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## J.D. SOMERVILLE ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

Full transcript of  
an interview with:

**Peter Sandeman**

Conducted on: 21 June 2019  
Interviewer: **Allison Murchie**  
Transcribed by: Deborah Gard

For:

The **Don Dunstan Foundation**  
**20th Anniversary Oral History Project**

1999–2019 celebrating 20 years of action for a fairer world



**DON DUNSTAN FOUNDATION** 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary **ORAL HISTORY** PROJECT

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

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**This is Allison Murchie interviewing Peter Sandeman on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019 at the State Library. This is part of the Don Dunstan Foundation 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary oral history project. Thank you Peter for agreeing to come along and chat with us today.**

It's going to be great fun Allison.

**I think we'll enjoy it. First off, can I get your full name?**

It's Peter Sandeman, very simple.

**And your date and place of birth?**

23<sup>rd</sup> March 1955 at Dover, United Kingdom.

**I know from listening to a radio interview and doing a little bit of research that you have a fascinating story but unfortunately we don't have time to talk about a most interesting childhood and then migrating out to Australia. What I would like to do just as a bit of an introduction for people listening to this, if you could tell me a little about some of your career highlights, particularly what you've been doing say in the last 10 years or so.**

Well, just to start off with I'm a Norwood High boy and I do remember sitting at school assembly and Don Dunstan sat next to me in the row, so there you go – brushed by fame! Of course, I had no idea then whose presence I was involved in.

**You were in the presence of a god on earth, weren't you?**

Absolutely, and that era was my formative era – it would have been 1970 I reckon. The '70s were the era of Vietnam and my generation's radicalisation to Vietnam and, subsequently, university and student politics.

**Where did you go?**

Flinders. My twin went to Adelaide and he was very conservative and I went to Flinders which was then in the throes, in the view of some, of being revolution on one campus to be a revolution to the world.

**I think it was with the professor [Brian Medlin] you had at Flinders – did you study under him as well?**

No, I was part of a different faction so I was never a Maoist. I was never a - - -

**So how would you have described yourself?**

I was Labor Party, which then was the right wing. Steph Key who was a member of parliament - - -

**We are very good friends – she’s been a lifetime friend as well.**

Steph and I formed the Council of Australian Labor Party Students and that became a national organisation but in those days was to the left of the party. Student politicians tend to be to the right of the party now. So student politics for me in the mid-70s – I was a full-time student officer at Flinders for three years. For me, that was a very gentle way, when I look back, on learning about the world, about leadership, about working with movements and about the incapacity to change some of society’s institutions from on campus or, indeed, from anywhere, so I learnt a lot in those days.

**That would have been the era to learn it.**

It was the era to learn. We had the occupation of the registry for a couple of months so the whole thing – it was a big deal.

**That would have set you up for life, wouldn’t it!**

It set me up. I then got involved in Labor Party politics. I had gone to campus with a very conservative Christian background.

**Was that how you were brought up?**

The way I was brought up, yes, and I became very concerned that that was a kind of selfish approach and we needed to change conditions for everybody, and that has really been my life ever since. It was on campus that I met my future wife, Deb, who was a young Quaker from the Society of Friends and who knew Lynn Arnold very well – my predecessor as CEO of Anglicare. I got involved in welfare organisations and had a long career in and out of government positions. I was chief-of-staff for a period of time, again, when Lynn Arnold was a minister in the Bannon Government way back when.

**Who were you chief-of-staff for?**

Barbara Wiese – it was delightful.

**She was an incredible minister.**

A very good minister, and I left when my daughter was born because politics and parenthood, if you want to be involved with your children, don’t mix well.

**You’ll miss out on your children if you stay in politics, yes.**

Yes, and thereafter back to the public service in the welfare and health areas, and then back into non-government land and back into public service and then back into non-government land.

**The whole of your career has been in that area.**

In that area – a more senior position was in Mission Australia. I helped form Mission Australia from the five mission organisations around Australia. I was CEO in Adelaide and we formed Mission Australia. That was a whirlwind of a period of time.

**When was that formed?**

About late 1998 to 2000 was that period. I was then involved at the national level working across Australia with the Howard Government then and forming a national welfare organisation. I then found I was spending every week in Sydney or Melbourne – I went from Adelaide. That got a little bit too much and so I returned from there and became involved with the northern suburbs. I became director of the Playford Partnership, which was looking at economic and social development of the Peachey Belt. We formed from there what was then styled the office of the north, which was aimed at social and economic development in the northern suburbs with the simple proposition of putting the people in some of the suburbs in the jobs in the other area together – really attempting to get people to stay at school and to have a trade or university pathway, and also to get people jobs in Holdens or the manufacturing companies – the tier one, two and three suppliers. Of course, that's all dropped away now.

**We no longer have an industry in Australia – no car industry at all.**

We no longer have them. The best job in the northern suburbs in those days was to get on the line at Holdens; that was a job for life. We managed to develop a little bit of a pathway for unemployed people to get jobs at Holden and with the tier one and two suppliers, which was unheard of. We formed what was called – and it still exists – the Northern Adelaide State Secondary Schools' Alliance, which was 11 high schools coming together so they could jointly provide VET in Schools<sup>1</sup> pathways certificates two and three.

**And that's still going?**

It's still going.

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<sup>1</sup> Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools. Undertaking a VET program enables students to develop industry specific skills and gain a nationally recognised qualification while completing the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE).

**That's an amazing achievement, through all of the politics in this state, to have that still going.**

The magic then was for the principals to stop talking about 'my students' and start talking about our young people. There were some fantastic education leaders I was able to work with, and with the councils as well. After that, I was asked by the archbishop to run the management of the diocese as registrar and secretary of synod because the child abuse had really hit. There were many, many cases. A notorious paedophile had infiltrated the church and there were historically a huge number of cases. The previous registrar who had started off the process had got burnt out and so I stepped in.

**That's a tough call.**

That was a really tough two years. Then I got the call to become CEO of Anglicare in Canberra in New South Wales.

**So that was a move for the family.**

That was a move for the family and that was the first time I was allowed to move interstate for work.

**Otherwise you were living on a plane.**

Otherwise I was living on a plane. Deborah and I packed our bags, left the kids here, who were young adults by that time. We packed our bags and went to Canberra. That was our big adventure.

**How many kids?**

Two – Patrick and Gemma stayed here. Patrick was still studying; Gemma had just about finished. Deb became the director of Student Equity at the Australian National University, which was a big job because student equity, pathways for non-traditional students from non-traditional backgrounds to get to university, and I was CEO of Anglicare.

**You were based in Canberra city?**

Canberra City.

**And she was at ANU.**

We ranged across the state doing similar things, particularly in the south coast. Deb was looking at encouraging Islander and Aboriginal and students from backgrounds who didn't usually go to university, encouraging them to stay at school and find a pathway to university. We were working in Anglicare on all sorts of economic and social development activities.

New South Wales is a big state, so lots of travelling. Then Lynn Arnold retired from Anglicare here and I applied and was fortunate enough to get the position. So that's another weaving of Lynn Arnold as trustee of the Dunstan Foundation.

**The two of you interweave – there are so many similarities, both on the religious and the political sides. Your families must be intertwined as well.**

I do point out to Lynn that I became ordained before him!

**I will mention that next time I see him.**

He will be amused. The then Bishop of Canberra said to me, 'You've got a vocation' – I was happily a lay CEO of Anglicare; there's no requirement to be ordained to be a CEO of Anglicare. He said, 'I see a vocation,' and he was right. The work of Anglicare is deaconal – it is deacon's work serving the poor. So against the protests and judgement of perhaps his more conservative-minded colleagues, he ordained me without me having theological training or anything like that. He ordained me as a deacon on the understanding I would study theology thereafter and exercise a role as deacon as CEO of Anglicare. I've kept that status and I'm a deacon in the diocese of Adelaide, the diocese of Willochra and the diocese of the Murray. I work across three diocese, three bishops, three synods.

**As well as doing your job!**

It's a bit interesting sometimes.

**You do sleep?**

Yes, I sleep very well thank you. I think it's a very good sign – something is really wrong when you're not sleeping, and I tend to sleep very well.

**The similarities with Lynn again – it was a calling and a vocation. It almost seems to be a requirement to be CEO of Anglicare.**

Well, he became ordained after he left so he got the sequence wrong!

**It's the similarities, and then you both end up doing work for the Don Dunstan Foundation.**

And we both work together on the social policy issues for the Anglican Church as well.

**OK, let's move on to – I won't talk about your role at Anglicare other than how it interacts with the foundation. What we're basically here to talk about is the Zero Project, which Anglicare and many organisations around the state are involved in. Give me the potted history of what Zero is, and how it came about.**

All over the world, and particularly in the western world, capital cities and major cities have a real issue with homelessness. They become a place that homeless people tend to congregate in, and in particular places. There hasn't really been any sense that you can end homelessness. Internationally the Institute of Global Homelessness has been established to tackle this problem. It's basically a United Kingdom, American United States effort. What I didn't know, and what I subsequently discovered, it is really Depaul International wearing a different face – Catholic Social Justice. Depaul International is a very strong international movement, not so much connected in Australia interestingly enough, but - - -

**I haven't really heard of it here. I've come across the name in my research but that's the first time I've heard about it.**

The signs appeared to me when David Pearson, the Executive Director of the Don Dunstan Foundation, together with Ian Goodwin-Smith – Ian is the third character I should introduce you to. David was interested in, can we overcome homelessness from the Dunstan Foundation? Ian is the Director of the Australian – I've got to get this right – TAASE, the Australian Alliance for Social Enterprise, which is a research centre which Anglicare funds in the University of South Australia. Professor Ian Goodwin-Smith is the director of that centre, previously an Anglicare staff member. We funded a research centre because we wanted more objectivity and a research culture. Ian, David and I went to one of the annual conferences of the Institute of Global Homelessness in Chicago and learned – and this is David's inspiration – of the work across the world to end homelessness. The examples that motivated us were the communities in North America who had picked an aspect of homelessness and managed to end it. The example was veterans' homelessness in that community commitment to work together to end veterans' homelessness, particularly in the United States, was a popular cause and you could mobilise a whole community around that.

Back in Adelaide we determined that street homelessness in the CBD would be the equivalent way of demonstrating the ability to overcome homelessness basically by bringing a coalition of groups together that would work on a concerted basis so that we could overcome what is a real pressure point in Adelaide, and that is street homelessness, particularly in the southern parklands of the city. It's a very big political issue. Having established that, the Don Dunstan Foundation put together the Zero Project and I agreed to become co-chair of that project. Anglicare puts a considerable amount of resources into that project, particularly on the evidence gathering and the research through the Australian Alliance for Social Enterprise and Ian Goodwin-Smith and his team. We use our research unit to have an evidence led process, which is unique. That's our contribution I think to the international movement. The Don Dunstan Foundation has been instrumental in bringing a coalition, particularly in the Hutt Street Centre, which organises the annual census of



homeless people. It's called Registry Week internationally, which doesn't sound very good, so we call it Connections Week. We literally go out and find all the homeless people. We run them through an assessment process which is quite intrusive but - - -

**So you talk to them when you find them on the street?**

That's right. Over 200 volunteers go out over two nights and a morning each year and we find everybody who is homeless or sleeping rough in the CBD and the parklands. There is a rating instrument called the VS Padat and it is quite a large questionnaire.

**Do you go through that with them?**

We go through that with each person and the resistance to that is remarkably low.

**I would have thought it would have been the opposite.**

Yes, that's what we all worried about. What I think we're finding is that the – the volunteers are pretty well-trained and in the second year we've uncovered more homeless street people because I think we've developed a reputation of trust, that we're not there to give them a hard time, in fact we are there to genuinely assist. So from that we develop what is called the By-Name List. The By-Name List – we know everybody who is homeless in Adelaide by name and then during the year between the connections weeks we keep the list up to date through any contact any of the participating agencies have with homeless people and we update the list.

**What sort of questions – you said it was quite an intrusive process – what sort of information are you getting from that questionnaire?**

Length of homelessness, which is actually significant because rather than being a crisis condition 58% of people in the last collection had been homeless for more than two years, so this becomes a lifestyle. The problem and the issue is not simply one of short-term homelessness but also Aboriginality, health status, drug and alcohol use, so quite intrusive.

**You're asking very personal things.**

Very personal questions. The refusal rate is very, very low so the information we gather we can do a lot of research with in terms of what the career has been towards homelessness, therefore where some of the intervention points might be for different cohorts, what the health acuity is for people and, therefore – because it's not just a housing or homelessness lens, it's a health lens as well that we need. In particular, what housing solution would best fit the person. What we tended to do in the past was have a one size fits all. For example, the shelters have all been dry so if you've got an alcohol issue, that is a major barrier to getting

shelter. So it's working through those issues and then finally there is a social housing supply issue. The Institute for Global Homelessness has provided the framework and we're able to analyse the situation and develop local solutions. What is particularly impressive I think is the way in which the Don Dunstan Foundation and the partnering agencies have been able to work together to actively take individuals from the By-Name List and jointly agree how to house and support them, and that's fantastic work. We've housed 166 people in the year.

**I knew it was over 150, so it's up to 166.**

It's 166 over the year but the list is continuing to grow as homeless people are essentially coming out of the woodwork and engaging with us more. Where we now need to work is, in particular, on turning off the tap, the flow into homelessness – so it's the causal issues and also the housing supplies. They are the challenges.

**I read recently that Anglicare has bought the Coca Cola site - - -**

Well, one third of it.

**Sorry, a big chunk of it. Would you like to talk about the plan for that? I find that quite inspiring, what you're looking at doing there.**

One of the issues for homelessness is that what we have tended to do is hold people in shelters as temporary accommodation. People then cycle back into homelessness or we place them in a house but without the support so they cycle back into homelessness. In order to break that we need to do a couple of things: we need to actually provide the right support and the right accommodation. Housing first is the principle we use, which is you accommodate people in long-term housing as soon as you can but with the appropriate support. Now one of the issues is, of course, there isn't enough long-term housing, there isn't enough social housing in Adelaide. In fact the public housing stock has been progressively sold off over the last 20 years. It is diminishing at the rate of some 500 houses per year, so we have lost 20,000 [sic] houses over the last couple of decades and so the supply of housing is a real barrier. For agencies like Anglicare and others who are in the homelessness and housing area, if we can leverage our balance sheets to buy property and build housing that is a very good thing and that is what we intend to do. We are one of what is called the big five of community housing providers who are not only receiving managing stock on behalf of the state government - - -

**Is this through the State Housing Authority?**

Through the South Australian Housing Authority, but also are now redeveloping that stock and we have bought the site in order to provide housing. We can go up about 10 storeys so it's a great site. We can do a lot of housing on that site because it's a very big site.

**And a fabulous location.**

A great location, and we've built up a capacity over the last little while to not only show that we are able to generate sufficient surplus to be able to service debt, so the banks are throwing money at us at the moment, which is unusual.

**You'd be one of the few that they're throwing money at!**

We are one of the few and it's only because we've worked very hard to be able to manage ourselves in a sufficiently businesslike way with the aim that we know we should be actually leveraging our balance sheet to provide more housing. So being part of the Adelaide Zero Project as an organisation, and for me as a co-chair of the project, we're on for system change. We're not just about advantaging particular organisations or particular types of services; we want system change because we want to end homelessness. First of all you want to end street homelessness in the CBD as a demonstration and to achieve what is called functional zero.

Functional zero is a technical description because if you say you are going to end homelessness and then a homeless person appears, you have immediately failed. You want a measure that is a little more robust than that. Functional zero is over a period of 90 days – and this is an internationally recognised criterion – in a period of 90 days we have a greater capacity to accommodate and support homeless people than there are homeless people. So it does mean that nobody need be homeless as opposed to there are no homeless people, because a homeless person will appear. The capacity to house people quickly with the appropriate supports is what the aim is and to have a greater supply of those supports and housing than there is a flow of homeless people.

**Could you talk a bit about the supports? It's relatively easy if you've got some housing you can shove someone in, but if they have been homeless for two years**

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The problem is we are actually shoving people into accommodation that is not necessarily appropriate for them. Put that to one side ---

**We need to talk about two things: what is appropriate housing and what the support is.**

There's a need for housing stock, and three-bedroom houses way out in the suburbs aren't necessarily appropriate for people. The key issue, as you point out, is the support. What we have not tended to do is to place people in housing with the support to make that a successful tenancy. That's the aim of the By-Name List and the assessment, so we know and have worked with that person as to the support they need so that when we find accommodation that is appropriate for them we also have to source the support as well. That requires homelessness agencies to work together to provide that support in a wrap-around way and it requires the housing agencies to work with the homelessness agencies to have that support coming into the house. There's a huge degree of collaboration required.

What the Don Dunstan Foundation has done is to act as what we call the backbone organisation. It's not a provider so it's not in the game of being a competitor or a provider. Its role is simply to facilitate – I say simply, but it's not a simple thing – to facilitate the collaboration that is required for system change, to have everybody in the room. My role as co-chair is to be part of that process to support the foundation to achieve the aim of the Zero Project. That requires working from ministers right down to workers to make sure that we are actually moving forward in a relatively coherent way towards achieving the goal. Part of that is to assist people to see that the kind of service provision that we have now isn't going to get us to zero, that as we collaborate we will need much less temporary shelter, much more support to people in housing. Many of us, including Anglicare, need to change our business models and we need to do it collaboratively so that as we become better at finding housing and support that we are able to provide less of what we don't have to do and more of what we have to do.

**When you were doing the interviews on the streets – that's answering part of that question – what were people telling you they wanted in housing and what sort of help did they say they needed?**

A lot of these people are what our service providers and our department used to say were service resistant.

**I've heard the phrase.**

It's a lovely term – service resistant. All that means is that the services we have on offer aren't what they need or want. The needs are actually quite significant because it's not a place of choice for people to be out in the cold and the wet in an Adelaide winter in inadequate accommodation, sheltering in makeshift tents or in car parks or wherever people find a place. Looking at the evidence we now have with nearly 60% of the cohort being homeless for two years or more, there are real issues about trust and relationship in them trusting a system that has seemed to reject them for so many years. So part of it is

relationship – what they want is a trusted relationship, people who will essentially acknowledge them as human beings and will actually work with them genuinely to assist them into housing. Getting a nice flat or a nice unit is often what people want. There are some location issues and often we are not able to offer accommodation in a place where people have connection to. That is a big issue.

The second issue is working with that person to understand what support they believe they need, as opposed to what support they might need, and work from their perception and perhaps be more responsive to what they need immediately so you can build the relationship so that you can move on. Often there's a lot of substance abuse and alcoholism. This is a controversial bit – it is possible to work with people while they are still drinking. Anglicare runs a nursing home for street people to come off alcohol – principally, it's alcohol for that population. It is an aged care facility – people who have prematurely aged. With a bit of tough love those nurses get that alcohol down but then the underlying issues as to why people did become homeless in the first place start to emerge, and why people are self-medicating. It's quite a complex business.

**And that is going to take a long time.**

It is built on, dare I say, love and the loving relationship which is required. That's where it's not just a professional service, it's something more than that. It's a relationship of mutual respect, trust, affection, love, and it requires that degree of safety for people to move from the lifestyle that they have had for over two years living on the streets to a lifestyle which is more appropriate and safe for them and one in which they can become a citizen and participate with others and become part of rather than separate from. There is a bit of companionship on the streets that people actually have, so by moving people into housing they can become very lonely unless there is companionship there as well in perhaps a safer way. Certainly having a fixed place of abode facilitates health services. Often people may have conditions that hospitals are reluctant to treat because the medication needs to be applied consistently over a period of time for it to be effective. One of the barriers can be, well, where does the person live and where do we deliver, et cetera? If you don't have an address, that depowers you in all sorts of ways. Having an address, having a home as opposed to simply a place to live and having the support that enables people to move through whatever transition they need, or wish for, is really important.

**One of the issues that is quite different is the Aboriginal community who are quite regularly in front of the library and, certainly, the war memorial. Basically, for the whole day I would regularly see 20 to 30 people quite drunk. How do you get involved with that?**

Our motivation at Anglicare to get involved with the Zero Project came from that population.

**I thought that might have been a bit of a trigger because that's pretty scary.**

It is. Just to give the background, each year people from the homelands from the West Coast and from the Pitjantjatjara lands up by the Northern Territory border come down to Port Augusta and to Adelaide over the summer months, it tends to be. There are a few reasons for that. Some of the reasons are because there is male business in the homelands that women and children need to get away from. Sometimes there is a medical condition that needs treatment in Adelaide and sometimes it's people wanting to come down from communities that are dry to a place where they can drink. There's a whole mixture of reasons, but when people come down from those lands they come down in large groups. The traditional place that they have gathered is the parklands. The council and the state government have enacted dry zones as a response to the fears of local residents about that population. The degree to which that population are the drinkers – certainly some of them are, but some of the drinkers in the public places are actually people who are not homeless – they are housed.

**A lot of these people I'm talking about are homed, yes.**

So they come into Adelaide to party. We approached this because I was looking for a way of dealing with this. The then director of Housing Strategy for the Housing Trust, Olive Bennell, who is a Wiradjuri woman from New South Wales and very experienced in Aboriginal human services, et cetera, said to me, 'You need to appoint me,' so we did. Olive and I embarked on a process of looking for a solution to an immediate population in the parklands – there were about 16 of them – who were very ill. We wanted to find a way of supporting them so that they could come out of the parklands and out of the weather. Olive went around Australia and had a look at best practice and developed the concept of the healing centre, which is essentially alcohol treatment custodial diversion, a safe place for people to live, receive treatment of their medical conditions, but also deal with their alcohol intake and then move into accommodation elsewhere. We bought a building on South Terrace for that purpose. However, we were opposed by the then government and by the Housing Department in particular because an alcohol management program was seen to be too dangerous.

**Why?**

Alcohol management program is seen to be risky if you don't know what an alcohol management program is and if you've never run it. Anglicare has run an alcohol management program at Brompton Nursing Home for a long time. We advocated that for some time. The other thing we were looking for was an alternative location to the parklands for Aboriginal people to meet and gather, particularly Aboriginal people who want to live a

more traditional lifestyle in the open air, et cetera, and to be able to drink. We put in a bid to buy the Enfield High School site for that purpose.

**That's my old school.**

Well, you'd know that the back oval would have been ideal for this purpose.

**It would have been wonderful.**

Anyway, we weren't successful in that and the Housing Department opposed us strongly for reasons which aren't completely clear to me.

**That's just a new housing development now.**

Yes, it's been sold off for housing. Certainly I think the department felt that they were managing the Aboriginal homelessness situation well and they didn't need Anglicare putting our oar in the water. So that hasn't worked and we have repurposed the building on South Terrace. There's a disability respite facility and that will open next month. We haven't given up on the healing centre, and as part of the Adelaide Zero Project Olive is leading what is called a 90-Day Project to look at the response to Aboriginal homelessness. As you pointed out, Allison, there are different cohorts coming into homelessness and their experience and the reasons they have become homeless are very different. For that part of the Aboriginal population who are homeless it is a mobility issue. They move around the state. At one level, departmental housing people will say they're not homeless, they've got a house back in their home community. In Adelaide they are homeless and they are homeless in groups of 30 or so. Three-bedroom homes in the suburbs don't actually work that well because what tends to happen is that relatives have cultural obligation to accommodate people from their community from their family and skin groups. That becomes overcrowding, it becomes noise, it becomes partying, and the host can lose their tenancy as a result – they can lose their house.

**I can give you a perfect example. I have neighbours, one Aboriginal couple who are delightful – this is a specified Aboriginal housing unit. I think it's two or three bedrooms and maybe 20 people live there and there are police complaints two or three times a week. How do we resolve that?**

We need the Enfield High School site.

**You do. These people will be evicted eventually because of what is happening.**

Sadly, this is what tends to happen. One of our other Aboriginal staff, when it's one of our houses, is expert at trying to defuse that situation and to get people back to wherever they

need to be – often people are stuck because they don't have the money to pay for the bus fare to go home – and actually break that cycle.

**This is through Anglicare.**

Yes, we do that for our houses and sometimes we are called in because we've got Aboriginal staff who can do this. Three-bedroom houses in the suburbs just don't work for that population, so finding an alternative location, or locations, is one of the things we're trying to do so that groups of people can be appropriately and safely accommodated, that the helping services can sensitively work with them because they know who they are and there's not a threat of being moved on, or the dry zone, or the police evicting, or any of that. Building trust in relationship and then being able to work with people is - - -

**And that is a slow process but you've got an organised program that works. Is that something that will be part of the Zero Project?**

Yes, the 90-Day Project is a sub-project of the Zero Project and we are working hard to get that happening. There's a great deal now, I think, of goodwill because a lot of this is people engaging voluntarily with each other to solve a complex problem rather than being required to work together. There's a skill in that and that is certainly where the Don Dunstan Foundation's backbone function is helping both in terms of relationship brokering but also in terms of inspiration. Part of this is a growing sense in all human services that we are accountable for the quite large resources we receive to make sure we are actually doing as best we can. If that means we do less of what doesn't work and more of what works, that is a good thing but it is a difficult dynamic to bring about. You've got to have ministers down working carefully with each other to bring that about. DDF is a place in which we can build these relationships. It's not just a secretariat function, though that is part of it; there is some broader work in building the relationships and the networks which is what we call the backbone function. The Don Dunstan Foundation does that really well.

**One other thing I'd like to mention is the vanguard cities under the international foundation. I was staggered when I found out that Adelaide was the second one in the world to be appointed. I know it was a Canadian one that was first - - -**

Vancouver.

**Vancouver, yes. Talk about the vanguard cities and how little old Adelaide gets to be number two.**

I think this is more about David Pearson's capacity and his background working in the Premier's Office to see opportunities and to seize them and to broker the relationships. With the relationship brokering it's the shared visioning – it's not just an individual's vision; it has



to be a shared vision – but also, frankly, the capacity to see opportunities and put resources together. That is what David is very good at; it's what the Don Dunstan Foundation as a neutral venue effectively creates – the room in which we can meet and then facilitates the room so that we are able to work forward together. As a co-chair I see and I'm part of the paddling under water that has to happen – little legs paddling away as we glide across the surface of the water in what looks effortless but there is an awful lot of work.

**It does look effortless, and to look effortless it has to be a lot of work.**

There's a lot of work and there's a lot of skill. Part of the legacy of the Don Dunstan Foundation is to actually bring some of these resources together, to nurture them carefully and to make sure that they are available for these types of projects. That is a wonderful thing because in Australia we don't tend to have the Rowntree Trusts and other trusted foundations that in the UK and in America resource these things. We're always trying to do it off the smell of an oily rag. Relationship and respect is sometimes all we've got.

**I've asked all the questions that I wanted to ask but I would like to sum up with some words I found about you while doing some research in LinkedIn, just googling, and I'd like your comment. This is describing you:**

**[Your] reputation is one of being ambitious, pragmatic, a worker who got results. [You] challenge the system relentlessly and you put the human experience back into the system.**

**I think you've just told me that that is you.**

I have no idea where you got that from but if that is what somebody else has thought of me, that is a wonderful thing to say. The magic of the Zero Project is that a significant group of people – and in Adelaide you can do this, you can pool five people together and you can produce the results because of the way we network in Adelaide, because we do know that we're going to bump into each other tomorrow at the barbecue, or whatever. You have to be nice to everybody and work collaboratively, whereas in the bigger states and the bigger jurisdictions you can be a bit more outrageous and get away with it as an individual. Here we actually have to be a bit collective. As I get older, the need for system change and the ability to change systems is really important because we have limited resources, we have some big problems but they are doable. I think that is actually what the Don Dunstan Foundation gives us, is the optimism to say if we work together we can actually do this. I heard the other day that a similar process is happening in Perth. They are just about to rename themselves as the Perth Zero Project. In Tasmania there is a Vinnies De Paul winter sleep-out that happened last night and they have called for a project similar to the Adelaide Zero Project.