



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SYDNEY 2000

**SPEECH AS PATRON AT 2006 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AWARDS DINNER**

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**HARBOURVIEW HOTEL, NORTH SYDNEY**

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

**HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR MARIE BASHIR AC CVO  
GOVERNOR OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

**THE HON BOB DEBUS MP, *Minister for the Environment***

**MRS DAWN FARDELL MP, *Member for Dubbo and Chair of Keep Australia Beautiful New South Wales***

**THE HON PAM ALLAN MP, *Member for Wentworthville and Immediate Past Chair, Keep Australia Beautiful New South Wales***

**COUNCILLOR GENIA MCCAFFERY, *Mayor, North Sydney Council***

**MR MATTHEW TAYLOR, *Chief Executive Officer***

**MEMBERS OF THE BOARD, MAYORS AND COUNCILLORS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**

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**IT GIVES ME MUCH PLEASURE TO JOIN YOU TONIGHT FOR THE 2006 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AWARDS. AND I AM INDEED BOTH HUMBLE AND PROUD TO SERVE AS PATRON OF 'KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL'.**

**SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THAT SPLENDIDLY TITLED PROJECT "KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL" IN NEW SOUTH WALES IN 1975, WE HAVE SEEN A RENEWED SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND LOVE OF COUNTRY ACROSS AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY.**

**WE HAVE SEEN AN INTEGRATION OF CREATIVE THOUGHT AND GENUINE PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONAL TIDY TOWNS INITIATIVE, THE CLEAN BEACH CHALLENGE FOR OUR COSTAL AREAS, AND THE SUSTAINABLE CITIES ACROSS METROPOLITAN REGIONS.**

**WITH EACH YEAR, WE HAVE OBSERVED CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT IN ALL SECTORS, WITH EVER INCREASING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, INCLUDING THAT OF OUR SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE.**

**I AM SURE THAT OUR YOUNGER GENERATION, FAR MORE THAN THEIR PREDECESSORS, UNDERSTAND THAT THE AUSTRALIAN ISLAND CONTINENT IS AN EXTRAORDINARILY UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL — BUT IN MANY RESPECTS ALSO VULNERABLE — NATIONAL PARK; AND THAT IT HAS SUFFERED FAR TOO MANY LOSSES IN THE SHORT SPACE OF 218 YEARS.**

**AS WE GLOW IN THE PRIDE WE FEEL WHEN OUR OVERSEAS VISITORS COMMENT GENEROUSLY ON THE BEAUTY, THE CLEANLINESS AND EVEN THE CARE WHICH THEY OBSERVE WHEREVER THEY TRAVEL IN THIS STATE, IT IS FITTING ALSO TO REFLECT UPON OUR INDEBTEDNESS TO ALL THOSE WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS MAKE OUR LAND, ONE OF THE MOST MAGNIFICENT IN THE WORLD.**

**AT THIS POINT, I WOULD LIKE TO RECORD MY RESPECT FOR THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND UPON WHICH WE GATHER, ALSO THEIR ANCESTORS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS — INDEED FOR ALL AUSTRALIA'S ABORIGINAL PEOPLE WHO HAVE NURTURED THIS GREAT CONTINENT FOR TENS OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS.**

**TONIGHT'S AWARDS ARE SYMBOLIC OF THE GRATITUDE OF THE WIDER COMMUNITY, AND I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE AND THANK IN ADVANCE, ALL OF YOU — AS GENEROUS INDIVIDUALS AND AS GENEROUS GROUPS, ALL WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED, — VOLUNTEERS, COMMITTEES AND SPONSORS. THANK YOU ALL.**

**JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND ADEQUATE FUNDING TO SUPPORT THESE VALUABLE ACTIVITIES, IS THE CAPACITY TO MONITOR NEGATIVE TRENDS AND FORMULATE PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES.**

**WE ARE NOW BEGINNING TO APPRECIATE THAT THERE MUST BE DIVERSE MODELS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF OUR PRECIOUS WATER SUPPLIES, AFTER DECADES OF WASTE AND OPTIMISTIC COMPLACENCY.**

**IN 2004, THE YEAR OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT ACTIVITIES DREW CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC ATTENTION TO THEIR EXHIBITION '*TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES*'. CRITICAL ISSUES SUCH AS THE IMPORTANCE OF MANAGING OUR WATER SUPPLY AND ALSO OUR DIMINISHING ENERGY RESOURCES THROUGH CAREFUL DESIGN OF THE AUSTRALIAN HOUSE WERE DELIBERATED.**

**CURRENTLY MUCH ATTENTION IS BEING DRAWN TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOOD OR POOR HEALTH, AND MODELS OF URBANISATION, INCLUDING THOSE FACTORS IN URBAN DESIGN WHICH MAY CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRONIC ILL HEALTH, INCLUDING LACK OF EXERCISE, OBESITY, DIABETES, HEART DISEASE OR MORE.**

**IT IS ASTOUNDING TO LEARN THE ASSERTION IN TODAY'S MEDIA THAT AUSTRALIA IS THE ONLY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WHERE THE PERCENTAGE OF OBESE CHILDREN IS GREATER THAN THAT OF OBESITY AFFECTING THE ADULT POPULATION!**

**IN MY PREVIOUS ROLE IN PUBLIC SECTOR MEDICINE, THIS WAS AN AREA WHICH DIRECTLY INVOLVED ME — HOW TO MAKE SURE THAT THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT MAXIMISED GOOD HEALTH AND MINIMISED RISK OF ILLNESS.**

**WE MUST SURELY HAVE AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH ENCOURAGES EXERCISE TO SUSTAIN HEALTHY HEARTS AND TO AVOID OBESITY, AN ENVIRONMENT WITH BICYCLE PATHS AND WALKING TRACKS, — A BUILT ENVIRONMENT WHERE GREAT ATTENTION IS GIVEN TO THE INDOOR AIR QUALITY IN OFFICE BUILDINGS, PERHAPS THROUGH THE USE OF INDOOR PLANTS TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY.**

**WE MUST BE MINDFUL OF THE IMPORTANCE OF MINIMISING POLLUTION FROM TRAFFIC, OF UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AND CONGESTED ENVIRONMENTS, OF THE NEED FOR SPACE, FOR PARKS, AND FOR THE CAPACITY OF BEAUTIFUL GREEN LANDSCAPE TO DIMINISH STRESS.**

**ON A VERY POSITIVE NOTE, I WANT TO TELL YOU THAT UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HONOURABLE BOB DEBUS AS MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ONE AND A HALF MILLION HECTARES OF NATIONAL PARKLAND HAS BEEN GAZETTED.**

**ALL THESE INITIATIVES SHOULD ALSO BE SUPPORTED BY PUBLIC EDUCATION.**

**THE SUSTAINABLE CITIES PROJECT HAS ALREADY ACHIEVED CONSIDERABLE GAINS, AND I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO ACHIEVE FURTHER.**

**CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU TO ALL INVOLVED.**