) and elderly people above 50 - both groups being particularly vulnerable to unemployment. On the basis of 1981 census data, it was shown that, whereas 45.8 per cent of families in Adelaide as a whole earned over \$12,000 in 1981, only 24.8 per cent earned that amount in Woodville North. At the other end of the income scale, a third of Adelaide's families received less than \$8,000 in the year, yet more than half of the families in Woodville North earned less than that. Effectively, this placed much more than half the population at or below the poverty line.

(13) Weekly Times 6 November 1985

"The likelihood of these people raising their living standards would be low, particularly in the light of expected changes in the economy." (14)

Even the railway line connecting Woodville to the Finsbury Munitions works site - built during the war - was no longer used, and was closed after 1979.

In a demographic study carried out by DCW in 1983, statistics on unemployment and financial and social problems placed Woodville consistently at or near the "top" in South Australia. For example, Department of Social Security statistics showed that the Woodville office had the highest total numbers of pensions and unemployment beneficiaries in the State (followed by Hawthorn and Glenelg). In terms of long-term unemployment, Woodville was ranked second after Elizabeth; it was ranked first with financial or social problems, and fourth (after Salisbury, Elizabeth and Enfield) with youth unemployment.

The first serious loss in manufacturing jobs came as a result of the contraction and eventual near-closure of the large Philips Industries Holdings works at Hendon. As early as 1972, radio and television manufacturing was transferred to Melbourne as part of an internal "rationalisation" (a word which crops up repeatedly, usually with dire consequences for Woodville's factories). Some retrenchments were made then. The factory still employed 1,849 people in 1974, when the group's Chairman, Mr. Herman Huyer, announced that the greater part of the plant - the manufacturing of components - might have to close because of the Federal Government's reduced tariff on imported electronic components. He said that if those new tariffs prevailed, most Australian television manufacturers would use imported parts, with the Hendon plant, one of the country's biggest manufacturers of components, simply becoming an assembly shop. He claimed that staff retrenchments would be due entirely to the tariff reductions and not to the company's rationalisation activities. (15)

(14) "Community Services Report", pp.15-16

(15) Advertiser 27 April 1979

Effectively, they amounted to one and the same thing: from 1974 the group carried out large-scale dismissals and transfers of workers, virtually completing the closing down of the Hendon Plant and transfer to Melbourne, by 1979. The transfer was all the more ironic as Philips had been encouraged to move to Hendon originally from its interstate location in Sydney.

Mr Huyer described the plant in 1979 as "a ghost town with a few hundred people occupying only a fraction of the space." (16). It is a description which comes to mind on a visit to Hendon even today, after its partial rejuvenation as an industrial park. Large South Australian developers, the Emanuel Group of Companies, bought the site in 1980, renaming it the Hendon Industrial park. Some new firms moved into buildings at Hendon, but the response generally was disappointingly slow. No local firm could hope to match the numbers of jobs provided by a manufacturer of national size and scope. However, one of the new tenants has attracted international attention, and its removal to Hendon was heralded as "a landmark in the development of the film industry in the State and Australia." (17)

The South Australian Film Corporation officially opened its new premises at Hendon in July 1981. Former Philips buildings were leased from Emanuel in 1980, and renovation of the main building started soon afterwards. The alterations mainly involved installing partitions to create numerous rooms, with other adaptations to create studios, sound studio, make up rooms, a theatrette, film library, canteen and marketing and administration offices. The Corporation had been cramped in its Norwood studio and the move heralded an expansion into the production of serials for television, as well as feature films, first, "Sara Dane" being produced and sold for world distribution by 1981.

In 1979 also, it looked as if Woodville was threatened with the closure of another major industry, Actil Limited. Actil then employed about 1,000 people. The threatened closure was again linked to

(16) Advertiser 27 April 1979

(17) Messenger 15 July 1981

possible Federal Government action on reducing protection levels for Australian industries. A report by the Industries Assistance Commission on the clothing, textile and footwear industries recommended changes in assistance which would rationalize the industries and make them more efficient but at the cost of thousands of jobs.

The Mayor and Town Clerk of Woodville discussed the problem with Actil's Managing Director, Mr. Ferris and moved actively to oppose the changes. In Mr. Dyer's words:

"Following the discussion with Mr. Ferris moves have been made to combine the forces of the Local Government Association and other State Local Government Associations in presenting a united submission through the Local Government Secretariat in Canberra."

"The submission would outline the disastrous effects on Local Government financing and community development if the Commonwealth Government accepts the proposals of the Industries Assistance Commission which does not seem to have any concern for people." (18)

The Town Clerk Mr. Hamilton, was a central figure in organizing the campaign to alert councils within Australia of threatened closures and with the Mayor, joined a large deputation to Prime Minister Fraser and Members of Parliament urging that the Government do not adopt the recommendations of the Industries Assistance Commission. He recalled, "I think it had a very strong effect on the Government's decision. Actil is still going strong. It's been taken over, consolidated and expanded."

The State Government also protested the I.A.C. recommendations. The Premier, Mr. David Tonkin, wrote to the Town Clerk in August 1980 that the Commonwealth had decided against the I.A.C. recommendations because they would lead to large job losses. A new programme of assistance was announced, for a period of seven years from 1982, and the decision was praised as one "which will provide these industries with the security and stability so necessary for further investment." At Actil, Mr. Ferris also expressed pleasure

(18) Mayor's Report, 5 December 1979

with the decision, but as he told the Town Clerk, "in the long term the textile, clothing and footwear industries must look at its (sic) operation and rationalisation." (19)

The rationalisation proceeded apace: jobs were lost certainly, but in this case, not at Woodville. Actil was taken over by Bradmill Industries, which, in 1983, announced plans to close two of its plants at Rutherford and Newcastle in N.S.W., due to continuing losses and substantial world over-supply of textiles and garments. This was done to ensure that the remaining plants (at Woodville and in Davenport in Tasmania) would operate at full capacity. Most of the Rutherford plant's fabric production was moved to the Actil plant. that plant has been subsequently expanded.

Other large local industries, including Simpson's and Shearer's have also been taken over. Some others, such as R.O.H. Industries at Woodville North, have expanded. Overall, however there has been a decline in industrial employment, although this has been carried out partly by early retirement schemes and also coincides with the ageing of the local population.

THE DEMISE OF GENERAL MOTORS - HOLDEN'S

"The General is old now -
he dozes, languid arms,
once strong in command
tremble a little as they
rest on musty leather, worn,
as he is.

"He did not learn about compassion -
wasn't on the agenda when he climbed
from Private to General - long ago.

"He'll not lead again -
No one follows a man who
leads a loyal army to
deliberate destruction .. "

(19) D. Hamilton, report to Council, on Actil Limited, 22 August 1980. Council records

In its sixtieth year of manufacture at Woodville, the General, General Motors - Holden's Ltd., announced a complete restructuring of its operations in Australia which would include withdrawal from the Woodville Plant. The Woodville Community reacted with all the shock and outrage of a long-married spouse to abandonment by the marital partner. Local bitterness is well expressed in these verses from the poem, "Too Late." This was published in 1984 by Margo Carlisle, a member of the Woodville Women Writers Workshop, "in commiseration with G.M.H. employees."

This must be the most significant single event to occur in Woodville in the past decade. it was certainly the most traumatic. At one stroke this act reinforced and greatly accelerated the area's industrial decline and loss of manufacturing employment, especially as only a handful of Woodville employees moved to jobs at the GMH Elizabeth plant. (20) Local reaction to the announcement was but a pinprick to a giant, GMH, having made a decision from which it neither would nor could budge.

The Council's response to the GMH withdrawal was an odd mixture of fight and resignation. It was not, of course, surprised by the announcement, although its responses suggest that initially the Council did not comprehend that the decision was final. Councillors and staff joined union picketers and protesters and the Council and the Federal Member for Hindmarsh, Mr. John Scott, called a "mini-summit meeting" on 26 April 1983. This was duly attended by Federal and State Members of Parliament, Union representatives, Commonwealth, State and local government staff, component industry manufacturers and retailers, who applauded the calling of the meeting and passed several resolutions. These were: that GMH should hold its current employment at Woodville in view of the initiatives of the unions and other organisations for development of segments of the light commercial and four wheel drive vehicle production in Australia and alternative product manufacture; expressed the deep concern of Woodville's people on what the employees' future would be, and that

(20) Information from interview with Mr. John Barlow, Personnel Manager, GMH Elizabeth, 28 July 1986

the company should be made aware of the position; welcomed the statements of the Minister of Industry and Commerce (Senator John Button) on the restructuring of the Industries Advisory Council; supported deputations to the Prime Minister, the Premier and GMH management, and that GMH "be made patently aware of the social costs of its continued action and the multiplying effect on the whole community in South Australia."

As the Town Clerk commented in a subsequent paper,

"Woodville has been built around such an area of productivity (GMH) since 1923 and any adverse move by a major manufacturer becomes a matter of 'public interest' because of the multiplying effect. The quality of living could be affected ... particularly when an amount of \$82 m. or more spending power annually

General Motors - Holden's board of Directors made its announcement in May, 1983. In a message to employees, the Directors outlined reasons for a need to restructure, involving consolidation of some manufacturing operations and the phasing out of others. A reorganisation plan was described, to be progressively implemented from 1983 to 1986, which would reduce employment by 2,800 from approximately 12,500. As levels had been reduced already by 4,000 between 1981 and 1983, this was not in itself an announcement of great moment. However, in the descriptions of individual plants within Australia, the implications for Woodville (and South Australia) were spelled out: Woodville was to bear the brunt of job losses with the effective closing of the plant.

"The operations carried out at the Woodville plant ... have been most affected by the changes in the automotive manufacturing industry in the past 10 years."

"The Stamping plant is now seriously under-utilised and it is intended progressively, by mid 1985, to consolidate stamping operations at .. Elizabeth ... The related sheet metal sub-assembly operations will also be consolidated ... at Elizabeth.

"The wooden case and metal rack manufacturing operation at

Woodville will be transferred to supplier companies in 1983. Out-of-Production Spares manufacture will be transferred to Elizabeth or to local suppliers. The use of plastics in bumper bar design will result in the phase-out of plating operations later this year. The automatic transmission plant will cease production at the end of 1985."

"The Woodville operation will remain as a tool manufacturing and maintenance activity for pressed metal and assembly. Manufacturing engineering activities will also remain."

"Employment at the Woodville plant in 1986 will be about 600 compared with the current level of 2,100".

The transfer of several operations to the Elizabeth plant did not mean the transfer of the existing Woodville workforce, the Directors' message proposing that the Elizabeth employment level would rise by 200, from 4,200 to 4,400 in 1986. Mr. John Barlow, who as Personnel Manager, has overseen the transfer, said that most reductions were made through retrenchments, everyone who left receiving retrenchment benefits. yet, he claimed,

"Everyone at Woodville was offered a job at Elizabeth. The acceptance rate we found has generally been less than 10 per cent. To us its quite surprising because everyone was offered a job here, normally at the same rate of pay and similar type of work."

In contrast to the Directors' message, he also estimated that there were as many as 3,500 employees at Woodville, so that as many as 3,000 left GMH between 1983 and 1986. he agreed that this must have had quite an effect on the Woodville economy, although, given their age, many employees probably chose to retire from active work. "The Woodville plant dates back quite some time .. The age profile at Woodville was quite a lot higher than at Elizabeth."

The strong reactions of State Government, Council and Unions (the Vehicle Builders Union covering more than 80 per cent of the workforce) was "understandable", given the drastic impact not only on the local community but in the State, numbers peaking at about 12,000

in 1974. They had already dropped to around 7,000 by 1983, and are now about 4,500, mostly due to the partial closure of the Woodville plant.

The causes of such decline have been widely published: they are both specific to GMH and the Woodville plant as well as general

As the Directors of GMH told their employees in 1983, when Holden manufacture was started, the company had to build the plants to manufacture most of the components for the car and then expand them to meet demand. Supplier industries were not, of course, well established at that time so the company had to make its own components, in Mr. Barlow's words, developing "a lot more vertical integration than perhaps would be the case were someone establishing now .. Therefore, we needed a lot more factories."

The most efficient means of providing cars to the Australian market was to locate assembly operations in the five capital cities, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. Components were made at Woodville, for example, and then shipped to those locations for assembly. By 1983 GMH had fabricating facilities capable of producing more than 1,000 cars per day. In the Directors' view of 1983, that capacity was appropriate 12 years previously when only three major manufacturers shared the Australian Market and there was a strong export market for Australian vehicles. "There are now five vehicle manufacturers in Australia sharing a comparatively small market and our facilities are greatly in excess of our present and future requirements." Here, the Directors stated for these reasons, "which are partly the penalty for pioneering the industry in Australia", the company had suffered large financial losses in recent years. In fact between 1978 and 1984 the Company recorded total losses of more than \$350 million. (21) Hence the decision to restructure the business so as to "concentrate on those high volume, high technology and high investment manufacturing activities which the Company can carry out most efficiently. All future investment in modern plant facilities depends on our ability to achieve high plant utilization."

(21) Sydney Morning Herald, 18 August, 1984

External changes began to have an impact even during the profitable 1960's. Then, as Mr. Barlow explained, consumer expectations changed; other manufacturers entered the local market, and the local supplier industry expanded. So, a much wider range of cars was made available to buyers "and the efficiency of running local assembly operations came into doubt." GMH started to consolidate operations, at first in 1970 with the announced closure of the Perth assembly plant, then, in 1980, that at Sydney.

In the meantime, Mr. Barlow explained, the market had become even more competitive. "Whereas GMH had a fifty per cent share of the local market in 1964, that had gradually been eroded down to around twenty four percent by the early 1980's." At the same time, the cost explosion of the mid 1970s drastically affected the GMH export market, which had been built up during the 1960s and 1970s reaching a peak of about 60,000 cars in 1974, about a third of total production. The curtailment in both domestic and overseas sales meant that volumes were reducing substantially by the late 1970s. This was acknowledged even by the Communist Party of Australia, which published a broad sheet in 1984 on the "Car industry in crisis." This agreed with prevailing views that, with five multinational corporations competing for the relatively small domestic market, they were forced to produce well below the volume that is economically viable. This meant that, at one and the same time, there was overproduction and also under-use of expensive factory equipment. "(In 1977 the entire GMH plant was working at 65 - 67% of capacity)."

GMH changed its export emphasis to components rather than complete car, and constructed a large engine plant in Melbourne. Apart from some components made at Elizabeth, that has become the company's main source of exports. At the same time, the cost of construction of the new four-cylinder engine plant at Fishermen's Bend, which was \$360 million, has been described, "as much responsible as the company's poor record in the market place for \$556 million of accumulated losses and the accompanying interest burden that nearly brought GMH to its knees ..." (22)

(22) The Age, 5 December, 1986

Public response to that disabling debt burden was coloured by the knowledge that the parent company, General Motors, of Detroit, siphoned many millions of dollars in dividends from GMH - around \$100 million in the 1950s and particularly during the 1960s after GM bought out the few remaining Australian shareholders and could then keep its profits secret. In 1960 and 1961, for example, as explained by Peter Freeman in the Sydney Morning Herald, 18 August 1984, GMH sent \$68 million in dividends to Detroit, \$12 million more than its actual profit for those years and as much as it had paid in dividends for the previous seven years. The article continues:

"While large dividend payments by GMH to head office may have been embarrassing for General Motors, attempts to keep these secret probably did the company more public relations damage than the payments themselves. Other examples of this political insensitiveness and secrecy abound .. "

During the 1970s GMH several times threatened huge retrenchments or cancellation of building plans unless it was given more protection from imports. As profits fell, the Australian car industry as a whole won progressively higher levels of protection from the Commonwealth Government. By 1980, the Industries Assistance Commission estimated import protection was costing \$13,000 per year for each of the 76,000 people directly employed in car manufacture. Yet, despite such protection, while other car manufacturers continued to make some profit, GMH recorded loss after loss. Since 1978 no dividends have been paid to GM.

While the reasons for that difference are, as the GMH Directors suggested in 1983, "partly the penalty for pioneering the industry in Australia", most other commentators seem to be in agreement with the Sydney Morning Herald's judgement that the main contributing factor has been control of GMH by General Motors. The Detroit head office has, throughout, exercised close day-to-day control of its Australian subsidiary. Many senior executives and all but one managing director have been American, for the past decade, this having been Mr. Charles "Chuck" Chapman. Nor would GM allow for any local Australian equity in GMH.

"From this has sprung many of the flaws which bedevil the company - from political insensitiveness ... to overconfidence

and, most important of all, an inability to react quickly and flexibly to local conditions." (23)

These limitations mattered little while GMH benefited from its head start in the Australian motor industry, but once sales contracted they began to take effect.

".. while the local ship wallowed under the pressure of falling sales, rising interest debts and crippling interest bills and looked like it would sink with all hands - or what was left of its dwindling workforce - GM has adhered to an extraordinary one-sided policy. Local management took its direction from the US and remained totally accountable to the US for the products but totally responsible locally to bail out GMH when the products failed." (24)

An fail they did. GMH was consistently criticised for making cars such as the Commodore, Camira and Gemini to fit with GM's global needs rather than the local market. In the words of journalist, Ben Hill (in the Advertiser, 18 October 1986);

"GMH is keen to blame the Japanese invasion, the economic downturn, high wage and staff structures ... everything but the bottom line, which is that despite massive tariff protection it hasn't been producing the sort of cars at the sort of prices that people want to buy".

Indeed "it has consistently backed losers" in the market place and - of particular relevance to Woodville - in its factories, GMH "has done too little too late to rationalise and modernise production and reduce labour ... "

The Woodville Plant was thus highly vulnerable on several fronts: the Company as a whole was in trouble, the plant was making products which weren't selling and it was outmoded and over-staffed. its drawbacks were all the more glaring because of the existence of another, larger and more modern GMH plant in the same State, at Elizabeth. It might have been predicted that GMH operations in South Australia would have ultimately been consolidated at Elizabeth, even without the downturn in the company's fortunes.

(23) Sydney Morning Herald, 18 August 1984

(24) The Age 5 December 1986

Posed that question, Mr. Barlow said that when the Elizabeth plant was built in the late 1950s there was no intention of leaving Woodville and consolidating at Elizabeth. Large new buildings were erected at Woodville at the same time in an attempt to balance development at the two sites. yet there was no doubt that the huge Elizabeth site provided greater opportunities for expansion or diversification: space had run out at Woodville by the early 1950s and the company had even cast a hopeful eye over the Cheltenham Race-course. The need to expand, combined with strong encouragement by the South Australian Government took GMH to Elizabeth. The last building expansion at Woodville after that was in the late 1960s for manufacturing automatic transmissions. ironically, that one major new activity was considered outdated little more than a decade later. Woodville's role as a tooling plant was also much reduced as local tooling was replaced with the "world car" concept. As the Business Review Weekly reported in August 25 - 31, 1984:

"The end result is that Woodville, with outdated machinery and constraints on expansion because of surrounding house development, had become obsolete. Despite union protests, the hard decision was taken; Woodville was no longer part of the GMH plan."

The decision to phase-out operations and to sell the Woodville plant was announced in the same year that General Motors celebrated its 75th anniversary and 60 years after the first Holden factory was built at Woodville.

Workers' reaction to the announcement was vocal, public and totally ineffectual, as were the approaches made at various levels of Government. In Mr. Barlow's view, neither criticism nor inducement would have kept GMH at Woodville, "given our financial situation and the competitive pressures in the industry ... the Federal Government's plan is intended to lead to further rationalisation in the industry."

Nor was the company much concerned by the criticism.

"Any circumstance like that is difficult. We must expect the initial reaction to be unfavourable. We attempted to give the maximum notice possible and we attempted to become involved with the various groups, such as the Council and the State government and the unions. Overall, we've been quite happy

with the final outcomes. The phase-out has occurred without any major problems ... I think the State Government has worked actively to ensure that the phase-out didn't have too much impact on the community and they've attempted to replace employment there."

The State Government's efforts are by no means at an end, nor had it been wholly successful in its plans. A working party consisting of Industry, GMH, Union and Government members was appointed in July to investigate various options for the plant's future use, and to oversee a study by engineering consultants Kinhill Stearns, in association with the National Institute of Labour Studies Inc. The study, completed by the end of 1983, reaffirms the invaluable advantages of the Woodville location and provides a detailed assessment of each of the factory buildings on the site. While these vary greatly in age and size - spanning the entire history of development of the plant from 1923 - they are described in the report as being generally in excellent condition, confirming the plant as "a major Australian manufacturing resource." The report also suggest that it was possible to divide the plant into smaller modules for lease or purchase by a number of firms in a manufacturing park.

While the working party considered other options, including purchase by the State of Commonwealth Government - it was undoubtedly with great relief that a private developer was finally found to buy the plant outright, and then create the suggested manufacturing park. In July 1984 the plant was sold for a reputed \$10 million to the Emanuel Group of Companies. The South Australian based property developer "Joe" Emanuel made a public announcement in May of his plans to develop the Woodville plant along the lines of the former Philips site at Hendon.

"We intend to do better (than at Hendon) because it's in a better position and has better buildings," he said ...

"The plant will not go dead, I can assure you ... We will regenerate it, to a level just like it has been all the time. We're proud to be involved and confident we can do justice to the site." (25)

GMH leased back part of the plant for its much reduced tool manufacturing and other work while completely clearing out the rest of the site. Some presses and assembly machinery were transferred to Elizabeth but most was auctioned, for re-use elsewhere, for spare parts or as scrap. New tenants have moved into some of the buildings, but the workers seen leaving the plant at knock-off time seem but a handful compared to the hurrying crowds of the 1970s. As Mr. Hamilton also commented, no new industries are setting up there, they are simply moving from one part of metropolitan Adelaide to another. Both the Emanuel Group and the Government continue to seek support for the use of the plant also as a joint tooling centre for the Australian car manufacturing industry as a whole. So far, while many of the companies canvassed have supported the concept, none seem interested in actual investment in the project. (26)

The loss of GMH and the diminished use of the Woodville plant reflects not simply the problems of one company but the profound changes at present occurring in the Australian economy at large. Manufacturing has been struck both by recession and by radical restructuring. The kinds of industries long established in Woodville have in many more cases than GMH become out-of-date. As a result, there has been a permanent loss of basic industrial jobs. As the Bunker report noted:

"Because the reasons fore structural unemployment are many - technological changes, production by multi-national companies, off-shore manufacturing, patters of overseas trade, among others - the remedies have to be many."

DISINVESTMENT AND INVESTMENT

The Bunker report suggested that there is both investment and disinvestment in the western metropolitan region. In terms of social, as well as economic costs, the most severe disinvestment in Woodville has certainly been by major manufacturers. yet, some industries have expanded, and perhaps more importantly in the long-term, there has been over the past ten years a remarkable series of new investments in the region, particularly in commercial, public and residential sectors.

(26) Advertiser 24 September 1986

West Lakes and West Lakes Mall have been described.

The old Arndale Shopping Centre at Kilkenny was bought by the Westfield Corporation and completely redeveloped and expanded in 1983-1984.

New housing is being built and old housing refurbished in some of the oldest suburbs of Woodville as well as in its most recent or "up-market" locations.

As in the past, such large scale residential and commercial development can have a cumulative effect, with investment in shopping and local services providing new jobs and attracting further new residents. Community services, public works and service industries such as recreation and tourism provide an increasing number of jobs.

Government sponsored redevelopment of areas in the neighbouring Councils of Port Adelaide and Hindmarsh increases interest in the intervening district. The Bunker report suggested that joint ventures between local councils and government agencies or private enterprise have helped. Certainly, such joint enterprises have become far more common in the past decade, although an even "more co-ordinated and informed approach is needed."

Woodville in particular and the western region in general may have become rundown in parts, suffered neglect, loss of jobs and innumerable other social problems, yet it has not lost any of the advantages of its prime metropolitan location which attracted the people, the industries and the many facilities in the first place. The Buner report confidently listed the region's many advantages: its prime metropolitan location; its wide range of supporting activities; the adaptation and use of existing premises and infrastructure for new purposes; proximity to the city, port and airport; command of railway lines; its stock of unused industrial land; its potential for advanced technology industries; its excellent location as residence and the variety of different residential environments and its greatest resource, the people themselves.

In other words, the region possesses considerable "opportunities for growth and change", especially if economic, social and demographic trends are capitalised on rather than simply endured. Simply stated, the goal of all agencies should be "to improve the environment of the Region and enhance its infrastructure so that it

becomes a more effective and attractive place in which to live and work." The potential exists.

It is entirely appropriate then, that Dr. Ray Bunker should have the final word in this account of Woodville's recent past. Placed within the context of the western region, his comment encompasses both the district's rich historical resources and its recent signs of decline:

"Yet nothing can diminish the advantages of the Region's location within metropolitan Adelaide; its well-established infrastructure; its variety; and its potential."

SUSAN MARSDEN,
JUNE 1987

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