

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

30 March 2004

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FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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Tuesday, 30 March 2004

The SPEAKER (Hon. Judy Maddigan) took the chair at 2.04 p.m. and read the prayer.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

The SPEAKER — Order! Before we commence, I would like to acknowledge the presence of a former Speaker of this house, John Delzoppo, in the gallery today. Welcome, John.

THE NATIONALS

Change of name

The SPEAKER — Order! I advise the house of a change of name for the National Party. The party will now be known as The Nationals, so the leader should be referred to as the Leader of The Nationals.

CONDOLENCES

Hon. Vernon Francis Wilcox, CBE, QC

Mr BRACKS (Premier) — I move:

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death of the Honourable Vernon Francis Wilcox, CBE, QC, and places on record its acknowledgment of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Camberwell from 1956 to 1976 and as Minister of Immigration from 1964 to 1965, Minister of Labour and Industry from 1965 to 1967, Minister of Transport from 1967 to 1973 and Attorney-General from 1973 to 1976.

Speaker, this house is saddened by the passing of the Honourable Vernon Wilcox on Saturday, 13 March 2004. He was 84 years old.

Vernon Wilcox was a minister who gave a great deal to Victoria. He served this house with distinction as a member of Parliament for some 20 years. He was born on 10 April 1919 in Camberwell. He was educated at Carey Baptist Grammar School, where he was school captain from 1935 to 1936. At Carey he won the Henry Meeks medal for leadership, scholarship and athletics twice. He returned to serve as a member of the school council from 1963 to 1970.

Vernon Wilcox graduated in law from Melbourne University but had to wait until after World War II to do his articles. He served as a lieutenant in the Royal Australian Navy volunteer reserve from 1942 to 1945, and he was a liaison officer to the United States seventh

fleet in the Pacific. After the war Vernon Wilcox was called to the bar in 1946, where he practised law with Hall and Wilcox. His father was, of course, one of the firm's founders. He became interested in politics after that period. Geoffrey Blainey notes that his early inclinations were in fact to Labor. In the 1930s he used to drive his mother mad, says Geoffrey Blainey, by arguing socialism around the table. But by the 1940s he had become active in the Liberal branches in Melbourne's eastern suburbs. He first stood for Parliament as a Liberal candidate in 1952.

It was another four years before Vernon Wilcox was elected to the seat of Camberwell, which he held continuously for some 20 years. He went on to be a cabinet minister in both the Bolte and the Hamer governments. He served as Assistant Chief Secretary, Assistant Attorney-General, Minister of Immigration, Minister of Labour and Industry, Minister of Transport and also Attorney-General. He also served on the State Law Revision Committee and the Qualifications Committee. Amongst the many achievements in the numerous portfolios that he held, I am told that Vernon Wilcox was most proud of the significant part he played in getting the City Loop underground railway built, turning the sod for that important and crucial piece of economic infrastructure for this state. He fought hard for the City Loop project, both in cabinet and in the community. On the announcement of his retirement he cited the turning of the first sod for the City Loop as the highlight of his political career.

Vernon Wilcox retired from Parliament at age 57, stating, when he retired, 'that it was a good time to get out when you are still in top gear'. In the same year his contribution to Victoria was recognised with the award of Commander of the Order of the British Empire. After his parliamentary career Vernon Wilcox was a director of several companies. He was appointed to the Australian Advisory Council of General Accident, Fire and Life Assurance Corporation, and he became a Melbourne Cricket Ground trustee in 1978. Maintaining an interest in politics, in 1998 he was elected to the Australian Constitutional Convention to debate the proposed republic, and he wrote extensively about those matters following the convention.

In 2001 Vernon Wilcox published his book *Minister of the Crown*, which is largely a commentary on his own political career and political interests and achievements, with a focus on how those outcomes were achieved during his 20 years as a member of this house. Like much that he said and published throughout his life, it reminds us of how dedicated Vernon Wilcox was to the service of the state of Victoria and to the wider community.

On behalf of the Victorian government I offer sincere condolences to the family of Vernon Wilcox: his wife, Jean; his children, Richard, Murray, Sue and Gerry; and his 13 grandchildren, Kate, Andrew, Tom, Edward, Lizzy, Jen, Emily, Simon, Sally, Meagan, Catherine, Lucy and Rose.

Mr DOYLE (Leader of the Opposition) — It is a privilege to join the Premier today in the condolence motion to recognise the contribution of the Honourable Vernon Francis Wilcox, CBE, QC. Vernon Wilcox had a life of service to his country, to this state and to the local community. Vern was born on 10 April 1919 in Camberwell and died on 13 March 2004, less than a month short of his birthday.

When you look at the careers of the ministers and members of Parliament who are no longer with us, particularly the great careers of the men and women who were part of the Bolte and Hamer era, it strikes you just how much these men and women were Renaissance men and women — how they were true all-rounders. Aspiring politicians these days are becoming increasingly career politicians, yet Vern Wilcox led a very full professional and a very varied life — one that was full of achievement. He served in the military, he had a distinguished legal career, he became a fine Victorian member of Parliament and minister of the Crown, and he ran a farm and became quite a distinguished primary producer as well. It is one of the reasons why, although you stand here to mourn the passing of someone who offered service to his community and to the Parliament, this is an opportunity for us to celebrate the great service that people like Vernon Wilcox offer this state, our party and this Parliament.

In fact Vern's service did not stop after he retired from Parliament. As the Premier noted, he continued to serve on boards and as a member of a variety of community organisations. Vern was the son of a solicitor, as the Premier noted. He was educated at Carey Grammar School, where he was school captain, and he twice won the Henry Meeks medal for leadership. He graduated in 1941 from Ormond College, Melbourne University, but before he was able to put his law degree into practice he served his country in World War II, first in the commonwealth military forces from 1940 to 1941 and then in the Royal Australian Navy from 1941 to 1945. In that naval service he rose to the rank of lieutenant, and in 1944 he was seconded to the United States navy in the south-west Pacific and in the Philippines for communications liaison duties.

When he returned from the war he practised law in the family firm of Hall and Wilcox — his father, of course,

was a founder of the firm. He became a senior partner and was appointed a Queen's Counsel in 1973. He was a consultant in that firm right up to 1993. Sometimes we forget that earning those post-nominal letters 'QC' really denotes not just seniority but having an enormous ability recognised by your peers in the legal profession. That burgeoning career in the law was given up for politics, particularly when he became a minister. Vern became the member for the seat of Camberwell in 1956 and served in that position with great distinction for the next 20 years. As the Premier noted, during his distinguished time he served as Assistant Chief Secretary, Assistant Attorney-General, Minister of Immigration, Minister of Labour and Industry, Minister of Transport and Attorney-General.

Vern Wilcox believed in a strong legal system and in the separation of powers. He spoke often of the importance of the rule of law as the supremacy of the law over all individuals and bodies in the community. He saw that as essential in the delivery of our democracy. It was fitting in a way that Vern Wilcox's very first speech in this Parliament was in support of the Judges Salaries and Allowances Bill, and in speaking to that bill Vern supported the proposed salary for the chief justice. I might point out to the Attorney-General that at that time it was the princely sum of £6250.

Mr Hulls — They were the days.

Mr DOYLE — They were the days indeed. He was appointed Attorney-General in 1973, and he held that position until he retired in 1976. He became the first Attorney-General since Robert Menzies to appear in person before the Supreme and High courts dressed in full judicial regalia.

His friend Professor Geoffrey Blainey described Vern Wilcox as utterly dedicated to his role as Attorney-General. Geoff Blainey also spoke of Vern's strong belief in the role of juries. He quoted Vern as saying, 'I have always thought that people were more important than any system'. He was ever passionate about the need for a strong legal system, and when he announced his retirement in July 1975 he spoke of his determination to fix what he must have considered unfinished business — that was, to tackle delays in our courts, which again is a problem that exercises the minds of attorneys-general.

Arguably, as the Premier said, Vern's greatest achievement, and certainly one he considered the greatest achievement in his parliamentary career, was the vision that was the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop — a project that he drove as transport minister.

He turned the first sod on that project in June 1971. What remains a huge success in rail infrastructure to this day was not, it must be pointed out, initially welcomed by the wider Victorian community; but he persisted, and the project went ahead. It was ready for service in 1982, leaving a legacy for years to come. At the time of its opening, the Queen toured what was then Museum station.

Vern was also passionate about the subject of whether Australia should become a republic. When he was elected a delegate to the 1998 constitutional convention he declared himself neither a republican nor a monarchist. Instead he declared himself a constitutionalist. He was not opposed, I feel, to Australia's becoming a republic, but he felt strongly that the safeguards in the constitution must be carried forward in any future model or through any changes. He felt the debate itself was vital to Australia's future, and he told the convention that he was there for his grandchildren and future generations, as Professor Blainey noted so eloquently in his eulogy.

In his politics Vern had some refreshing views. If I go back to his first speech in 1956, he remarked that one of his 'first impressions of this institution was the friendliness of members on all sides of the house and the officers and staff'. I would like to think that has not changed too much, but I am not too sure about that. It was his first speech, and often early utterances can be proved wrong by later experience.

Professor Geoffrey Blainey also referred last week to Vern Wilcox's respect for many politicians from other parties. Vern gave an interview to the *Herald Sun* when he retired, and he claimed he 'had more friends among older Labor men — the traditional trade unionists — than some of the intellectuals'. I was mildly taken aback to have the Premier tell me that initially Vern Wilcox was a Labor man. I will check that. I think we can only put that down as an early aberration and the folly of youth, because on this side there was no doubting that Vern Wilcox was a Liberal through and through, and he wore that badge with great pride.

In the same interview with the *Herald Sun* he articulated his belief that 'it is only in an atmosphere of freedom that a human personality can develop to the full, and this freedom cannot be found under socialism'. He was widely known for his opposition to socialism, and that was best summed up in what is a remarkable quote — wise and yet simple:

Let the people go out and stand on their own two feet.

Vern Wilcox was strongly opposed to the interventionist style of government. When he retired

from Parliament he spoke out about what he thought was too much government, and he lamented what he thought were excessive restrictions on people's freedom. He said:

You can hardly move without being restricted by government.

He advocated the simple life, particularly where government was concerned. That is something he pursued when he left the Parliament. He remained an active participant in a multitude of interests. Vern and Jean moved to Alexandra in 1976 to the property they had bought about 18 years earlier, and there they ran a successful sheep and cattle farm, including a 20-year ownership of Carwoola Poll Hereford stud. They sold that farm in 1992.

Vern Wilcox was a man dedicated to serving the public, including as a parliamentarian, whereby he offered fine service over 20 years, as I have noted. But a quick roll call of some of his other achievements show what a remarkable, all-round man Vern was. He served on the council of the Law Institute of Victoria and was president of the Camberwell Returned and Services League, vice-president and patron of the Camberwell Magpies Cricket Club and vice-president of the Eastern Suburban Churches Table Tennis Association. He was a member and president of the Old Carey Grammarians Association, a council member of the Institute of Public Affairs and the Maritime Trust of Australia, a trustee of the Melbourne Cricket Ground and the Dame Pattie Menzies Centre for Handicapped Persons, and a life councillor of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria.

He was a man dedicated to serving his community, our state and the country he loved. Evidence for much of that can be found in the reading of a book I recommend to honourable members, *Minister of the Crown*, which he published in 2001. Vern Wilcox was a man with vision. He was, as I said, a dedicated man, an honourable man, a wise man and a man with the strength of his convictions.

On behalf of the Victorian Liberal Party I offer my condolences to the family of Vern Wilcox. He is survived by his dear wife, Jean, who is here with us today, as are three of their four children and some of their grandchildren. The Premier documented the entire family, so I will not do the same, but I say to them: I hope you are as proud of Vern as we are. Vern always spoke of his appreciation of the partnership he shared with Jean. Whatever is on the record about the achievements of this remarkable man, Vern himself said, 'The record would not have been as it is without the support, for better or for worse, of Jean Ramsay

Wilcox'. It was very much for the better for her support, and she is in our thoughts.

Mr RYAN (Leader of The Nationals) — On behalf of The Nationals I rise to support the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in the condolence motion for the Honourable Vernon Francis Wilcox, CBE, QC.

Vern Wilcox died on 13 March. He gave 20 years of distinguished service to this Parliament as the member for Camberwell. Throughout that time he was active in various ministries, which has been detailed by both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition.

Like so many of those who came to the Parliament in that period of time he had a distinguished record of service in the military. He was in the Royal Australian Naval Volunteer Reserve from 1942 to 1945. In 1946 he was admitted to practise law and became a partner in the firm Hall and Wilcox — which I remember well from my days in my former firm, when we used to contest very strongly various claims on behalf of our deserving clients!

Mr Wilcox made his maiden speech in this place in May 1956 on the Judges Salaries and Allowances Bill. As the Leader of the Opposition has observed, the salary of the Chief Justice of Victoria at the time was £6250, with the other judges being paid a lesser sum. There was also mention by Mr Wilcox of the pension benefits payable to judges, which might have been the subject of comment by him today, if he were able to make further comment!

He was a stickler on the issue of judicial independence. He was very proud of the parliamentary system in Victoria, the common law and the jury system, which he saw as underpinning the way in which the courts in this state functioned. He was very strong in his belief about the necessity for a strong and independent judiciary. Later on, from 1973 until 1976, he served as the Attorney-General of the state of Victoria.

On the day of the announcement of his retirement in 1975 there was commentary in the media release he issued about his great pride in some of the achievements he brought about during his parliamentary term. As has been mentioned, he saw his turning of the first sod on the rail loop as a singular achievement, and he introduced new trains and trams to the system during the six years in which he was transport minister in Victoria.

He was a man of many disparate interests, including politics, very obviously, and the law, very obviously; but he also served on the council of the Law Institute of

Victoria. He represented interests in the Returned and Services League; he was involved with the Camberwell Cricket Club, and he played for both the university and for Richmond; he had an interest in table tennis; he had an interest, with wife Jean and the family, in a Poll Hereford stud, to which reference has already been made; and generally speaking he was a man with a wide-ranging public and charitable group of interests which were the beneficiary of his contribution over many years. Not the least of those was the further contribution he made to education, particularly in his role on the board of Carey Baptist Grammar School. He is survived by his wife, Jean, their four children and their 13 grandchildren; and to them, on behalf of The Nationals, I convey my deepest sympathy.

Mr HULLS (Attorney-General) — Vern Wilcox was actually once a socialist. In the heady days of law at Melbourne University the young Vern declared himself a follower of the Marxist tradition: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs. Of course if circumstances had been different, Vern Wilcox may well have ended up a great Labor man sitting alongside, instead of opposite, the likes of John Cain, Sr. Nevertheless, for reasons known only to himself, Vern Wilcox decided on the conservative side of politics and carved an illustrious and varied career for himself, representing the people of Camberwell in this house for more than 20 years.

Perhaps it was his earlier leanings, however, that led him to make lasting friendships with those whom he described, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, as the older Labor men, the traditional trade unionists. That caused him to be labelled a left-wing Liberal by the previously mentioned head of the Cain dynasty, John Cain, Sr.

Vern Wilcox retired from politics while still at his prime, bowing out in this corresponding week of March some 28 years ago. He held, as we have heard, many positions during his time in this house, including Minister of Transport, during which time he was the driving force behind the creation of Melbourne's City Loop. However, it is of no surprise that it was his three years as Victoria's Attorney-General, under the leadership of another great Victorian whom we mourn today, in which I am most interested. Given his stated belief in minimal government and limited legislation, I guess Vernon Wilcox would be somewhat appalled at the workload of the Attorney-General's portfolio some 30 years after he held it. Nevertheless I am sure he would approve of the changes that have taken place since that time in our legal system and of the place we are building for Victoria's courts and the legal profession in the wider community.

Vern Wilcox was passionate about courts and the legal profession. He was concerned about delays occurring in the courts at the time he held office, and he moved quickly to redress those delays. Most importantly he was keen to raise the profile of the courts within the wider community and disseminate to ordinary Victorians information on their standing and importance. He wanted the courts to be understood and appreciated so that their value and capacity to administer justice would be secured. Vern Wilcox described the role of Australia's courts as the chief repositories of our great common-law system, a system which has a vital role in preserving the freedom of individual Australians, as well as preserving their many rights and duties. In pursuing this theme he emphasised that it was important for the community to understand that the law existed for the people, not for lawyers, and he urged the legal profession to see that this understanding was actually reached. Wilcox wanted the profession to be seen as more than useful by the community — as maintaining a special role in their protection from increasing executive power.

Those values resonate equally today, and I would be very interested to learn what Vern Wilcox thought about the Bracks government's forthcoming justice statement, which seeks to do those very things — raising the security and raising and securing the profile of the courts, and reminding the legal profession of its role in the protection of ordinary Victorians. It is my belief that, socialist or no socialist, as someone who believed emphatically in the paramountcy of the rule of law above all else, Vern Wilcox would certainly have approved.

I extend my deepest condolences to the Wilcox family. I thank them for allowing their loved one to give so generously and participate so fully in public life.

Mr McIntosh (Kew) — It is both a privilege and a very proud moment for me to be able to speak on the worthwhile life and great contribution of Vern Wilcox.

As a young man I had the benefit of hearing Vern Wilcox speak at a Liberal Party branch meeting. In late 1973 I was invited by a friend to attend the Canterbury branch of the Liberal Party — I was not a member at that stage as I was still at school. Vern had just been appointed as Attorney-General and his speech left an indelible impression on me. He talked about why he was a member of the Liberal Party, how he saw the future of this state, and his vision for the courts and the administration of justice. He talked about his strong belief in the rule of law and the ability of the common-law courts to dispense justice in this state.

He talked also about the dead hand of government and his concerns about people being overregulated, and he left me with the indelible impression that as a true Liberal, as a true community leader, and as Attorney-General he had an abiding understanding of Victoria's constitutional place in this country and an understanding that the protections, benefits and freedoms that we enjoy have come through an understanding that the rule of law is paramount in this state.

As an aside he indicated that he had just made the transition from Minister of Transport, an office that he had held for nearly six years, to Attorney-General. He said that that transition meant that he was probably the only person at the cabinet table who was no longer highly regarded. He did not actually do anything; he just kept restraining his colleagues in cabinet who may have been a little excessive in the way they wanted to apply the law in this state. He certainly was a great man who was highly regarded by his fellow Victorians.

I had the honour of working for Sir John Young, a former chief justice under Vern Wilcox. Sir John spoke highly of Vern Wilcox as a man, as a community leader, as a lawyer and as a contributor to his community. He was also highly regarded by people of the calibre of Sir Daryl Dawson, who was Solicitor-General of this state at that time. Sir Daryl went on to become a High Court judge and was a distinguished Victorian in his own right. Both Sir John and Sir Daryl related to me vicariously what a high regard they had for Vern Wilcox as Attorney-General of this state.

His single biggest achievement was City Loop, which other members have already mentioned. But for me as a lawyer, somebody who grew up steeped in the law and went on to become a barrister, the regard that the legal profession had for Vern Wilcox as Attorney-General left an indelible impression.

It is with regret and mourning that we note the passing of Vern Wilcox, but we also rejoice in what he did for this state. Indeed the issues that he talked about, such as the republic, delays in the courts and judicial salaries are issues that we are still grappling with today. The issues of judicial salaries, delays, the operation of the courts, and the administration of justice are of real concern to all of us. The leadership provided to this place and this state by people like Vern Wilcox should be regarded with particular interest, and we should listen to what people like him have to say.

Mine is a personal reflection, a vicarious reflection gleaned through others, but he certainly left an indelible

impression on me. It is both a regret and a privilege to be able to talk about the life of Vern Wilcox. It is with real pride that I stand here and talk about a great Victorian of the calibre of Vern Wilcox and his contribution to this state through this place, through the legal profession, as a member of the armed forces during the Second World War and through a variety of other activities such as his work with the council of the Law Institute of Victoria and as a trustee of the Melbourne Cricket Ground. I will conclude by passing on my personal condolences to Jean and the Wilcox family.

Mr BATCHELOR (Minister for Transport) — Vernon Wilcox died on 13 March 2004, one month short of his 85th birthday. He had a long and distinguished working career, which included almost 20 years in this house as the member for Camberwell. He held a number of very senior and key positions in government, including periods as Minister of Labour and Industry, Minister of Transport and Attorney-General.

Whilst being on the other side of the political fence to Vern Wilcox, as a fellow transport minister I certainly have some sympathy for the challenges he faced and had to deal with during that period as transport minister from May 1967 to May 1973. Six years as a transport minister is a long time in Victoria.

Mr Doyle interjected.

Mr BATCHELOR — Yes, it is — to Vern Wilcox. He served that period with great distinction. In fact the travelling public of today should have a great deal of respect for Vern Wilcox's vision as a transport minister because of the number of initiatives he was able to introduce during that period; and of course the centrepiece of those initiatives was the commencement of Melbourne's underground rail loop. This was a major project — it was a huge task — and like many other projects of great economic and social significance undertaken over the years by that government and other governments, it had time lines and a budget to match.

It is worth considering some of the issues that surrounded the decision-making process that went into putting forward the proposal to construct an underground rail loop here in Melbourne. It was at the time and for many years after Australia's biggest urban engineering project, and to this day it remains, together with the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, near the top of the list of those types of projects.

According to annual reports at the time, it was expected to cost \$200 million, and that was a lot of money in

those days. Construction commenced in June 1971 and was estimated to finish in mid-1978. The loop actually opened in June 1982, some four years late, and cost \$466 million — more than double the original estimate.

However, it is interesting to note that when people think of Melbourne's underground loop they do not think of it in those terms. They do not think of it as having been over time or over budget; they either take it for granted as part of their daily transport experience or they think about the major engineering feat that it was and the addition it provided to Melbourne's quality of life.

It is also interesting to note that according to newspaper articles of the time, when the underground loop was put forward it had a number of critics: the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria said the money would be better spent on roads; the retail traders did not want it because it cost too much; the Country Party did not support it because it did not think it would help country Victorians; newspapers of the time referred to it as 'the ghost train', because they thought it would never be completed; and the Melbourne City Council was against it as well, on the basis that it had to contribute towards the cost of the project.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BATCHELOR — Exactly — you have stolen my line. Precisely. All of which goes some way towards proving that old trite but true aphorism — the more things change, the more they stay the same. It is also interesting to note that the project was paid for through developer contributions — that is, by those who benefited from the cost of its construction.

The commencement of the loop, however, was only one of a number of public transport initiatives that Vern Wilcox put into place during his tenure as transport minister. They ranged from the introduction of non-smoking carriages way back in 1969 to the introduction of the then new silver Hitachi trains. He was also responsible for the introduction of the Z-class trams, which entered service in 1975, after he had moved on to become Attorney-General.

Possibly one of his most notable achievements as Minister of Transport — apart from the underground loop, of course — was from a public health and safety perspective the introduction in 1969 of the requirement to fit seatbelts in the front seats of cars, followed in 1970 by the introduction of the mandatory wearing of fitted seatbelts. It is hard to imagine that these things were not a mandated part of everyday driving. So every time a motorist or passenger reaches across to go through that totally familiar and almost automatic

process of buckling up, they do so because of Vern Wilcox, who was responsible for this terrific initiative.

The Attorney-General noted some comments that Vern Wilcox made in reflecting upon his life on his retirement in 1975, when he mused that earlier in his life he found the doctrine ‘From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs’ quite appealing. It is clear, given the challenges he faced as Minister of Transport — including the opposition to those initiatives and the media and stakeholder comment — that if we could sit down and have a few beers, we would find we had quite a lot in common.

It is ironic that at the time there was little public recognition of the importance of Vernon Wilcox’s real legacy to the people of Victoria — the Melbourne underground loop. One hopes that in his death this achievement, and many of his others as Minister for Transport, will serve as a lasting recognition of the work he did, because he truly deserves it. My sincere condolences go to his wife, Jean, his family and friends.

Mr BAILLIEU (Hawthorn) — It is hard to believe that Vern Wilcox was 84 and that he is no longer with us. Vern was a real fixture in Camberwell; he described himself as a Camberwell man, as he has been described in the press in the last week. Vern had a bright mind, lived an involved life and was a vital personality. In all regards he was somebody who was very much an icon in his territory, in this Parliament and in Victoria.

From my own point of view as the Victorian vice-president and president of the Liberal Party for a number of years, I got to know Vern well; and as a Victorian in the 1970s with, shall I say, a younger mind, I was very conscious of the contribution Vern was making at that time. In 1999, in the middle of the election campaign following which I first came into this house, I was in Camberwell. It was pouring with rain, and I had spent the morning at various railway stations. The mobile rang and at the other end of the line was Vern, who invited me to come and have a cup of coffee. I think he just wanted to make sure he would be comfortable with my being his local member.

An honourable member — Was he?

Mr BAILLIEU — Very much so! As it happens I had parked my car just a few doors from Vern’s house, and given a moment’s notice I was there having a cup of coffee — although I was having something else — with Vern and Jean. He gave me the rounds of the kitchen, as he could, and with a vital mind expressed his views about a range of things. Above all, he wanted me to know that I could call on him at any time and that

he would be willing to assist in any way whatsoever. It was an exercise that we repeated on other occasions, whether in his living room or over the phone. I valued those conversations; I value the contribution he made. Vern served Camberwell and his constituents exceptionally well. As the member who now represents Camberwell, it is an honour to be one of his successors.

Others have mentioned the contribution Vern made in a parliamentary and government sense, including to the law and in the building of the underground loop. Vern was dedicated to the law, and others have spoken already of the importance he gave to it. He certainly gave me his views about both the legal system and what was occurring on a day-to-day basis. I note that the Attorney-General suggested that Vern might have been appalled by the workload of the current Attorney-General. Without wishing to reveal any conversations, I can reveal that he was appalled — but let us leave the workload out of it!

As I said, he was a real character and a fixture in Camberwell. There was an extraordinary representation of Victorians and local Camberwell people at the jam-packed service at St Mark’s last week. The eulogy by Geoffrey Blainey, the representations from the Camberwell sub-branch of the Returned and Services League and all his colleagues, and the remarks made by Arthur Pearce served that memorial very well.

The tribute we pay to Vern here is one that in my view reminds us that we should never underestimate the fragility of our democracy, our institutions and our heritage. We should thank all of those who have made it so, we should thank all of those who have kept it so, and we should thank all of those who have enhanced it so well. We should especially thank those who have stretched the vision of the community in their roles as ministers and government leaders. We should respect and honour those people, and we should especially pay tribute to the fact that they have fostered the peace and prosperity of Victoria and obviously of Australia.

Vern Wilcox was one of those individuals — a fine Australian, a fine Victorian and a fine representative of his people. He was brilliant, he was determined and he was fun to be with. I, like others, pass on my condolences to Jean and the family, but I also want to thank Jean, Richard, Murray, Sue and Gerry for the contribution they and their families made in allowing Vern to serve the people of Victoria. He was a fine Australian, a fine Victorian and a fine Liberal.

Mr STENSCHOLT (Burwood) — I rise to pay tribute to one of my predecessors, Vern Wilcox, who was the member for Camberwell for 20 years from

1956 to 1976. As has been mentioned, Vern Wilcox was very much a quintessential Camberwell man. He was born and died in Camberwell and lived out his life there. He was an active participant in the local institutions in Camberwell. He attended Carey Baptist Grammar School, where he was school captain and won the Henry Meeks medal for leadership, scholarship and sporting achievement not just once but twice — in the junior school and in the senior school. He was also president of the Old Carey Grammarians and later served on the school council. He played sport locally, and for a long time he was an office-holder and later patron of the Camberwell Cricket Club. He was also involved with the Eastern Suburbs Churches Cricket Association and the Eastern Suburbs Churches Table Tennis Association. At one stage he was president of the Camberwell Returned and Services League. It was fitting that at the state memorial service held last week at St Mark's Anglican Church in Camberwell the current secretary of the Camberwell City RSL, Arthur Pearce, led the RSL ritual.

Other speakers have outlined Vern Wilcox's contribution to the law and the state first as a barrister and later as a parliamentarian and subsequently a minister for well over a decade. I note that he was a man who was not averse to a little bit of humour as he told a bit of a joke against judges in his first speech in this place. I am pleased to mention it to the house, because he talked about the judges who at the end of the century before last, as it is now, were coming out with Queen Victoria for the opening of the new Royal Courts of Justice. The judges had to produce an address, and they thought the preface should say, 'We, Your Majesty's judges, mindful of our manifold defects ...'. Vern said the judges thought that sounded a bit suss and decide to change it. To illustrate their human personalities they finally produced an address with this preface: 'We, Your Majesty's judges, mindful of the manifold defects of each other ...'.

In his own news release announcing his impending retirement from Parliament in 1975 Vern noted that he had had a good innings and a very full political life. He particularly pointed to his highlights in his six years as Minister of Transport, which included his zealous pursuit of getting the Melbourne underground rail loop up and running. He also noted in that news release that after Parliament he wanted to balance the budget a bit — the Treasurer should not worry, he was talking about his life after Parliament — and put something into the non-government sector of the community. I am sure we all agree with his view that that sector is a vital part of life in Victoria and of course is vital to the future of Australia, as he put it. He served with the Royal

Agricultural Society council, the Maritime Trust council and the Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust, as well as being patron of the Gwen Nisbet Music Scholarship fund.

I did not know Vern Wilcox personally, although I knew of him. I have heard many positive stories about him. I heard the marvellous tributes given at his memorial service by his brother-in-law, Peter Anderson, and by Professor Geoffrey Blainey. He was clearly a generous man who was devoted to his family as well as being dedicated to the law and the state. I sat next to the Honourable Bill Baxter at the service. He recalled that in 1973, when he was a young member of the Country Party, as I think it was then, Vern Wilcox, obviously having remembered his own experience back in the 1950s, took the time to talk to the new member and offer him advice and wise counsel.

On my way to the memorial service last week, which was so packed that I had to park several streets away, I fell in step with someone who had parked his car nearby, and we introduced ourselves. He told me he had run the Australian Labor Party campaign in Chisholm some years ago. He was going along to pay his respects to Vern Wilcox, because he had been a good bloke and had done some good things as transport minister. It was certainly the measure of the man that he was well respected by all.

On behalf of the people of Camberwell I pay tribute to Vern Wilcox and his service to the community and the state, and extend our sympathies to his wife, Jean, his four children and his extended family.

The SPEAKER — In concluding the condolence motion for the Honourable Vern Wilcox, on behalf of the whole house I pass on condolences to his wife, Jean, and the Wilcox family. The tributes paid to Vern Wilcox this afternoon speak very highly of him, not only in relation to his service to this Parliament but in relation to the service he gave throughout his life. The tributes also showed that he was a man of very broad interests and strong intellectual capacity with a great desire to change the world.

Many people who come through this Parliament do not leave a record of having been here, but Vern Wilcox was certainly not one of those. Even though everyone may not be aware of all the things he achieved while he was in Parliament, certainly the City Loop and the introduction of seatbelts are things for which the whole of Victoria will forever have Vern Wilcox to thank. The tributes also show that he was prepared to keep fighting after he left Parliament, and I think that is always an excellent sign.

I congratulate Vern and his family on all the work he did for Victoria.

Hon. Sir Rupert James Hamer, AC, KCMG

Mr BRACKS (Premier) — I move,

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death of the Honourable Sir Rupert James Hamer, AC, KCMG, and places on record its acknowledgment of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as a member of the Legislative Council for the electoral province of East Yarra from 1958 to 1971 and member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Camberwell from 1971 to 1981, Minister of Immigration, Assistant Chief Secretary and Assistant Attorney-General from 1962 to 1964, Minister for Local Government from 1964 to 1971, Chief Secretary and Deputy Premier from 1971 to 1972, Premier from 1972 to 1981, Treasurer from 1972 to 1979, Minister of the Arts from 1972 to 1979, Minister for State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism from 1979 to 1981, and Minister for Economic Development, 1981.

The house is certainly saddened by the passing of Sir Rupert Hamer on Tuesday, 23 March 2004, aged 87. As we have heard today — many of us have been to the state funeral — and from the statements that have been made in the press and publicly elsewhere, Sir Rupert Hamer made an outstanding contribution to Victoria throughout his life. He was a great Victorian and also a remarkable Australian. He fought for socially just causes, he broke new ground and he never resiled from his commitment to pursuing the greater good in public life. He was a distinguished soldier, a dedicated politician and a devoted family man. Probably the saying which is often used is aptly applied to Sir Rupert Hamer: he was both an officer and a gentleman. Those two titles were worn very well by Sir Rupert Hamer over his whole life.

We heard today in the beautiful and outstanding eulogies delivered by former Premier Lindsay Thompson, Richard Divall and Fay Marles something of the character of the man, of the character of the public life that he pursued and of the qualities of the person that Sir Rupert Hamer embodied. We heard some of probably the best testimonials for someone who served this country in the Second World War, this state as a member of Parliament and as Premier, and his community organisations subsequent to his being Premier.

We all heard former Premier Lindsay Thompson's amazing recall of facts without reference to notes today in the eulogy he delivered. Many, many people said to me that it was one of the best eulogies they had ever heard in any service. It was testimony to two things: one was obviously Sir Rupert Hamer and his distinguished service in his career to the people and

state of Victoria, and the second was Sir Rupert's great bond with Lindsay Thompson and his great elocution.

Sir Rupert Hamer was born in Kew on 29 July 1916. He was educated at Melbourne Grammar School and Geelong Grammar School and then progressed to the University of Melbourne. A distinguished student, he excelled across several disciplines, receiving honours in all subjects, including first-class honours in Latin. I do not know that any member of the house can claim such a title — except the member for Sandringham. I have to say that I went to year 10 with Latin and elected to leave it at that point. Modern political institutions and political philosophy were also subjects in which Sir Rupert Hamer received honours distinctions in his studies. He graduated with a master of laws degree at 24 years of age.

The next stage of his life saw Sir Rupert enlist in the Australian Imperial Force in 1940. He completed some five and a half years of wartime service. In the first year of his service Sir Rupert achieved another distinction — that of being the first soldier ever in Victoria's history to be admitted to the Victorian bar. Sir Rupert rose rapidly through the ranks and fought in several major battles during World War II. He was part of the Australian 9th division's Rats of Tobruk and fought at the battle of El Alamein under the command of Field Marshal Montgomery. He subsequently returned to the Pacific and served in New Guinea, where he achieved further distinction, being mentioned in dispatches for bravery.

In 1944 he married April Mackintosh. We heard of their union today in warm and very fond references. Sir Rupert obviously was very proud of that union over a 60-year period. They recently celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary, which in itself is a great achievement and acknowledgement, and I know it would have been held dear by Sir Rupert and Lady April Hamer. Sir Rupert and Lady April had five children.

At the conclusion of Sir Rupert's active service he joined the family law firm of Smith and Emmerton.

Sir Rupert began the next stage of his remarkable journey in 1947, when he joined the South Camberwell branch of the Liberal Party. In 1958 he represented East Yarra Province in the Legislative Council. His colleagues almost immediately recognised the great talent and ability that he showed in his public life as a member for that province. He became a minister very soon after. He was elected in 1958 and became a minister in 1962. It was a very, very quick rise, particularly in those times, to the position of minister,

holding appointments as Minister of Immigration, Assistant Chief Secretary and Assistant Attorney-General. In 1971 he was appointed Chief Secretary and Deputy Premier in the Bolte government. During that time Sir Rupert demonstrated his sharp intellect and began to champion the many socially progressive causes that would become his trademark, his hallmark — including, of course, the environment and the arts, for which he is most profoundly known and acknowledged.

In 1971 Sir Rupert transferred to the Legislative Assembly as the member for Kew. He continued his rapid rise. In August 1972 Sir Rupert became the Premier of Victoria after the retirement of the then Premier, Sir Henry Bolte. Sir Rupert was a leader ahead of his time. His nine years as Premier were characterised by enormous progress and change. When he took over from Sir Henry Bolte he gave a glimpse of his broad vision in one of his first remarks in a press conference as Premier. He said:

We will be less materialistic and more interested in things of the spirit.

He certainly pursued that over his nine years as Premier of this state.

One of his first initiatives was to create the Victorian Ministry of the Arts, with Sir Rupert as well as being Premier also being Minister of the Arts. Not only was this the first arts ministry in Victoria, it was also a first for Australia and has been copied by almost every jurisdiction in the country, state and federal, where there are now distinct ministries for the arts. Often the Premier, as was the case then, is also the minister for the arts.

Sir Rupert was instrumental in the establishment of the Victorian Arts Centre, which is a monument that reflects his lifelong commitment to cultivating the arts in Victoria and which will stand as a legacy of that commitment. So pivotal was Sir Rupert to the development of the arts centre development that very soon after assuming the job as Premier in 1982, John Cain not only allowed his predecessor to be involved in the opening of the arts centre but also invited him to open the concert hall. That was not only an appropriate gesture but an appropriate measure, and obviously the opening of that important facility was an acknowledgement for all time.

In recognition of Sir Rupert's wonderful contribution to the arts in Victoria, I am very pleased to announce that the Victorian Arts Centre Trust, on the recommendation of the Minister for the Arts, has agreed to change the name of the concert hall to honour Sir Rupert Hamer.

The government is currently in consultation with Sir Rupert's family, who are pleased about and have a preference for that acknowledgement, and will soon be able to announce the exact new name that will honour his enormous contribution to the arts in Victoria. Whether that be the full title of the Sir Rupert Hamer concert hall or some derivation of that — the Hamer Hall or any combination between — will be something that will be discussed with the family and resolved, we hope, today or tomorrow.

Certainly the family, and I know the arts centre trust and the Minister for the Arts, are very pleased and thrilled that that honour has been bestowed and that the concert hall will be renamed in the future to recognise the contribution that Sir Rupert Hamer made to the arts as Premier, particularly to that facility. It is a fitting tribute to a man who understood the importance of building vibrant cultural institutions in Victoria.

One of Sir Rupert's other passions was protection of the environment, as we also heard today at the state funeral. Sir Rupert established the Environment Protection Authority, and parks and reserves all over Victoria are a tribute to his vision and have become a great foundation for successive governments as well. He coined the great slogan 'Victoria — The Garden State', which was displayed on Victorian numberplates from 1979 and endured under the governments that followed him but has been changed subsequently.

Sir Rupert also worked tirelessly to ensure that Victoria continued to prosper through the development of key industries, including the development of Gippsland's coal and oil reserves. He was keen on research into a change from coal to oil. It was a feature of some of the work he did at that particular time and was something that he put a lot of effort and support into.

When you think about it now you realise that some 25 years ago Sir Rupert was the first Australian leader to establish direct relationships with our neighbours in China and Japan. This house owes a great debt of gratitude to Sir Rupert Hamer for that, especially when you think of the investment that has flowed and the preferred relationships with Victoria that have followed, compared to other states in the commonwealth. That is largely due to our sister-state relationships with both the Aichi Prefecture in Japan and Jiangsu Province in China — both of which were initiated by Sir Rupert. This year is the 25th anniversary of our partnership with Jiangsu Province — the Treasurer opened a new Victorian government business office in Nanjing last year — and next year we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of our relationship with the Aichi Prefecture, along with the World Expo being

held at the same time, to which Victoria will make a significant contribution. It is something that at the time was pioneering and groundbreaking.

As I said earlier, Sir Rupert had a keen appreciation of the need for government to reflect social change. He introduced a private member's bill seeking to abolish the death penalty, which subsequently passed into legislation in 1975. He received the congratulations of many Victorians for his leadership on that matter. His government also enacted legislation decriminalising homosexuality and abortion, social reforms that were again profound and significant during the time of his premiership. As a measure of Sir Rupert's achievements, Melbourne University awarded him an honorary doctorate in law in 1982, amongst many other accolades offered to him.

After Sir Rupert's retirement in 1981, as I know members of this house realise, he was active and prominent in every aspect of Victorian life, particularly in the arts, in international affairs and in the work he undertook with refugees. Some of the areas he was involved in — I know it is a big list, but I will mention some key areas, and I know members who follow me will mention his other areas of involvement — included his being chair of the Victoria State Opera Board, president of the Victorian College of the Arts, president of the Friends of the ABC, president of the National Heritage Foundation and president of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens. Just recently Sir Rupert lent his support to the campaign for Point Nepean to become a national park. He never failed while Premier and subsequently afterwards to take a strong public stand on controversial issues. That included championing the push for the republic and supporting the establishment of heroin injecting rooms when it was proposed by our government.

In 1982 Sir Rupert's achievements were recognised when he was awarded a knighthood, and 10 years later he was made a Companion of the Order of Australia. They were both well-deserved honours in recognition of his achievement.

Inescapably, like many Victorians, Sir Rupert had a great love of football. That was mentioned today by former Premier Lindsay Thompson, when he referred to Sir Rupert's love of the Hawthorn Football Club as a matter over which he and Sir Rupert had some disagreement — the only disagreement, I understand. His love of sport and of the ABC intersected recently when he joined me, the Leader of the Opposition and other prominent people in Victoria as signatories to an open letter to the ABC opposing its decision to introduce a national sports wrap rather than allowing

decisions to be made in Victoria. That is unfinished business which this house can bring some weight to, and we would want to do that not only because it is the right thing to do but also because of Sir Rupert's great interest in those two areas.

On the day of his death Sir Rupert was present in this place attending a state reception for a leading United States Muslim leader. It shows the breadth of his interest, the breadth of his intellect and the breadth of his interest in major international affairs that he was attending a function on the very day of his untimely and unfortunate death. He will be remembered as a man who served his state right up until the day of his passing.

Sir Rupert Hamer's boundless energy, combined with his modesty and respect for others, will ensure him a special place in history. His passion for the arts, the environment and the democratic process has left an important legacy for all Victorians. Today we salute the achievements and great character of Sir Rupert — including his personal integrity, his wisdom and his devotion to making Victoria a better place in which to live. He will indeed be sorely missed.

On behalf of the Victorian government I offer sincere condolences to the family of Sir Rupert Hamer — his wife, Lady Hamer, his surviving children, Christopher, Julia, Sarah and Alastair, and his grandchildren, Phillip, Rowena, Daniel, April, Rory, Edward, Christopher and Alexander.

Mr DOYLE (Leader of the Opposition) — I am honoured to join with the Premier in speaking to the condolence motion for Sir Rupert 'Dick' James Hamer, AC, KCMG, ED. I was shocked by Dick Hamer's death. That is remarkable; after all, Dick was 87 years old. Yet many people, including Lindsay Thompson, said they were staggered to hear the news. Why? Because Dick remained an active and vital contributor to our community right up until he passed away peacefully last Tuesday. He was a man with a vibrant and acute mind. I never viewed him in terms of his age and perhaps took for granted that he would continue his passionate community involvement for many years to come.

Dick was a legend. The dictionary tells us that a legend is a notable person, an icon and someone who creates a legacy of cultural, community and professional contributions and achievements — all true of Dick Hamer. If you listen to young people, which is exactly what Dick Hamer did, you will hear them say to each other, 'You are a legend'. What they mean is, 'You are

a good bloke'. That meaning of the word 'legend' is equally applicable to Dick Hamer.

I said in the previous condolence motion for Vern Wilcox that he was a Renaissance man. That is certainly true of Dick Hamer, including his 18 years of distinguished military service and successful careers in the law and as a respected businessman — and much must and will be made of his 23-year political career. It is indicative of the man and his legacy that he undertook work in the community for as many years as he served in this Parliament: he served in the Parliament for 23 years, and then he served the community for 23 years following that, up to and including, as the Premier said, the Tuesday of his passing.

It is almost impossible to get an accurate and complete list of the causes and passions to which Dick gave his time and his intellect. They include the Eirene Lucas Foundation for medical research, Werribee Park, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research, Hanover House, the Girl Guides Association, the Melbourne Scots, Trinity College and the University of Melbourne, the Save the Children Fund, the Greenhouse Action Trust, the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition, Yarra Bend National Park, the Regional Parks Network, the National Heritage Foundation, the Cancer and Heart Consultative Committee, the Victorian College of the Arts, the Royal Botanic Gardens, the Commonwealth Constitutional Commission, the Keep Australia Beautiful movement, the National Institute of Circus Arts and the Victoria State Opera — and the list rolls on.

Dick was born the son of Hubert, a solicitor, and Elizabeth Anne MacLuckie, of England. He was husband to Lady Hamer, April Felicity Mackintosh, father to Christopher, Alastair, Julia and Sarah, and the grandfather of eight. He was educated first at Melbourne Grammar and finished his secondary education as a boarder at Geelong Grammar School. As the Premier noted, he was patron of the Hawthorn Football Club — a blot on an otherwise spotless career.

He was a major in the Australian Imperial Force from 1940 to 1945, and it is worth reflecting a little on the military career which so formed Sir Rupert 'Dick' Hamer. He served at Tobruk, in New Guinea and in Normandy, and he was instrumental in the development of the Rhine Crossing strategy — his great strategic mind was always evident in all parts of his career.

When he enlisted he spent his first night camping beneath the members stand at Caulfield racecourse, as so many of those who enlisted did. He said:

We spent the night on the cold, hard concrete, but it was a damn sight better than our billet later in Western Australia, the pigeon and poultry sheds at the Claremont showgrounds'.

In June 1940 — his first year in the army — he was sent to Victoria Barracks to work in the top secret decipher section. He later noted he was sent there with little more instruction than 'decipher this', and he did.

He returned to Australia, as the Premier noted, in 1944 on leave. He was married in March of that year. Just one month later, as the Allies were in the advanced stages of preparing an invasion on the French coast with a view to rolling back the Nazi forces, he was packing his bags and heading back to a theatre of war. Instead of enjoying a honeymoon at that time with his bride of less than one month, he flew first to the United States, then across the northern hemisphere from Newfoundland to Scotland in order to board a Liberator bomber which was bound for London. When he got to London, he went to the combined operations headquarters as a member of their training team to undertake the greatest amphibious invasion in the history of modern warfare. He was there when the allied armada crossed the English Channel and landed on the French coast at Arromanches with a company at the time of royal marine commandos. Sir Rupert's distinguished military days concluded in a role of which he was proud — lieutenant colonel appointed to the Victorian Scottish Regiment as its commanding officer from 1954 to 1958.

If his military career were Dick's only career, what a remarkable career it would have been. Of course, as we know, that was just the beginning of a distinguished life in public service. Later reflecting on his time in the armed forces, he thought about his time in combat, and he gave us some clue to that great resilience which he brought to public life in the decades thereafter. He was asked about his time in conflict and just how you survived under those terrible conditions. He said:

We survived because of determination, camaraderie and the good old-fashioned diggers' sense of humour.

That philosophy stood him true through the rest of his life. Perhaps people who did not know Dick well find it remarkable that he talks about that sense of humour and sense of fun, but if you talk to his grandchildren about their relationship with him, you will find that he did have a great sense of fun, almost of playfulness, and it is something that his own family holds in very high regard in their memory of Dick.

As the Premier noted, Sir Rupert was the first person to be admitted to the bar in uniform. He signed the roll in 1940, had a master of laws degree from the University of Melbourne by the time he was 24, and then spent his time with the family law firm of Smith and Emmerton.

He began that long association with the Labor Party in 1947, joining the South Camberwell branch, and he went on to become a member of the state executive of the party.

An honourable member — The Liberal Party!

Mr DOYLE — I beg your pardon. The earlier announcement must have got to me, I am sorry. I just keep turning it over and over! I am sure Dick will forgive me. I hope that sense of playfulness is still there for him.

He served as the upper house member for East Yarra Province from 1958 until 1971, when he was elected to the Legislative Assembly seat of Kew, which he held until 1981. That move from the upper house to the lower house — part of the machinations of the then Premier, Sir Henry Bolte — is probably best left untold in the Liberal annals, but it was a remarkable triumph, one which I will touch upon lightly later on.

When he was serving as the member for East Yarra Province, he was approached by Sir Robert Menzies and asked if he would take over the federal seat of Kooyong to succeed Sir Robert. I think members on all sides would understand in our party the meaning of such an offer. To be offered it implied stature; it implied great honour in the party and great expectations of his ability to succeed the great founder of our party. In true Dick Hamer style, he refused this generous offer because he wanted to have the direct effect on people's lives that he felt could only be given expression through a state Parliament.

And what a remarkable political career unfolded at the state level. From 1962 to 1964 he was Minister of Immigration, Assistant Chief Secretary and Assistant Attorney-General; from 1964 to 1971 he was Minister for Local Government; from 1971 to 1972 he was Chief Secretary and Deputy Premier; from 1972 to 1981 he was Premier and Minister of the Arts; from 1972 to 1979 he was also Treasurer; from 1979 to 1981 he was also Minister for State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism; and in 1981 he was also Minister for Economic Development.

Somehow in 1973 he also found time to put pen to paper and wrote a number of books on a range of subject matters, such as federalism and a design for the

future of Australia, and the need and necessity for constitutional change in a shifting political landscape.

When he came to the premiership and ascended to power in 1972 following in the footsteps of Sir Henry Bolte, the *Age* referred to Dick Hamer as 'the urban and urbane man trying to wear the baggy suit of the bluff farmer from Bamganie'. He was certainly urban, he was certainly urbane, but I can tell you he never wore anybody else's suit. He was his own man from the beginning until the end of his remarkable career. He hated wasting time. He insisted that meetings were brief and to the point. He rarely lost his temper; he rarely displayed anger, but he did not suffer fools lightly. One of his greatest admonishments was to tell somebody to simply 'get on with it' — still not bad advice.

He was a strong advocate not only for change but for those in power having a responsibility to do all they could to help young and talented people on their way. He was always a great champion of the young. That was illustrated in 1995 when Dick was chairman of the Victoria State Opera, a position he had held for 13 years. It was one of the great loves of his life — a great commitment and a great passion — and yet after that time he announced he would be stepping down from that role because, despite the fact it gave him great joy, it was, as he put it, 'time for other people to be given a chance'. Mind you, last week he also accepted the continued chairmanship of the National Institute of Circus Arts because he felt he still work to do in that area.

The Premier mentioned the remarkable service from which many of us have just come. What a fitting tribute to Dick Hamer and the complexity of Dick Hamer it was. After being inside the great cathedral of St Paul's today, where we heard Joan Carden sing Mozart, we stood on the steps outside to watch circus performers in Federation Square offering their particular tribute to Dick — a remarkable diversity, but again entirely true and encapsulated by Dick Hamer. He was responsible for icons such as the Victorian Arts Centre, the Ministry of the Arts and a host of regional cultural developments. His government also strengthened the legislation that was the establishment of the Environment Protection Authority.

In our discussions I found an interesting side to him. He was a true statesman. He was never comfortable with the expectation of opposition parties — perhaps because he did not have to think about it, as some of his successors had to. But he had very firm views, let me tell you, on how opposition parties should conduct themselves. He understood the necessity for oppositions to demonstrate the incumbent government as inept, but he felt that such an approach simply by

itself was rather narrow minded and failed to respond to the changing nature of politics. I can tell you that he and I had a couple of fairly gentle discussions on exactly that point.

He talked about his gravitation to politics as a desire to really do something — what sounds like such a simple aim and yet such a noble and lofty one at the same time, given Dick's career. He wanted to continue the work that he had begun in his distinguished military career, part of which was as part of the famous Rats of Tobruk. In those two careers — politics and the military — he saw himself as helping to protect the institutions and ideals that required protection.

I was asked during this last quite emotional week what I thought Dick Hamer's achievements and lasting legacies were. One of the great icons of the state Liberal Party is, of course, Sir Henry Bolte. Sir Henry departed after a 19-year parliamentary career, of which 17 years were spent as Premier.

After that time in office you would think a changeover to a different leader could have been public and quite bloody — nothing could have been further from the truth. There was a seamless change to Dick Hamer that was supported enthusiastically by the party and by the public. You could not get two premiers, two politicians, who were more unlike each other, yet both were loved by our party and by the public.

As a Liberal Premier, while continuing to promote the ideals of economic growth and self-determination, he brought to our party and to the office of Premier an energising perspective on existing policies, becoming associated with what he would call 'lifestyle liberalism', which spoke to a broad range of Victorians. He was a great liberal humanist, and he was that all his life — whether it was showing you some small kindness, which was so typical of Dick, or offering you the wisest and most lofty counsel, which was also so typical of Dick. His renewed approach to the environment, the arts, urban planning and social welfare redefined our party's landscape, and necessarily the operation and responsibilities of the government that our party enjoyed at the time. It is said in the history of our Parliament that under Hamer the Liberal Party grew in strength, the government grew in confidence and the Parliament grew in stability — of itself, not a bad legacy.

But he was also a visionary, and many of the decisions he made and the policy settings he put in place prepared us for the issues that we face even today — yet to him they were issues that were decades ahead. He predicted that a lack of recreation areas for those wishing to

escape the hustle and bustle of the city would be the single biggest challenge facing his government in the 1970s. So as Minister for Local Government when he was still in the upper house he froze development along Victoria's coastline all the way from the South Australian border to New South Wales. At that time probably one of the best predictors of population growth and change in our community was the former board of works, which had to provide the infrastructure, and it predicted that by the turn of the century — in other words, four years ago — the population of Melbourne would grow to 5 million people.

Dick's government at the time faced with some horror the prospect of how you could continue lifestyle, provide infrastructure and give people a balance between work and recreation. Four years into this new century our total state population is only a little away from that prediction, which was for the city of Melbourne alone.

Thanks to Dick Hamer's realism and foresight, plans were enacted many years ago to provide governments today with the best possible opportunities to facilitate sustainable urban growth, and many of the strategies and policies of today rest firmly on the building blocks of Dick Hamer's policy. Dick Hamer recognised and championed the important issues of conservation and sustainability. His commitment to green wedges, open spaces and the Garden State has been well documented. When I was asked what Dick's great legacy would be, I suggested the Garden State.

Television political advertising does not always tell, I regret to say, the exact truth. But in one of Dick Hamer's TV campaign advertisements he was shown washing from his hands the dirt from his own garden, and that was true of the man. Whether it be his love of his own garden, his love of that great vision of gardens that surround our city, the great gardens like the Royal Botanic Gardens or the regional gardens, the green wedges or the whole concept of the Garden State, that will be Dick's great legacy, alongside his commitment to the arts, which has been documented by the Premier as it will by other speakers, I am sure.

In the 23 years after he left politics he involved himself in so many causes. He was a groundbreaker and leader in so many ways. From memory, he was the first senior Liberal to speak in favour of a republic, and he championed that cause passionately. He felt that although the end of the monarchy was inevitable, change required legitimate and unqualified bipartisan support.

When he was Premier he looked forward to what he thought would be the big challenges facing future generations. More often than not politicians get it wrong, but the two things Dick Hamer thought the politicians of our era would have to face were, firstly, the impact of rapidly advancing technology on job numbers, employment levels and employment types, and secondly, the combined effect of early retirement and longer life on the community and the economy. He was remarkably prescient. Both are issues that face us today and both were seen by Dick Hamer as issues of importance decades ago. He was an enlightened visionary who promoted fundamental changes in our community. He was very well liked, and I will go further and say: when you think about the turnout at his state funeral today, Dick Hamer was loved. He was certainly respected by all sides of politics.

One saying is: as you love, you will grieve. As I say, we did and we do love Dick Hamer, and we will grieve deeply, but we will also celebrate a great life and a great contribution. Today we mourn Dick, we extend our support to April, Christopher, Alastair, Julia, Sarah and their children and extended families, and we celebrate the life of a fine Victorian, an accomplished parliamentarian, a visionary Premier and a good bloke. He was much loved, he will be deeply grieved, and he will be robustly celebrated. He put great value on service, on public life; and what he lived for will live on because of Dick. At Dick's state funeral — and by the way, as the Premier said, I do not think I have ever heard spontaneous applause for an eulogy as I did after Lindsay Thompson spoke today — Dick's daughter Sarah read from Tennyson's great work *Ulysses*. I thought, '*Ulysses*, how appropriate for Sir Rupert "Dick" Hamer'. *Ulysses* was that great citizen soldier, leader of men, pilgrim, traveller and visionary. In one line from that great work *Ulysses* himself says:

I am a part of all that I have met.

That is also true of Dick Hamer, and all of us, of whom he is a part, are the richer and the better for it.

Debate interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

The SPEAKER — Order! Before I call the next speaker I also acknowledge in the gallery a former leader of the Liberal Party, Alan Brown.

Debate resumed.

Mr RYAN (Leader of The Nationals) — It is my honour on behalf of The Nationals to join this

condolence motion and support the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in marking the passing of the Honourable Sir Rupert James Hamer, AC, KCMG, ED. He was born on 29 July 1916 and passed away on 23 March 2004.

As we have heard, Dick Hamer, as he was affectionately known, had 18 years of distinguished military service, including his time as a Rat of Tobruk, and in the battle of El Alamein during the Second World War. He was admitted to practise law in 1940 and joined the firm of Smith and Emmerton.

He was elected to the Legislative Council of the Parliament in 1958 and then subsequently to the Legislative Assembly in 1971. Dick Hamer served a total period of 23 years in the Parliament, and as we have heard, he served in a vast array of ministerial roles during his time in this place, most particularly from 1972 to 1981, when he was Premier.

In his maiden speech of October 1958 he made references to the judiciary, the importance of the separation of powers and the longstanding issue of court delays, which seems to plague governments to this very day. I might say with due respect to a speech which was very well constructed and no doubt well delivered at the time that it was bland in comparison with what was to come. There was little warning of what the years ahead would bring in the sense of Dick Hamer's service to this Parliament and to the people of Victoria.

In his ministerial roles, of course, he was outstanding in the contribution he made, but in so many other aspects of his life he contributed so richly as well, and indeed I have a page-long list of those various entities and enterprises, some of which have been referred to by the Leader of the Opposition, and I do not intend to go through them all. I think the Leader of the Opposition nominated about 21 different organisations which were the beneficiary of Dick Hamer's contribution; but the one I find of most interest was his role as chairman of the National Institute of Circus Arts. I differ from the Leader of the Opposition in this regard: I think rather than there being a divergence about all of this, Dick Hamer probably saw, in taking on that role, some sort of synergy with his time in this place, and so it is that he took on that task!

He took it on as part of his commitment to youth, and, as we have heard, he had an unfailing commitment to young people. During the tributes today I was struck as much by what was not said as by what was actually said. In the course of those tributes, which were delivered during the service by Lindsay Thompson,

Richard Divall and Fay Marles, I thought about the fact that each one of them was a remarkable contribution to an extraordinary day. But I am sure I would be forgiven by both Richard Divall and Fay Marles if I were to say that the manner and the content of the contribution which was made by Lindsay Thompson was nothing less than extraordinary. The amazing recall of factual material, speaking extempore as he was, was an outstanding thing to see and to hear. He captured the life of Dick Hamer so very, very well.

But the thing that was missing from the speech that I thought was remarkable was any mention of the contribution Dick Hamer made in the direct sense of the economy or budgets, be they surplus or deficit, or development of infrastructure as such, or matters of that ilk. Rather, the emphasis of all of the contributions made today and reflected in what I have otherwise read and heard about Dick Hamer since his passing centred on the contribution he made to his fellow man, and in three particular areas during his time in this place he made those contributions. He actually changed the cultural heritage of this state, not only through the development of the Victorian Arts Centre and developing such entities as the Victorian College of the Arts, but through a vast array of other contributions made within the context of the arts community. He changed the cultural heritage of Victoria.

He developed the Environment Protection Authority. He was the first to talk about the environment and the significance of it to this state and nationally, and he was active in ensuring that he established the Environment Protection Authority as the mechanism of measuring, in time to come, the heritage that was necessary for future generations. His contribution to the environment was absolutely outstanding.

Third was his contribution to social justice. Dick Hamer was active in social justice before the term was coined in the way we understand it today. He made a remarkable contribution to the issues of social justice. He was a lateral thinker; thinking outside the square was a feature of the man. He changed the way Victorians have lived their lives, and he changed them very much for the better.

His contribution to the arts was outstanding. He is remembered as having effectively been the one to abolish the death penalty in this state in 1975. He forged international links in trade, again ahead of his time. That was a feature of Dick Hamer — he was a man ahead of his time. He had a wonderful and full life, and on behalf of The Nationals I convey to Lady Hamer and to the Hamer children and their grandchildren the condolences of The Nationals. These

things are said often without a factual base, but in truth Dick Hamer was a great man, a great Victorian and a great Australian, and we all justifiably mourn his passing.

Mr THWAITES (Minister for Environment) — I join the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of The Nationals in honouring the life of Sir Rupert Hamer and extending my condolences to his wife, Lady April Hamer, and his family, Christopher, Alastair, Julia and Sarah.

Sir Rupert Hamer certainly was a great Australian, and he was a great Victorian. He was a man of vision, of compassion and of achievement, and he was also, as we have heard, a man with an incredibly busy mind. He played a role in so many of the things that we value in this state — the arts, immigration, education and the environment. His achievements are truly daunting in their extent and range, and yet I think he is an example for many of us to try to follow. Despite all of those achievements Dick Hamer was certainly down to earth. He was very approachable, he always had a twinkle in the eye, and he was always interested in the ideas of others. He was not a crash-through type of leader; rather, he was the sort of leader who sought to bring out the best in others, to bring people along with him.

His achievements are certainly extensive, but I want to concentrate on one area today — that is, the environment. Dick Hamer was one of the first people in the 1970s to talk about quality of life — a term that is so familiar now that we take it for granted. But in the early 1970s he said, for example:

Economists gave us the concept of gross national product, and interest has centred on the rate at which it grows. Is it time that our proper concern with growth should be tempered with a greater emphasis on the very essence of the quality and purpose of life itself?

He continued:

Is it time to think about gross national wellbeing?

Sir Rupert acknowledged environmental concerns that were gathering momentum after a period of intense industrial growth in the 1950s and 1960s, and he recognised those environmental concerns in ways that affected people in a very real sense, with new initiatives, and new legislation. Just to look at some of them, the Land Conservation Council, our system of state and national parks, a new ministry of conservation, a new ministry of planning, green wedges, the development of the Environment Protection Authority and Victoria's reputation as the Garden State.

All of these initiatives have lasted, and they are just as relevant to Victoria today. Dick Hamer represented so many of the things about Victoria that we regard as good — for example, culture and the arts, education, tolerance, and concern for the environment. This may partly explain why the Labor Party found him so difficult to remove — he was very hard to pin down. I recall being ejected from a polling booth during one election in the 1970s for wearing a Labor Party state election badge that had the somewhat unimaginative slogan ‘Hammer Hamer’. Unfortunately the slogan was very unsuccessful and we were hammered!

You can almost hear the frustration of Labor Party members of the time in the debates reported in *Hansard*. In one debate on an Environment Protection Authority annual report a Labor opposition member lamented that:

Everybody — from His Excellency the Governor down — is talking about pollution, the environment and the quality of life. The Premier and Treasurer —

who of course was Mr Hamer —

highlighted these matters in his budget speech. Ministers, at every opportunity, appear on television and pour out the government’s concern for the environment.

As we know, in the 1970s Labor took power federally and in a number of states, but not in Victoria. Dick Hamer had seized the middle ground and addressed those quality-of-life issues which had seen Labor governments elected nationally and in other states. However, he did it on the basis of his personal commitment to those issues, not on a political basis. That commitment was evident right throughout his life, including his life after his political career. Most recently we heard his voice of reason in the debate over Point Nepean, when he lent his support to the proposal to turn the site into a national park. That was quite appropriate, because while Dick Hamer was Premier not only was the National Parks Act enacted but the number of national parks increased from 24 to 47 and the area covered by national parks in Victoria tripled.

With Bill Borthwick as conservation minister Dick Hamer created a new department of conservation, the first in Australia. He was also behind the creation of many metropolitan parks such as the Westerfolds, Banksia, Werribee and Maribyrnong River parks. He famously called Victoria the Garden State, a title that we still proudly uphold. He is also reputedly the first person to use the term ‘green wedge’ to describe the green belts around Melbourne that separate the development corridors and ensure we have a place to breathe.

He also oversaw the development of the Environment Protection Authority as an important and respected watchdog that helps make our air cleaner and improves the health of our waterways. The creation of the Land Conservation Council as an independent body responsible to the Parliament was another key achievement, and this gave the community an opportunity to voice its views on how land should be used and whether it should be set aside for forestry or for parks.

Other initiatives that Dick Hamer was involved in included Trees on Farms, which was the beginning of the Greening Australia movement, and the Victorian Conservation Trust, which was established in 1972 to encourage private landholders to preserve significant areas of natural land. Last year the Victorian Conservation Trust’s successor, the Trust for Nature (Victoria), recorded having its 500th property covered by a covenant protecting significant natural areas.

After politics Dick Hamer’s continued commitment to the environment was reflected in the huge number of organisations he was involved in. These included his being president of the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, chairman of Greenhouse Action Australia, the inaugural patron of the Regional Parks Network of South-West Victoria, the president of the Natural Heritage Foundation, a member of the Committee for Permanent Forestry, a trustee of the Yarra Bend National Park and president of the Keep Australia Beautiful Council.

The Leader of the Opposition quoted from Tennyson’s *Ulysses*, and there is another passage that could describe Dick Hamer’s life:

How dull it is to pause, to make an end, to rust unburnished,
not to shine in use!

Sir Rupert Hamer’s life will continue to be celebrated in numerous ways all around Victoria as we continue to enjoy the better quality of life that is his legacy.

Mr HONEYWOOD (Warrandyte) — It has been said often enough about the strange vocation that we in this chamber share that the difference between a politician and a statesman is that a politician looks to the next election but a statesman looks to the next generation. This was clearly a distinguishing feature of the late Sir Rupert Hamer. So many of the ideas and social policy platforms that he either initiated or adopted have stood the test of time; and because he believed so strongly in these policies he was able to communicate them to younger generations long after he had left behind his formal parliamentary career. The

opinion pages of the *Age* will be the poorer for his passing.

I would like to focus on just two of his many interests — firstly, Swinburne University of Technology, and secondly, the Keep Australia Beautiful Council. In 1992, as a member of the then Swinburne Institute of Technology governing council, I had the honour of sitting next to Sir Rupert at the ceremony that transformed Swinburne from an institute into a fully fledged university. I was to discover that Swinburne provided him with the most amazing confluence of local electorate involvement, an education policy ideas platform and, importantly, family and civic responsibilities.

George Swinburne, the founder of the institute, was Dick Hamer's uncle. Dick told me that he remembered from the time he was a boy the enormous effort his uncle put into the creation of this outstanding college for workers. Furthermore, Dick's father, the late H. R. Hamer, served as treasurer on the Swinburne governing council for some 36 years. So seriously did Dick take his subsequent commitment to Swinburne Technical College that he was to become a member of its governing council body and vice-president from 1948 until 1972, almost 25 years of continuous, voluntary service. It was with great regret that he resigned from Swinburne because he had become Premier.

In his honour Swinburne University instituted the Sir Rupert Hamer Lecture Series in July 1986. Even there Dick was hands on, having a key say in selecting the guest speaker each year, and, typical of his even-handedness, he selected Barry Jones as the inaugural speaker for the lecture series in 1986. The organiser of the lecture series, one Bruce McDonald, informed me that each year when he and Dick met to select the next speaker, Bruce would offer him a cab to be organised and paid for by Swinburne. To this suggestion Dick would invariably reply, 'Don't worry about it, mate, I'll catch the tram'.

Again adapting to new education challenges and trends, Dick went on to become the inaugural chairman of the National Institute of Circus Arts auspiced by Swinburne University. I know from being the former Minister for Tertiary Education and Training just how persuasive Dick could be when it came to lobbying for the NICA cause, be it for buildings, recurrent funding or whatever. It was a role that so well combined his love for the arts and education. The young performers from NICA provided a very impressive backdrop indeed to the funeral service today.

The second aspect of Sir Rupert's community service that I wish to pay tribute to was his total commitment from day one to the Keep Australia Beautiful Council. This wonderful national body was fostered through a partnership between Sir Rupert and one of my own electorate's pre-eminent citizens, Dame Phyllis Frost. When travelling up the Calder Highway to Bendigo one day, Dame Phyllis witnessed a passing semitrailer driver having a good old-fashioned cabin clean-up — he was disposing of all manner of rubbish through the open window. The items included fish-and-chip papers, orange peels and beer cans, two of which landed on the roof of her new car.

On her return to Melbourne, a very irate Dame Phyllis phoned Sir Henry Bolte and said, 'I want you to help me. I want you to start an anti-litter campaign'. Bolte said, 'I don't have an opinion on that'. 'You don't have an opinion on keeping Victoria beautiful?', she responded. As it transpired, Sir Henry, who was becoming hard of hearing, thought Dame Phyllis was talking about an anti-liquor campaign rather than an anti-litter campaign. Knowing the man, we know why he did not have an opinion on that issue in particular. Knowing when he had met his match, Bolte neatly handballed this social policy over to Dick Hamer, and a lifelong environmental partnership and friendship between Dame Phyllis and Sir Rupert was the end result.

The Keep Australia Beautiful Council, as a national body, was properly inaugurated in 1968. Dick Hamer played a key role in drafting its mission statement, which included, firstly, to foster and encourage the appreciation of clean and well-kept cities and countryside — and I am sure all honourable members have gone around regional and country Victoria in particular and seen how proud they are of participating in that wonderful campaign even today; secondly, to encourage all Australians to safeguard our water resources by keeping them pollution free — and as the Leader of the Opposition said, so many of these issues that Dick was involved in were about the future, and the future is now upon us; and thirdly, to encourage the reuse of our nation's resources by recycling as much as possible.

Thirty-five years later, this set of objectives that Dick was involved in drafting is as relevant today as when it was drafted. Furthermore, Sir Rupert Hamer was still active in his support for this cause 35 years after its formation. He believed it was one thing to create national parks, state parks, flora and fauna reserves and green wedges — and he created more parks than any other Premier — but he believed it was equally important to maintain those parks and resource them

properly, which is a lesson that current governments of all persuasions could well heed. My thoughts are with Lady Hamer, their children and all family members.

Mr JASPER (Murray Valley) — I join with the previous speakers in debate on the condolence motion for Sir Rupert Hamer, as one who served in the Parliament for part of the time when he was Premier of Victoria. I found Rupert Hamer to be a friend to new members of Parliament, and he often spoke to me in the corridors and asked if he could be of assistance. I found him to be a person of unquestionable integrity. He was certainly a gentleman and respected. I acknowledge the comments made by the previous speakers about his being a man of vision in the arts, culture and environment, which is well documented, but the thing that impressed me most in those early days was his knowledge of everything that was happening within the Parliament and his ability to be able to respond to all sorts of questions that were put to him.

Question time was much more orderly in those days, and you could even get in a parochial question on your own electorate without being howled down. Dick Hamer would give you a measured response and even talk to you later about his response and where he could be of particular assistance. Now we need to talk quietly to ministers or to their advisers to get that assistance. Despite the attacks that were often made on him in the Parliament — and I saw that occur on many occasions — he never responded with vitriol. He was a person who sought to clarify the situation and give a measured response to the issues raised.

There are two or three issues I want to mention in particular in joining debate on this condolence motion because they highlight the person who was the Premier of Victoria. In the early days, as a member representing an area in the northern part of the state, I directed Rupert Hamer's attention to the problems of border anomalies, which I have mentioned in this Parliament on many occasions. His response was to say to me, 'This is an issue which we should investigate'. He spoke to his counterpart, the Premier of New South Wales, and in 1979 he formed the Border Anomalies Committee, and that committee worked extremely hard in those early years in addressing a large number of border anomalies, and, in fact, taking corrective action. The Premier's department always had an annual report on those border anomalies, which we do not have now, and that is something we certainly need to be addressing.

One of the other issues I noticed as a new member in the Parliament in the late 1970s was that when parliamentary functions were being conducted we

seemed to be drinking South Australian wine. I said to the Premier at the time, 'If we are going to be promoting Victoria, we really should be drinking Victorian wine', and he made a directive at that time that when government functions were being conducted in Parliament House, the guests should be drinking Victorian wine. Dick Hamer really changed the culture by promoting the drinking of Victorian wines at those functions. He also took the opportunity of making sure there were Victorian wines within the parliamentary dining room and of writing to all the restaurants throughout Victoria, saying, 'You should be promoting the great Victorian wines'. As a person coming from that great winegrowing area in north-eastern Victoria around Rutherglen, I appreciated the actions Rupert Hamer took in promoting the wines of Victoria. He was probably a forerunner to the further great development that has taken place within the wine industry in the state of Victoria.

I also noted that as Premier of Victoria he travelled to the former Shire of Numurkah on one occasion and opened the new shire offices in the late 1970s. He was being introduced by the then shire president, and in his opening remarks the shire president welcomed the Premier of Victoria to the Shire of Numurkah and said, 'We have no politics in this council — we are all Country Party'. The Premier took that on board and made the comment that he accepted they were all Country Party and that there were no party politics within the council at all.

I developed a great respect for Rupert Hamer, for what he did as Premier of Victoria and for the respect he had for the Parliament itself and for the members who were within the Parliament. We could take a great lesson from the way he handled himself as Premier and the way he handled this Parliament. The conduct of the Parliament itself was a great tribute to the way he conducted himself within the Parliament and responded to the issues that were raised.

Dick Hamer came under enormous pressure in the late 1970s in particular and in the early 1980s from the politics of the time, but he never became upset. He responded to the issues that were being dealt with in a measured way and took the heat out of a lot of the discussions that took place. The way he handled the house at that time was a great tribute to him as a person and as the Premier of Victoria. I express condolences to the family of Dick Hamer on behalf of the people of the Murray Valley electorate.

Ms DELAHUNTY (Minister for the Arts) — It is a great pleasure, as Minister for the Arts, to join this condolence debate for Sir Rupert Hamer. It is often said

that good leaders are those who get to the future first. It is true that Dick Hamer was a true, if understated Renaissance man — a classics scholar, a man of letters and ideas and arts who deeply understood the civic and civilising influence of culture on a robust democratic society. It is no surprise to anybody in the arts that the state funeral we were privileged to be part of today featured both the high arts and accessible arts with the Flinders Quartet playing Haydn's *Sunrise* and Joan Carden singing Mozart; alongside — complemented by — the performers of the National Circus Arts Institute, which performed in his honour in Federation Square.

I do not think it is at all a surprise to anyone who knew Dick Hamer that his funeral also featured his contribution, not only the powerful influence as a premier but also his influence and successful socially progressive policy as regards women's affairs. But it is the arts which I wish to speak about today and that wonderful development of the Victorian Arts Centre, which is what the Premier and others have referred to. It is a really wonderful story. I am told that the land for the arts centre was set aside by former Premier, John Cain, Sr. It was constructed by and under the premiership of Sir Rupert Hamer. It was officially opened under the premiership of the John Cain, Jr. John Cain as Premier invited Dick Hamer to officially open the Melbourne Concert Hall in 1982. The theatres were opened a couple of years later, I understand. I am delighted that the Bracks government has announced that we will change the name of the concert hall in the arts centre and officially recognise the contribution of Dick Hamer to music and the arts.

Dick Hamer established the Ministry of the Arts, now Arts Victoria, in 1973, the first such arts ministry to be established in Australia. It continues to be a powerful little pocket of influence right across the state. He established a fund for the development of performing arts projects in regional areas. In collaboration with the City of Melbourne he introduced free lunchtime entertainment in city parks. He established — and this is something that has almost been replicated by Robyn Archer in the Melbourne International Festival — triennial statewide arts festivals, including the visual arts in 1975, crafts in 1978 and music in 1981.

In 1972 he helped found the first college of the arts, the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA), and I do not think we can stress how significant this was. This has become the nursery of the arts in Victoria and indeed in Australia, with a proud list of alumni, including most recently the creator of *Harvie Krumpet*, Adam Elliot, who won the recent Oscar, and many other outstanding artists, directors and performers. He founded the VCA

School of Dance in 1978, and after he left political office he became president of the VCA and a very effective advocate for that centre. He fostered the development of community theatre through the VCA. He helped establish the Murray River Performing Group in Albury-Wodonga, Crosswinds in Benalla and Theatreworks in St Kilda. In 1977 he was instrumental in establishing St Martins Youth Arts Centre. In the same year he established the Victorian Craft Collection, and in 1979 he helped establish the Meat Market Craft Centre, which was part of Crafts Victoria. His interest and effectiveness in the arts was widespread and eclectic.

As was mentioned at the funeral, and certainly after the funeral, he was the chieftain, the patron of the Highland Pipe Bands Association. He started that association way back in 1951, and he has been the chieftain since then. It was no surprise then to hear the bagpipes played at his state funeral this morning.

After politics he continued, and in fact you could say that if he was influential in the arts as Premier and Minister of the Arts, he was especially effective in supporting and advocating for the arts post politics. From 1982 to 1985 he was chairman of the Victoria State Opera. From 1984 to 1991 he was president of the Friends of the ABC; and as the Premier mentioned, he was still working for the interests of the ABC — still advocating against the recent folly of the ABC in trying to minimise local sport on ABC television news. From 1988 to 2000 he was the inaugural chairman of the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition. This is highly significant for me, because as a newly sworn-in Minister for the Arts one of my first official meetings was to see the former Premier Dick Hamer as he came lobbying for support for the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition and for a recital hall. I am also pleased that the Bracks government has committed to building a recital hall right next door to the VCA.

From 1998 to 2004 he was the founding chairman of the National Institute of Circus Arts. But he was not just the chairman; he had been absolutely influential and effective in raising pilot project funds in 1999 and before. He was a very loud voice in lobbying, I am pleased to say, for federal funds during 2000 and encouraging the federal government to award NICA centre-of-excellence status for arts training. Indeed he helped develop a scholarship fund for talented young Australians who attend NICA. He was also influential in establishing Australia's only university degree in circus arts — the three-year bachelor of circus arts degree at Swinburne University of Technology.

He was also the founding chairman of the advisory board for Renaissance Television, which is an organisation that broadcasts television programming aimed at 50-plus audiences on community television in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth. He was also the patron of the Melbourne Opera Company. He established the Victorian Tapestry Workshop in 1976. As Minister for the Arts I was able to welcome in a formal meeting a discussion with another former Premier, John Cain, who joined with Sir Rupert Hamer and came to see me, lobbying on behalf of the Victorian Tapestry Workshop.

I do not know what the collective noun for premiers might be, but they were a formidable duo.

Mr Bracks interjected.

Ms DELAHUNTY — Trouble! And their advocacy, I have to say, Premier, was very successful on that occasion.

In 1989 Sir Rupert Hamer was awarded the facilitators prize at the Sidney Myer performing arts awards. Arts supporters, artists from Australia and international representatives paused to reflect and salute the contribution of Dick Hamer, the modern Medici.

He was also influential in and an important advocate for the rights of women. His progressive social policies have been mentioned. It is hard for many of us to remember that around 1973 women could only enter the Victorian Public Service as typists or tea ladies, unless they were employed in the professions of social work, teaching or nursing. To protest that, in the early 1970s women marched into the Exhibition Building, waving their invitations and application forms, demanding to be allowed to sit the public service entrance examination. They had obtained these application forms with ambiguous names like Robin, Kerry and Pat. They did actually sit the entrance examination and Sir Rupert Hamer, the then Premier, offered them jobs, but then went much further.

In February 1975 he established the Victorian Committee on the Status of Women, and three years later he introduced the equal opportunity legislation which was passed by the Parliament as the first equal opportunity act making discrimination on the grounds of sex and marital status illegal. The Hamer government appointed an adviser to the Premier on women's affairs and a small unit within the Premier's department began looking at the issues of women's status, a policy that has been continued and expanded by successive governments.

Let me mention briefly his contribution as a minister who was very influential and effective in the area of planning, for which he was responsible as local government minister from 1964 to 1971. We know much of his support for the green wedges — his defining of the lungs of Melbourne — developing the concept which has now been formally defined and legislated in a protective way by the Bracks government. It is probably not known that he also introduced statements which allowed planning policy to protect unique areas such as the Yarra Valley and some key environmentally sensitive areas to be formally protected under the planning policies. As Minister for Local Government he initiated regional planning authorities for particular areas of the state such as the Upper Yarra River and Dandenong Ranges Authority, and the Westernport Regional Planning Authority. I am, though, very grateful for his vision of the green wedges, and for his support for the work this government is doing on sustainability and planning for the future of Melbourne.

Sir Rupert Hamer was a terrific republican. He was also a significant republican. I remember with great affection 27 April 1993 when, as is reported, on that day Sir Rupert became the first senior state Liberal to acknowledge publicly that a republican Australia was both inevitable and, in a minimal form, desirable. He is quoted as saying that his support of the republican movement should be seen as a desire for the issue to be discussed rationally and soberly. He went on to say — and this was apocryphal — that to succeed it will need to be bipartisan, and that he hoped this would happen soon. Ten years later this is still unfinished business.

Dick Hamer also said that he believed if you have enjoyed privilege you have a duty to care for others. He was brought up to believe in the duty of the privileged, otherwise known as noblesse oblige. I think we were all delighted that he turned down Robert Menzies when apparently he was invited, in the suite at the Windsor Hotel across the road from this chamber, to take the seat of Kooyong. We are pleased that he turned that down and went on to become Premier of Victoria and to lead an extraordinary renaissance in the arts and culture.

He certainly will be missed, but long remembered. Let me pass on my deep sympathy to Lady April Hamer and his four children, and many grandchildren and friends. It is deeply satisfying that they were able to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary only a few weeks ago. I would like to say to Lady April Hamer that she will always be warmly welcomed in the theatres and the concert halls and at the festivals right across this state. We have announced that the concert

hall will be named after Sir Rupert Hamer, a very appropriate tribute to him, but we are also working on a concert in that concert hall where the arts community more broadly will be able to celebrate the life and contribution of Sir Rupert Hamer.

Dr NAPHTHINE (South-West Coast) — I join with others to pay tribute to a great Australian, a great Victorian and a great and very true Liberal in Sir Rupert ‘Dick’ Hamer. I would like to pass on the sympathy of my family and myself and that of the people of south-west Victoria to Lady April Hamer, their children Christopher, Julia, Sarah and Alastair, and the grandchildren.

Others have spoken of Dick’s service to Australia in World War II. It is certainly an outstanding war record, including service as a Rat of Tobruk in the wider Middle East campaigns, in the Pacific and later in Normandy and Europe. I simply wish to reflect on the fact that Dick Hamer was only 23 at the commencement of World War II, and through his outstanding service and leadership had achieved the very senior rank of major at the young age of 29 when hostilities ceased. This is an enormous record for such a young man, but a forerunner of things that Dick was to contribute to our society.

Dick’s political life was very rich with achievements that changed the way of life for Victorians. Many of these innovations have been adopted or adapted in other states, and indeed around the world. I wish to list and comment on some of those that stick in my mind and in the minds of the people of south-west Victoria as great reforms which I particularly associate with Dick Hamer and his very effective Liberal government team.

Obviously at the top of that list is the Garden State, which is symbolic of Dick’s contribution to enhancing, enriching, protecting and preserving our rich natural environment in Victoria through the creation of many state and national parks and, indeed, for the first time anywhere in any state of Australia, a ministry for conservation dedicated to that purpose. Dick put the Environment Protection Authority on the map here in Victoria.

Dick Hamer was the first Premier to establish a ministry for consumer affairs, and he appointed the first Victorian Ombudsman. He oversaw the building of the Victorian Arts Centre, which stands decades later as a great tribute to the cultural life which Dick Hamer so loved and which is so important to Victoria. He was the first Minister of the Arts and put the arts on the map in a political as well as a cultural sense in our society.

At the same time he also established for the first time in Victoria an office for youth affairs. He led the campaign, through the introduction of a private member’s bill, for the abolition of capital punishment. He introduced equal opportunity legislation. He also introduced residential tenancy legislation, which for the first time in Victoria gave tenants rights and certainly looked after their interests on both a short-term and a long-term basis. He was responsible more than anybody else for the development of the Free Entertainment in the Park series, which was a great legacy that all of us who were around in the 1970s remember so well and so fondly. With his youth, sport and recreation minister, Brian Dixon, he was responsible for the very successful ‘Life. Be in it.’ campaign, which not only changed Victoria but also was adopted by many other states and territories and, indeed, worldwide.

As the Premier said in his contribution, Dick Hamer saw the need for Victoria to develop ongoing and positive relationships with our northern Asian neighbours, and he developed sister-state relationships in Japan and China. Having recently visited China, I know how well Sir Rupert Hamer was thought of and recognised in China, particularly in Jiangsu Province, where the people very much treasure the sister-state relationship which was developed. They recognise — I hope I am correct in saying this — that this was the very first sister-state relationship with an Australian state and, indeed, with the Western world.

People may not recognise that Dick Hamer was the Premier at the time and one of the leading proponents of the acquisition of Werribee Park in 1973. That is a great legacy for the people of Victoria.

Many people have spoken about Dick Hamer’s commitment to and passion for cultural and quality-of-life issues. As Premier he also oversaw and was responsible for some very significant infrastructure changes in this state. Indeed the West Gate Bridge was opened in 1978, so the major part of the construction of the bridge — particularly after the tragic collapse in the early stage of its construction — was overseen by a Hamer government. The underground rail loop was mentioned in the contributions on the condolence motion for Vern Wilcox. Obviously any Minister of Transport putting forward such a radical proposal needed the support and direction of a Premier to see it through. So the underground rail loop is another legacy of Dick Hamer and his government.

The Dartmouth Dam stands the state in great stead in terms of its infrastructure. The Newport and Jeeralang power stations provide enormous peak-load capacity

for our electricity supply. If you look at the state's electricity supply, you can see that the Loy Yang A and Loy Yang B projects were conceived, started and developed under the Hamer government. Those power stations provide the major base-load capacity of the state's electricity supply and hence underpin our economy.

In rural Victoria Dick Hamer is well remembered for taking on the role of Minister for State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism from 1979 to 1981. He was a passionate advocate for decentralisation and for assisting growth and development in the broadest sense in regional and rural Victoria. Not only was he passionate about having performing arts centres and cultural activities in regional and rural towns and communities, but as the minister responsible for decentralisation he was also passionate about underpinning that with jobs and economic opportunity.

I digress to discuss my former profession as a veterinarian. I remember Dick Hamer as a Premier who made a significant difference in the veterinary profession and in agriculture as a whole in Victoria and Australia. There was an impasse in the mid-1970s over the eradication program for bovine brucellosis, a disease which causes abortions in cattle and significant economic loss. It threatened our export markets, because we had the disease while other countries around the world, particularly the United States of America, were eradicating it. For a number of years we had been undertaking a program using vaccination as the tool to control brucellosis but had not moved to the next step of eradication. Everybody wanted to go to the next step, but there was a familiar impasse between the states and commonwealth, because to go to the next step we had to get agreement from the commonwealth to fund 50 per cent of the compensation cost for eradicating animals that were tested and found to be positive. The commonwealth would not come to the party. I will not mention the political colour of the commonwealth government in the mid-1970s, but shall we say it was not a Liberal government.

The impasse went on for far too long as far as the Victorian government and Dick Hamer were concerned. Indeed Dick Hamer authorised Victoria to break the impasse and go it alone with a test-and-slaughter campaign. He said that Victoria would fully fund the compensation scheme itself. Within six months the commonwealth came on board, and the test-and-slaughter phase of the brucellosis campaign was then taken up by every other state and territory. We in this state are now free of that disease and Australia is recognised as being free of this disease, but it took significant leadership from Dick Hamer and

his cabinet to move to that. So it was not just in the environment, the arts and culture but also in economics, agriculture and regional areas that Dick had a significant influence. I mention in particular a city that I lived in and had the pleasure to represent until the recent redistribution. The people of Hamilton well remember Dick Hamer's involvement in the construction and building of Lake Hamilton and the Hamilton Art Gallery.

It must be recognised that the achievements in social reform and quality-of-life issues that Dick Hamer was so passionate about and is so well remembered for were anchored by a commitment to strong and sound economic management. When you look at the economic measurements during the period of his premiership you can see that gross state product was in double digits for most of that time and that on a per head basis Victoria's gross state product exceeded the national average. So Dick Hamer had a real commitment to understanding and providing sound economic management as the basis on which you could deliver on these quality-of-life issues.

On Saturday night I had the pleasure of watching the Melbourne Opera Company, of which Sir Rupert Hamer was patron, performing *Madame Butterfly* at the Warrnambool Performing Arts Centre. Given that we are looking at how we can provide a lasting legacy to the life of Sir Rupert Hamer, I recognise and applaud the government's agreeing, with the Hamer family, on the renaming of the concert hall. Those people who attended the funeral service today would have heard that up to his last day Sir Rupert Hamer was still working on getting an opera company back in Melbourne and Victoria. He was patron of the Melbourne Opera Company, which receives no state government funding. It would be a fitting legacy if the government saw fit to provide some ongoing funding in Sir Rupert's name to this very young, dynamic and Victorian-based opera company.

In conclusion, I again pass on my sympathy and that of the people of south-western Victoria to Lady April Hamer and to Dick and April's children, Christopher, Julia, Sarah and Alastair, and their grandchildren and extended family.

Mr BATCHELOR (Minister for Transport) — Sir Rupert Hamer died on 23 March 2004 aged 87 years. He had a distinguished life, whether in the armed services, in the law, in the community or in Parliament. He was an all-rounder politician, having served first for a lengthy period in the Legislative Council and following that up with a long period of service in the Legislative Assembly. As was pointed out

by the Premier, he quickly rose to become a minister and ultimately Premier of Victoria — a position he held for nine years.

Dick Hamer was a Victorian Premier who will be fondly remembered. Whilst he was Premier for a long period, it is not the length of time for which he will primarily be remembered but rather what he did as Premier of Victoria. Dick Hamer did things. As they say, he made things happen, which was a campaign slogan. He did things in the arts, in the environment, for humanity generally, for social wellbeing, and importantly he did things for individual citizens. I did not know him personally at the time when he was Premier, but as a citizen of Victoria you knew of him. In recent times I did get to know him through chats at various art functions, particularly at the opera. He was always keen to initiate a conversation or discussion to find out what was going on and to let you know his views. He was terribly interested in contemporary events and wanted to be kept up to date. In those discussions he was always very personable, generous, passionate and caring. I suppose all these qualities that endured throughout his political life and that people have so often spoken about can be summed up by the request of his family following his death this week. His family said that instead of flowers mourners should make a donation to assist asylum seekers. I think that says a lot about the way Dick Hamer's family appreciated the sort of personal values he held and displayed throughout his life.

One of Sir Rupert Hamer's last public acts was to co-sign an open letter to the ABC objecting to its imposition of a Sydney-based, Sydney-centric national sports package on the Victorian viewing public. Although he was a patron of the Hawthorn Football Club, Sir Rupert was better known for his support of the arts than any great passion he had for sports. This act, in itself, highlighted what made Sir Rupert Hamer an exceptional individual and exceptional politician. He was someone who cared deeply for and tried to reflect where possible the diverse views and passions of the Victorian community.

Much has been said today and more will be said, no doubt, about this passion, but you need to look at some of his achievements throughout his political life. He was opposed to capital punishment and used his role as Premier to end it in Victoria. There was his sponsorship of the arts. We have heard the Minister for the Arts talk eloquently about the great contribution he made generally to the arts and how the physical manifestation of that, the Victorian Arts Centre and the Melbourne Concert Hall, stand as a lasting tribute to him. The very public acknowledgement by the then Premier of the

day, John Cain, in allowing Dick Hamer to officially open the concert hall on 6 November 1982 was a great recognition of the respect for him held even by his political opponents. I am sure that his contribution to the preservation of Victoria's built and natural environments, as was mentioned by the Deputy Premier earlier this afternoon, will be celebrated as part of this condolence debate.

I raise a couple of Dick Hamer's less publicised contributions to Victoria's diverse community, all of which have improved the health and lifestyles of many people, groups and individuals over the years. Firstly I mention fluoridation. In the face of strong opposition, some from within his own party and from others in the medical and allied professions, Dick Hamer early in December 1973 introduced the Health (Fluoridation) Bill. It took until February 1977 before the Silvan Reservoir treatment plant began to fluoridate water for around 60 per cent of Melbourne's population. The remaining catchments serving Melbourne's population were fluoridated by September that year. Incredibly, even today the controversy surrounding this fundamental public health measure still rages in some small pockets, and there are children in Victoria who are missing out on the benefits of this far-sighted and important policy. It can now be observed with the benefit of hindsight that those children who live in areas that have fluoridated water have some 40 per cent less tooth decay than those who do not. There are lots of Victorian children with good teeth who owe their thanks to this public initiative of the Hamer government.

Later during his term as Premier, Dick Hamer oversaw the introduction of the cooperative development program. It was an initiative to help workers cooperatives and was based on a program modelled in New South Wales. I am not sure how successful it was overall, but the program spawned some interesting and socially influential businesses and helped to set up some extraordinary careers. The objectives of the cooperative development program included the establishment of viable small-scale business enterprises or employment-generating modifications to existing businesses through work cooperative ventures and enhancing the employability of participants in the program.

One of the successes of the program is sitting in the chamber with us today. The member for Brunswick was a recipient of the benefits of the program initiated by former Premier Dick Hamer. In this case the grant was used to support the L'Osteria restaurant in Lygon Street, Brunswick, as a workers cooperative. It is worth noting that another participant in that venture, Stefano

de Pieri, who unlike the member for Brunswick stayed working in the restaurant business, is now running an award-winning restaurant in Mildura. Another cooperative business that received a grant under this program was Correct Line Graphics. This grant supported the employment of one full-time worker on a publication called *Gay Community News*. Direct Line Graphics subsequently became the Gay Publications Cooperative, the publisher of *Outrage*. The significance is that this chain of events represented the establishment of the gay press in Victoria. While many of the cooperative businesses that benefited from these grants unfortunately are no longer in business, others like L'Osteria were sold as going concerns, and the cooperative members went on to establish influential and successful careers in other areas.

Another recipient of this grant, and one of the original recipients, was Sybylla Press, an independent publisher of feminist fiction and non-fiction, which was only recently wound up after many years of successful publishing and distribution to the people of Victoria. Open Channel was also an original recipient. It is now being funded by the Australian Film Commission and Film Victoria and continues as a cooperative and community business. These were the results of a government program initiated by Dick Hamer that accepted, as the basis of it, tolerance and diversity as respected and positive community values.

Finally, it is probably not well known or acknowledged that Rupert Hamer as Premier was instrumental in starting the process of gay law reform. At the end of 1976, in response to an initiative of the Homosexual Law Reform Coalition, which interestingly was supported by the Young Liberals, Dick Hamer requested the then state Attorney-General to investigate and bring forward a review of the criminal law relating to homosexual acts. This review proved to be crucial in the later reform of these laws. I have no idea how Dick Hamer felt personally about gay issues, feminist publications or the pros and cons of fluoridisation, but I think this typifies exactly what I believe marks him as an exceptional politician. In some controversial areas, clearly he put his own preferences, prejudices and beliefs to one side and tried not only to govern for all Victorians but for each individual Victorian. Sir Rupert said in an interview with Michael Shmith in 1995:

You have got to respect other opinions, even if you do not share them. You must respect the people who hold those opinions, even if you are not enamoured by them.

We can see that these thoughts are certainly worth reflecting upon during these condolence speeches. I would put to you, Speaker, that they are worth reflecting upon at all times throughout the political

process. It is true that Dick Hamer will be missed by all Victorians, and my sincere condolences go to Sir Rupert Hamer's wife, April, his family and his friends.

Ms ASHER (Brighton) — If Sir Rupert were here, he would probably say, 'This is enough reminiscing, enough of the condolence motion. Let's just move on'. In deference to Dick's humble attitude, I will try to be as brief as possible about the career of a great man.

He had many distinguished careers — that of student, his unbelievable military career, his career in the law, his career in politics, and, of course, his post-political career of community service. His political career, as I said, was just one of his many careers. He was elected in 1958 and served 23 years in the Victorian Parliament. He was appointed as a minister in 1962 and held a variety of cabinet posts, culminating in being Premier from 1972 to 1981. That represented a total of 19 years in the ministry.

Much has been said about the quality of life that Dick espoused and acted upon while he was Premier. Oddly enough, the term 'quality of life' was first used by Sir Henry Bolte, with Bolte making the observation that the community had become particularly interested in the quality of life, and it was also said in the context of handing over to Dick as leader. It was Sir Henry's view that times had changed, that Dick was the perfect successor in the role as Premier, and that he would allow Dick to concentrate on some of these quality-of-life issues. There is no doubt that Dick did focus on some issues that were not associated with the previous administration. He gave a lot of these issues prominence by his own intellectual force, his own credibility and his own passion.

The environment has been touched on, including the number of national parks that were created during that Liberal administration, and, of course, the Garden State. The arts have been touched on — the first Ministry of the Arts and the Victorian Arts Centre — and the arts have been well reflected in his post-political involvement. The abolition of capital punishment has also been referred to on many occasions today.

I want to also briefly mention Dick's commitment to the advancement of the status of women. Again it is true that he reformed the public service exam to allow married women to enter at all levels of the public service. He was also the driving force behind the Equal Opportunity Act. I would also pay credit to a predecessor in Brighton, Jeanette Patrick, who drove that issue very strongly within the parliamentary Liberal Party at that time. Dick was also responsible for

very substantial rape law reform, which greatly acknowledged women's rights in this particular area. Another colleague who was most instrumental in that area was the Honourable Haddon Storey.

Much has been said about Dick's style. There is no doubt about it — he was a natural leader. He was not threatened by others. He wanted to encourage others at all opportunities. He was particularly interested in the young. When I joined the Young Liberal Movement in 1976, he had regular meetings with us. I think probably Mark Birrell, when he was president, instituted the regular coffees with Dick, where we simply raised issues of concern to us — an opportunity of access to a Premier of the day that I think would be unparalleled in other youth organisations.

I want to touch very briefly on two issues with a slightly different emphasis to a lot of the other speakers. The first issue is that Dick was deeply committed to the economic advancement of Victoria. He was just one of those Liberals who believed that economic management was not an end in itself but has a social purpose, and his view was that if you got the economy right, other things would flow and other things could be funded. I think in the legitimate desire to focus on Dick's quality-of-life issues, sometimes it is forgotten that he was an outstanding manager of the Victorian economy, as Premier and indeed as Treasurer, before that great team of Lindsay Thompson as Treasurer and Dick as Premier emerged.

Much has also been said about Dick's decency, and quite rightly. He was well mannered, civilised and decent on all occasions. But I also want to point out that he was also incredibly tough. You just need to look at his military career alone to show how tough he was. Likewise in politics — tough, resolute, achieved his aim, but achieved it always by being polite and always by being civil. I think sometimes in the desire to depict Dick as decent — again legitimate and accurate — it should not be discounted that he was, as Lindsay Thompson said today, a man of steel. Dick Hamer was a truly great Australian and a truly great Liberal. I too would like to pass on my condolences to Lady April Hamer and her four children and Dick's grandchildren.

Mr BRUMBY (Treasurer) — Today I too would like to join the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and other members in paying tribute to the life of Dick Hamer and to extend condolences to Lady April Hamer and to the Hamer family.

Like many MPs present in the house today, I attended the state funeral service for Sir Rupert Hamer this morning. As the Premier noted earlier in his remarks,

the service was in every way a fitting tribute to a great Victorian. We were very privileged to hear eulogies from former Premier Lindsay Thompson, from Richard Divall and from Fay Marles. I want to put on the record that they were outstanding eulogies, none more so than that presented by Lindsay Thompson, which I think was outstanding in every respect.

On the way to Parliament House this morning I was listening to Lindsay Thompson being interviewed on the radio, or it may have been a radio grab about Dick Hamer. One of the words used to describe Dick Hamer was that he was always a 'constructive' person, always looking for a better way of doing things. Was there a way of moving on? Was there a better way of doing things? I thought in many ways that that came through in a story from Fay Marles during the eulogy.

It was quite a humorous story about the petrol dispute and about how a petrol station owner had been summoned by her for potentially breaching the Equal Opportunity Act. During the petrol rationing the petrol station owner had been serving the male customers first in one queue and sending all the female drivers to the back in another because they were less important. Fay recalled the discussion she had had with the then Premier, who suggested, 'Maybe it would be better if you go out and see this person rather than summoning them in'. She said she would do that if she could but that, because she was very short staffed, she would take it on notice. She took it on notice and went out there, and there was a successful resolution. To me it was an interesting story about that time, because you cannot imagine that sort of behaviour happening nowadays. It was a good story about Dick Hamer, about his looking for constructive and better ways of doing things and about his deep and abiding passion for equal opportunity. He was the first Premier to bring about, and Victoria was the first state to see, the establishment of an equal opportunity commission.

Dick Hamer was best known for his support of the arts and the environment. We have seen that come through in all of the eulogies and the tributes that have been written and in many of the speeches made today. I saw Dick Hamer about a month ago at the announcement that the regional head office of Cirque du Soleil, which is the Canadian circus arts company, would be located in Melbourne, which was quite a coup for Melbourne. Sir Rupert was in the audience, and I acknowledged him and the fact that Victoria has had a proud record of supporting the arts since the 1970s, which has continued through the 1980s, the 1990s and, of course, under the Bracks government, and we talked about that after the official announcement.

One of the points I would like to make today is that in addition to his passion for the arts, for the environment and for quality-of-life issues, Dick Hamer was also Treasurer for seven years — he was Premier and Treasurer — and he was also Minister for State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism from 1979 to 1981. If you look at that era, you see that he was a passionate believer in the arts, in the rights of individuals, in choice, in equal opportunity and in quality-of-life issues, but — if I can take up a point made by the member for Brighton — he was also a staunch advocate for economic development, particularly for regional economic development.

If you look at that era, you see it was an era in which governments invested heavily in economic infrastructure — for example, during that period the natural gas pipeline to Albury-Wodonga was completed, the gas pipeline to Ballarat and Bendigo was completed, work was commenced on the 4000-megawatt Loy Yang power station and major softwood plantations were established across the state and subsidised by the government. It was a period of investment in infrastructure. It was also a period of investment in water and irrigation infrastructure. During that time the Thomson Dam stages 1 and 2 were completed and stage 3 was commenced. At this time, after our having seven years of below-average rainfall, the question arises: where would Melbourne be today without that storage facility? During that time the Cardinia Reservoir was also completed, the Sugarloaf Reservoir was completed and there were extensive improvements to irrigation infrastructure.

While it was a period where priority was on lifestyle, the arts and the environment, it was also a period in which there was strong investment in economic infrastructure, not unlike the period that Victoria is experiencing today under the Bracks government.

The Premier made comments earlier about the trade relations which were developed by Sir Rupert Hamer. I echo the importance of those, particularly the Jiangsu-Victoria sister-state relationship. Dick Hamer was the first Victorian Premier to visit China. He did that in August 1979. At that time Gough Whitlam had recognised China in the early 1970s, but China was a very different place to what it is today. It was a bold step to make that visit and to enter into that sister-state relationship, and it is a relationship which has served Victoria well. I want to emphasise that, because people often say that states enter into too many sister-state relationships and ask whether they add value and what they really mean. But this sister-state relationship is one that has served Victoria well. The Premier visited

Jiangsu in 2002, and last year following the Premier's visit I officially opened our office in Nanjing.

This year we will celebrate its 25th year, and the Governor of Jiangsu will be visiting Melbourne with a major delegation. I understand, Speaker, that you, in the company of the President and many other members of Parliament, have just returned from leading a substantial delegation to Jiangsu and Nanjing, which I understand was very beneficial in terms of that sister-state relationship. In 1985 the Victoria Jiangsu Joint Economic Committee was established, and I think there have been 10 or 12 meetings of that committee. That two-way trade between Victoria and China is now approaching \$7 billion. On current growth estimates, by 2006–07 China will be Victoria's largest trading partner. So the links we have with Jiangsu are important.

The other trade relationship is with the Aichi Prefecture, the capital of which is Nagoya. I visited Nagoya in 2001 and met with Governor Kunda. Nagoya is the fourth-largest Japanese city after Tokyo, Yokohama and Osaka. There are many important Japanese investments which come out of Aichi Prefecture, and companies such as Toyota, Denso, Araco and Aisin can all call Victoria and Aichi Prefecture home. Japan is Victoria's third-largest export market. Our two-way trade is approaching \$7 billion, and this is also a significant sister-state relationship which was formed in 1980 by then Premier Hamer and will celebrate its 25-year anniversary next year.

There have been many comments today about the late Dick Hamer. He had an extraordinarily full and distinguished life, and served this Parliament with great distinction. That period of the 1970s was a fascinating time in a political sense. Dick Hamer was taking over after 17 years of quite a dominant premiership of Sir Henry Bolte, and a lot of people wondered at the time if that transition could be made. It was an interesting time from a Labor Party perspective also. Of course at the time of the 1973 election Clyde Holding was leader. There was quite a debate about state aid, and George Crawford and Bill Hartley were dominating the state administration committee — and that, of course, had an impact on the Labor policies of the time. In 1976 we had seen the end of the Whitlam government, the election of the Fraser government, and a huge amount of division in the Australian community. But in Victoria Dick Hamer occupied the middle ground. There is no doubt that he was strong and solid in terms of occupying the middle ground, and that is one of the reasons he enjoyed such political success.

He led an extraordinarily full and distinguished life as a student, as a soldier serving his country in the Second World War and as a member of this place serving the Parliament and the state as Premier of Victoria; and of course, in later life he contributed so generously to the community and particularly the arts after his retirement from politics. He was a great servant of the Victorian people, he will be greatly missed, and I extend my deepest sympathy to Lady April Hamer and the Hamer family.

Mr PLOWMAN (Benambra) — It was a great privilege for me, as a young person, to meet with Dick Hamer first when he came to speak to a branch of the Liberal Party in country Victoria, and to recognise that there was a man who not only had a grasp of the urban and metropolitan issues that were so important to Victoria, but also, as the Treasurer said, had a great understanding of regional development and country issues.

Certainly that was the time when I made up my mind to take an active role in politics in the party and to be involved, but equally the reason I wish to speak this afternoon particularly is the involvement that Dick Hamer had with my father. At that same time he was instrumental in getting my father to stand for Parliament — unsuccessfully as it turned out. That was brought about by the fact that my father actually served in the army with Dick, and particularly in Tobruk, so I would like to touch briefly on Dick Hamer's military career and then the two other major issues for which he will be most greatly remembered in Victoria.

Following his graduation in law from Melbourne University in 1940, Dick Hamer's military career commenced and, as was noted earlier by other speakers, he was the first uniformed person to be admitted to the bar. He fought in four major world battles — in north Africa, in Tobruk, in El Alamein and in New Guinea — and was part of the Normandy landings.

In July 1940 Private Hamer, aged 24, was posted to Victoria Barracks where he worked in the decipher section. In September of that year he received his commission as lieutenant and became OC of the intelligence section of the 2/43rd battalion. As a second lieutenant, in December 1940 Lieutenant Hamer received embarkation orders and with the 9th division sailed first to the Suez and then into Palestine. His division was sent to relieve the 6th division, which had been fighting in North Africa after capturing and liberating Libya.

In March 1941 the German push led by Rommel surrounded Tobruk and all the allied troops. Dick

Hamer, then aged 24, was caught in that famous siege which lasted for eight months. That was the birth of the rather heroic Rats of Tobruk, in which my father served with Dick Hamer. My father was certainly very proud to serve with him, and Dick was very proud to be one of those troops who have been so well remembered. It is worth noting that the 14 000 Australian troops who fought did pay a high price: 3000 Australian troops were either killed or seriously wounded during that conflict and over 1000 were taken prisoner. What is important to remember is that it was against extraordinary odds, and that they did stop Rommel's advance and proved that he was not invincible. Until that time Rommel had been seen as one of the invincible forces of the German war effort.

In October 1941, with a promotion to captain, Dick Hamer saw service at El Alamein. It was during this period that he kept a diary. He noted that it was to banish the boredom during the days when Rommel seemed to be sleeping. In his diary Sir Rupert noted that he would always remember El Alamein's stark, smoky landscape littered with burnt and battered bodies. He also said:

You never forget that, it gives you respect for human life ... An awful lot of people died in one way or another, it has a subduing effect.

You learn about human life, but you also value the things you fought for.

We are all now very wary of anyone being a dictator, and we're more alert about protecting our traditions and the ways of life we value.

And that sums up the sentiments that Dick Hamer took into his political life. Clearly that period, particularly in El Alamein and Tobruk, moulded his life and moulded his career, not only as a soldier but also as a politician.

Following promotion in 1943, Major Hamer went to New Guinea as a member of the invasion force to liberate Lae from the Japanese forces. During this time he was often mentioned in dispatches. In April 1944, when the allies' invasion forces were being prepared for landings in northern France, Major Dick Hamer's experienced leadership was again called upon. He entered his third theatre of war and became an instructor of tactics and techniques for amphibious operations. He helped to plan the Rhine crossing prior to the crossing of the English Channel as part of the Normandy invasion. He was attached to the Royal Marines commando company and landed on the French coast at Arromanches. His war service lasted 66 months, and he finally returned home in October 1945.

It is worth noting the extraordinary service that he gave. I have no doubt he was one of very many, but his service was quite outstanding. As I said, my father remembers Dick Hamer as one of the most outstanding men he met during that period in Tobruk.

When Dick Hamer retired I note there was a motion of appreciation for the services of the Honourable Rupert James Hamer. I will quote selectively from a speech made by Alan Hunt, a former President of the Legislative Council. He said:

Even those who did not agree with his political philosophy would acknowledge that he was a man who displayed foresight and long-term vision; a man who had immense compassion and understanding of people; a man who sought always to bring parties together rather than to capitalise on political differences. There were some who saw that as a failure; on the contrary it was his great strength, that he could seek and find a common ground and build upon it.

... He was man who sought to bring parties together; a man who sought to engender cooperation rather than drive opponents apart. He did that remarkably well over many years.

That was particularly so during the period when he was Premier of Victoria. Those words of Alan Hunt's sum up the spirit in which Dick Hamer acted as a member of Parliament, but most particularly as Premier of this state.

I also touch on the words spoken by the Honourable H. M. Hamilton, a former member for Higinbotham Province, who joined the army with Dick Hamer. A couple of things he said are worth repeating:

... one of the first people I met was Captain R. J. Hamer of the 2/43rd battalion. I point out that Dick Hamer has not only served this state well, but has served his nation with conspicuous success.

...

When I heard he was interested in entering politics I felt that this was a great move because I had a tremendous admiration for his intellectual capacities. But I had one doubt. As a young man he was inclined to be a little intolerant of lesser intellects, and there were very few who could match him intellectually. However, to my astonishment, when I eventually found my way into this chamber and Dick was sitting on the front bench as Minister for Local Government, I found that he was the most patient and reasonable of any minister I have ever seen. He would listen patiently to the arguments coming from all sides of the house, sift them, and if an idea appealed to him as a good one, irrespective of who made it, he would gladly accept it.

... He changed from being intolerant of fools to listening with infinite patience to the advice and suggestions and chatter that came from all directions. He brought to the office of Premier at that stage an enormous intellectual capacity which was responsible for the tremendous successes he achieved.

Again I think those words from a sitting member who had been in the army with him and had actually joined up with him reflected the sort of man that Dick Hamer was and the intellect that he brought to the position of Premier. It reflected the fact that he was prepared to listen to every member of the party and every member of the opposition and act on the advice he thought was best, irrespective of where that advice came from. One would hope that that same philosophy still abides, but I have to say that it is rarely seen.

The last two things I want to comment on are the two things that I believe Dick Hamer will be most remembered for. Firstly, the words 'Garden State'. Victoria will always hold that name, no matter how we use it. Victoria is the Garden State; it is recognised by all Australians as the Garden State. It was Dick Hamer's involvement in the environmental movement that led us to use those terms advisedly to promote Victoria as probably the most lovely state in Australia, and certainly the state with the greatest respect for the environment. Dick Hamer introduced a changed level of environmental management during his term as Premier that I think is still very much part of the way we manage our environment and our parks. Certainly the introduction of national parks to Victoria and the involvement he had in the introduction of the green wedge concept in and around Melbourne have helped keep Melbourne the city that it is.

His passion for the arts is still reflected in the fact that the state of Victoria is the capital of the arts and the artistic movement throughout Australia. One of the things the Treasurer spoke of earlier which I would also like to comment on is Dick Hamer's involvement with the water supply for the City of Melbourne. He was far sighted. Like others earlier, he and the Victorian Parliament recognised the need to have closed catchments for Victoria.

It means that Victoria and Melbourne have a water supply the quality of which is the envy of any city of its size anywhere in the world. Dick Hamer's foresight in proceeding with and pushing through the building of the Thomson Dam means that Melbourne now has a secure water supply which again is the envy of almost every city of its size in the world. I think this sets him aside as a man who not only wanted to look after the environment but was prepared to balance the needs of us all by building dams when they were needed. Without the Thomson Dam and the energy required to build it at that time, Melbourne and Victoria would be in an untenable situation at the moment.

I, like everyone else, offer my sympathy to Lady April Hamer, her four children and all the members of her

family. I conclude as I started by saying that it was a privilege to have met Sir Rupert Hamer at an early age and to have known him throughout my life. It is with great pleasure that I take part in this debate.

Mr HULLS (Attorney-General) — In an era when politicians openly admit to expedience, Sir Rupert ‘Dick’ Hamer was a window to another age. He was a member of a rare breed who valued decency and integrity above all else, and he was an old-school Liberal who believed that with privilege came responsibility. In short Hamer was a Liberal with a heartfelt philosophy rather than just a package conservative.

There are a great many accolades that can, have been and will be given to Dick Hamer, but there will be none better — and I know this has been commented on earlier — than that given by another former Premier, Lindsay Thompson, at Dick Hamer’s funeral today. Hamer’s résumé is a testament of public service, and his interest in and contribution to the community were immense and diverse. What I will talk briefly about today however, are two characteristics which pervaded Dick Hamer’s career and his public life.

Dick Hamer was not afraid to be himself. He showed constancy and a strength of principle which was founded on concern and compassion for ordinary people and which made him unafraid of chance, whether it was initiated by the community or had him at the helm. It was this fearlessness which made him able to oppose the last execution in Victoria while a minister in the Bolte government and which also led him to undertake one of Victoria’s most fundamental and meaningful reforms, the abolition of the death penalty, when he was Premier.

It was this fearlessness that more than 20 years later allowed him — as has already been said — to be the first prominent Liberal politician to declare himself for the republic. His fearlessness also caused him to urge that drug addiction, in light of its awful consequences for individuals in the community, should be treated as a health issue. He argued against the grain of his party for reform of that place across the corridor. I expect that any person who had seen the kind of horrors that Dick Hamer saw in his five years of active military service during World War II would hardly be afraid of a little political discomfort.

He was also a politician of immense foresight. He could see change happening in the community and harnessed it, from the burgeoning awareness of our fragile environment to the forces of feminism and the abolition of the death penalty. Hamer was indeed a genuine

reformer, transforming his party and the machinery of government. During his nine years as Premier he established nine new ministries, including the first arts ministry in Australia and, as Victoria’s first Garden State Premier, a ministry of conservation.

There are two things, however, that have resonance for me as Attorney-General, as someone who is passionate about equality and who is concerned about the basic rights of ordinary Victorians. The first is Dick Hamer’s identification of his biggest regret about his time in government, and that was his failure to take on sporting clubs and their infamous ‘white lines’ when he brought in the Equal Opportunity Act, which was Victoria’s first antidiscrimination legislation. Hamer explained that he excluded voluntary sporting clubs from the legislation on the basis that they would catch the public mood and come around themselves. However, as many clubs, such as horseracing clubs, operated on Crown land, the government had missed its chance to make it a condition of their leases that discrimination against women, and in particular the absurd white-line policy, should end. This regret of Dick Hamer speaks to me of a politician who genuinely cared about fairness and who was not afraid to take on institutions of privilege.

Perhaps, though, the greatest indication of Dick Hamer’s integrity was the fact — it has already been touched on by the Leader of the Opposition — that in 1966 Sir Robert Menzies approached him to stand for preselection for the federal seat of Kooyong. Having thought about it for about a week, Hamer declined on the basis that the states were responsible for issues of much more importance to ordinary people. Menzies was, of course, very much taken aback; Kooyong went to Peacock; and Hamer ultimately went on to be Premier of Victoria.

‘Much loved’, ‘a special kind of politician’, ‘compassionate’, ‘courageous’, ‘intelligent’ and ‘the finest flower in the Victorian Deakinite Liberal tradition’ are just some of the tributes to Dick Hamer that have flowed from his political opposition since his unexpected and tragic death. I know he was a man in his later years, but nonetheless I think his death can be described as tragic. To this I shall add my own humble eulogy, that Dick Hamer was a man who personified integrity and who brought to politics and public service a clarity of purpose and a joy in life that touched everyone who had the privilege to know him.

On becoming Premier in 1972 Sir Rupert declared that his government would be less materialistic and more interested in things of the spirit. I believe this has been his legacy in public life as well. I hope towards the end of his days he was satisfied that he had found the right

balance. I extend my deepest condolences to the Hamer family, who have the gratitude of the people of Victoria for giving so generously of one they so loved. Vale Sir Rupert.

Mr SAVAGE (Mildura) — I rise to reflect on the life and times of Sir Rupert James Hamer, former Premier, soldier, husband and family man. Too often we know too little of our fellow citizens until we hear their eulogies, but I would surmise that this is not the case with Dick Hamer. I have certainly not been long enough in this place to know very many past members, although I note that since 1996 there have been some 55 departures — two-thirds of this house.

I do not propose to repeat the comments of other members on the life and times of Dick Hamer. The funeral today at St Paul's Cathedral was a fitting tribute to a man who served his country bravely and served his state and community with distinction. I have had the privilege of meeting Sir Rupert and Lady Hamer in his role as patron-in-chief of Chances for Children in Mildura. Sir Rupert was the first freeman of the City of Mildura, and there have been only three others since that honour was accorded.

A former member for Mildura, Milton Whiting, approached Sir Rupert in 1979 to become the patron of Mallee Family Care, and that patronage continued until his death on Tuesday. This association has been very strong, and it was strengthened when Sir Rupert became the patron-in-chief of Chances for Children.

Sir Rupert made a tremendous impact on this state and on our daily lives. Some from generations past, and I am one of them, probably hanker for a return to those days of full employment, low crime and the values and standards that prevailed when Sir Rupert was Premier of the state.

It was an honour and a privilege for me to meet Sir Rupert and his wife, Lady April, and I extend my condolences to her and her family. During his eulogy or reflection on Vernon Wilcox, the Leader of the Opposition said that he was a good all-rounder, and I have thought about that since that moment. I think you would have to say that Dick Hamer was a good all-rounder, and I am convinced that this Parliament has prospered under the postwar members who, like Sir Rupert, were good all-rounders and led the state into a very progressive arrangement. Many people who had lives outside the Parliament came into this place well versed and were well equipped to become leaders, statesman and members of Parliament. As other speakers have said, Sir Rupert Hamer has left a very significant impact on this place and on the lives of most

Victorians, and I reflect on his passing and the contribution he made.

Mr McINTOSH (Kew) — During an appreciation motion in this house in 1981 the then Premier reflected upon the qualities of Sir Rupert Hamer. In a reasonably short contribution, which was perhaps unlike his eulogy today, he used the letters of Sir Rupert's name to indicate the qualities that he brought to this place as Premier of Victoria. He said that 'h' stood for humanity. Sir Rupert was a really humane person; he had compassion and he thought about other people all the time. As for the 'a', he said Sir Rupert was amiable. He was amusing, he was good company, he always listened and he always had a twinkle in his eye to look at the brighter side of life. The 'm' was for modesty, and indeed, a number of people have highlighted Sir Rupert's modesty and humility for all of his achievements in a very long and distinguished life. The 'e' was for energy. Until the last moment Sir Rupert was actively involved in public service, attending a state reception here at Parliament House on the day that he died. The 'r' was for respect. It is the last letter of his name, but above all it is also what everybody brings to this place in remembering Sir Rupert Hamer with the utmost respect and regard as a true Victorian, and a true leader of our community in a number of different areas.

I certainly do not propose to dwell on what other people have far more eloquently talked about as his achievements as a student, as a military person, in the law, in politics or in his achievements post politics. But perhaps I can reflect on what I knew about Sir Rupert Hamer as a former member for Kew, with whom I built a strong relationship over the last three or four years since I have been in this place representing Kew. I met Sir Rupert Hamer, probably accidentally, many years ago. I was attending the opera — and what a rugby player was doing at the opera is something we will have to dwell on — and I saw a friend of mine from school who was also called Rupert, which is an uncommon name.

I yelled out, 'Rupert', and this man stood up in front of me and said, 'Yes?'. Before I could get anything out he jumped in and said, 'How is it all going?'. I said, 'It is going very well'. He said, 'What are you up to now?'. I said, 'I am at the bar'. He said, 'Which floor are you on in Owen Dixon Chambers?'. I described it. He said, 'Do you know X?'. I said, 'Yes', and we had a 3-minute conversation about my career in the law. After 3 or 4 minutes he said, 'Good to see you, and I look forward to seeing you again in the future'. Then he turned around and walked off. That was the first time that I met Sir Rupert Hamer, although I had subsequent dealings with him before I was elected here.

It was probably shortly after my election that Dick Hamer came into my office to pass on his congratulations, but it rapidly developed into a cross-examination about what I felt about a number of significant public policy issues. He had the ability to go across a range of different issues; he was up to speed with the current thinking and debates on a number of those issues. We went from energy policy and the concern that he raised about the capacity of this state to generate sufficient energy and power to meet the needs of a growing population through to aged care. We ended up dealing with things as significant as water issues and what I thought about what was happening in the Murray River. He had a sharp intellect; he listened to what I said, notwithstanding that my ability to deal with those issues was nowhere near as great as his.

What has struck me over the last four years is how deeply he was involved not only in his broad community here in Victoria but also in his electorate of Kew, now my electorate. The respect that he built up in a large number of people in a variety of different activities was profound. The extraordinary thing was that you would turn up to a concert given by the Australian Boys Choir, which is based in the electorate of Kew, and you knew perfectly well that Sir Rupert and Lady Hamer would be present at that gathering. He was a profound sponsor of the arts, and the fact that the Australian Boys Choir was based in Kew was a matter of some pride to him.

In all sorts of non-profit groups, whether it be the neighbourhood house or a charitable institution, you would turn up as a local member knowing that in many cases Sir Rupert and Lady Hamer would be there. You would go to aged care facilities, one of which bears his name in my electorate, and he would be present; if he was not, he would be there in spirit. Everybody would be talking about his involvement in what he had done as a member of Parliament and subsequently for their particular institution.

Only last Friday a ceremony at Burke Hall in Kew — the junior school of Xavier College — dedicated a new garden between it and Villa Alba, a magnificent Victorian building that has been substantially renovated as a result of a long process that started with Rob Maclellan banging heads together to ensure that the land and house were preserved and there was some economic way of doing up the house. At the dedication of the garden, speaker after speaker paid tribute to Dick Hamer for the way in which he was involved not just in a superficial role, not just where he would turn up for the occasional meeting but because he was intimately involved in every aspect of that development. People were at pains to say that when you had a deadlock

between the different and disparate groups, quite often Rupert Hamer would come in and resolve it for the benefit of the entire community.

He was intimately involved in his community. For example, he was involved with Joan Kirner in a proposal to build a school hall at Canterbury Girls Secondary College. He would regularly attend that and many other private and public schools in my electorate.

He was a man of great humanity; he was very amiable, modest and energetic right up until his last day. He was held in deep respect by the people of Kew. He will be sorely missed. I pass on my personal condolences and that of the people of Kew on his passing to Lady Hamer and her family.

Ms KOSKY (Minister for Education and Training) — I join with others in this house in passing on my condolences to Lady April Hamer and her family and in contributing to the fantastic celebration of Sir Rupert Hamer's life, which has been so well spoken about within this house. I do not want to go over the ground that other members have talked about in detail but to talk about some of the background to the roles that Sir Rupert held.

I too remember the first time I met Sir Rupert Hamer. I was a backbencher in opposition and I had been in that role for only a couple of months. I was at a function when Sir Rupert came up next to me to sign a book and said, 'You are Lynne Kosky, aren't you? You were the mayor of Footscray'. At that stage as a new member I felt that nobody in the house knew who I was, let alone people who had left this place. But he followed public affairs in great detail and was prepared to go out of his way to help people on both sides feel welcomed into politics. I certainly felt honoured that he had acknowledged one of the roles I had had before and knew who I was, even though I did not necessarily deserve it.

I want to talk particularly about Sir Rupert's work in relation to the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA). He played a significant role in making sure that facility was alive and well. He became the founding chair of the institute in October 1998. The National Institute of Circus Arts Ltd was established in 2000 by Swinburne University of Technology and was opened in February 2001. It has a three-year vocational degree, the bachelor of circus arts, which is an example of Swinburne's cross-sectoral nested degree program. It covers both the training component, or the TAFE component, as well as the university component. So it is not just at what some would consider to be the high end of the arts that Sir Rupert was involved; he was

also involved in an area which combines both the vocational and the academic for a group of students who had not previously been well acknowledged in arts forums.

He supported the establishment of NICA by assisting it to raise funds for the initial pilot project in 1999. He then went on to lobby both the state and federal governments. I still remember the phone call when Sir Rupert rang to say, 'We need some extra state assistance for NICA'. I am pleased to say that we successfully directed funding from the training budget to support the TAFE-level programs in NICA, and his timing in lobbying the federal government close to an election meant that he was also successful in gaining federal funding. He did not get others to make those phone calls; he made them directly himself.

I know that he had many discussions with the current member for Eltham, who at that stage was my chief of staff, in looking at how funding could be provided for the proper establishment of the institute. Sir Rupert helped NICA to establish a scholarship fund to enable talented young people from all over Australia to attend the institute regardless of their financial backgrounds, making sure that all young people who had the talent and capacity could participate. He championed the NICA story to a number of private donors and philanthropic organisations and in doing so was able to establish that scholarship fund. His advocacy also supported NICA's establishment of its indigenous Australia programs, which were very important not only to the institute but also to indigenous communities across Australia. He supported NICA in its partnership with the Cirque du Soleil, with Tokyo Disney and with the circus schools in Shanghai, Nanjing, Shenyang and Taipei. Some of the connections he had through other parts of his life helped make the connection for the National Institute of Circus Arts.

In December last year Sir Rupert officiated at the inaugural graduation ceremony awarding Australia's first bachelor of circus arts. He was very active right from the beginning, through to funding and to the first graduation ceremony for circus arts students. It is worth mentioning that the first graduates of NICA have already found their way into Australian and international companies such as the Cirque du Soleil. Many work as successful freelance artists, so they have been able to move into very rewarding careers.

It has been mentioned that Sir Rupert was reappointed as chair of the board earlier this month, an indication that he did not believe his work with NICA was finished. I have a bit of a feeling that he really loved the organisation and was not prepared to walk away at this

time. Indeed, its members did need and were very appreciative of his support. Their appreciation was very aptly demonstrated today when they put on a performance in Federation Square at the time when the family and the coffin were leaving St Paul's Cathedral. It was a fitting thankyou from students who owe a great debt of gratitude to Sir Rupert for establishing them in the art form they love best and for establishing NICA so that they could have good careers in circus arts.

I want to pass on the acknowledgment of Swinburne University. It will obviously pay its own tribute, but I indicated that I would pass on its great thanks to Sir Rupert and to his family for allowing him to have the time to spend in establishing NICA. I join with the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of The Nationals and other members in this house in paying my respects to a wonderful man who was much loved and who has taken politics to a higher level in Victoria. I pass on my sincerest condolences to Lady April and the family.

Mr BAILLIEU (Hawthorn) — Many people have made great contributions to the leadership of the Liberal Party. Those who were privileged to be at Sir Rupert's funeral today saw one of the finest in Lindsay Thompson. His eulogy was a reminder that not all leaders enjoy the success that is probably due to them in their position of leadership, but Lindsay made an extraordinary contribution today.

I say that because I believe there are four giants of the Victorian Liberal Party whom I distinguish on the basis that they have led the party in multiple election victories and have obviously captured the imagination of the community. They are those who have led the Liberal Party in victory and triumph. As I said, there are four great giants of the Liberal Party who have met that criterion — obviously Sir Robert Menzies, who made the Liberal Party, and indeed made postwar Australia; Henry Bolte, who restored Victoria as a place of stability and prosperity; Jeff Kennett, who took Victoria back to the top again; and of course Dick Hamer. Dick Hamer was the one who opened our eyes and leveraged the prosperity of the time for everlasting good. It is fair to conclude from his doing so that Dick Hamer was a decent, modest, determined and intelligent visionary for Victoria, and it is indeed hard to imagine Victoria without him. He has played such a part in our lives.

Last week after his death I heard him described on Melbourne radio as 'a reassuring presence'. I believe that was absolutely true when it came to Dick. He was always about, always there, always supportive. Only recently I found Dick Hamer sitting in the front row at the Richmond town hall, sharing a somewhat large

public lament for what was regarded as an inappropriate development on the Burnley Gardens precinct.

He was there of his own volition. He was not seeking to speak, not seeking attention, but was there caring in his own right. That was very much Dick Hamer.

The Leader of the Opposition and others referred to a piece we heard from Dick's daughter Sarah Brennan today — the extract from Tennyson's *Ulysses* and the line 'I am a part of all that I have met'. How true that is. In the same context I recall the electioneering slogan we had in the 1970s — and we might have blanched at the time because it seemed so pedestrian — the simple slogan 'Hamer makes it happen'.

An honourable member — It was a winner.

Mr BAILLIEU — Not only was it a winner, but on reflection how true it is — Dick Hamer made it happen.

Not only was Dick a part of all he had met, but he is part of our fabric, and the reverse is equally so. I am of the view that we do not actually have to remember Dick Hamer because he will be with us almost every day. We can enjoy and share his legacy and his contribution almost every day. So much of what we take for granted in Victoria is part of his legacy. It is actually quite an extraordinary list, which other members have commented on already. I do not intend to go over all that ground, but young Victorians could be forgiven for never imagining Victoria without that legacy.

If you go through the list you could conclude that many Victorians would never contemplate or give a moment's thought to the fact that many of the things that Dick Hamer introduced never existed before. It is what made Dick Hamer an intelligent visionary, whether it was the arts centre, a healthy Yarra or the city taking its face again to the river — and I remember working as an architect on Dick Hamer's landmark competition in the late 1970s, which inevitably led to what is now Federation Square. Whether it is the parks and gardens — and again I remember working on Brimbank Park and Jells Park, which were the Hamer government's investment in the green wedges of Melbourne — the Garden State, the Melbourne festival, freedom of information, equal opportunity, seatbelts, the underground loop, Werribee Park, fluoridation or even the 'Life. Be in it.' campaign, equal opportunity legislation or the dams, it is an extraordinary legacy.

More recently, in my own experience — but others, including the Treasurer, have referred to this — is the legacy of the sister-state relationship with regions in

both China and Japan. In December I had the privilege of being in Nanjing, in Jiangsu Province, with some other members. We walked through the Sun Yat-sen gardens and the Emperor's memorials in Nanjing. It was extraordinary to hear our Chinese hosts speaking of Dick Hamer, and the contribution he had made, as if he were one of them. It was a reassuring presence, even as far away as Nanjing, to have Dick Hamer's name mentioned. To be in Nanjing and to see those extraordinary gardens — I am sure other members have had this experience — is to understand how much Dick Hamer valued the relationship through the sheer physical presence of the gardens there. There is much to be compared between Nanjing and Melbourne.

Dick Hamer made it happen. He made it happen with a cheery smile, a reassuring presence and a supportive word for just about everybody. In saying that, I also want to say thank you to the Hamer family. The Hamer family have made a remarkable contribution to Victoria — not only Dick but his brother David, who was a senator, his family and extended family. He was a true family maker, and the Hamer family has made a quiet but devastatingly effective contribution to the people of Victoria. We all owe them a great debt. We should be saying thank you and celebrating everything they have achieved and will achieve — as I am sure they will — in the future. We say thank you particularly from the Liberal Party, from parliamentary successors and Dick Hamer's own colleagues, from his friends and from the people of Victoria. We say thank you to Dick Hamer and to the Hamer family. We take comfort that wherever we walk in Victoria, there will always be a part of Dick Hamer about us, which we will enjoy. It is an everlasting legacy that we can all share.

Ms GARBUTT (Minister for Community Services) — Dick Hamer was an outstanding Victorian. He was a fine Premier and parliamentarian, with major achievements both inside and outside Parliament. His was a life of wonderful, committed service to the Victorian community.

I want to acknowledge his outstanding wartime service and pay my respects to one of the legendary Rats of Tobruk. He served not only in the Middle East but also in the Pacific and Europe. I think my generation and those following owe a debt of gratitude to people such as Dick Hamer, who served overseas so well.

However, I also want to recognise his outstanding contribution and service in Parliament and as Premier and in that way his contribution to the Victorian community. He saw and understood the massive changes that took place in Victorian society in the 1960s and then developed policies to match them. Our

society and our community changed and became much more diverse, educated, tolerant and appreciative of the arts and the environment. We became much more outward looking in the 1960s, which was a time of crucial change. Dick Hamer himself reflected the changes. He was urbane and cultured; he was tolerant; he was educated; he had broad interests, and he had visions. His policies and achievements reflected those values and reflected the changed times. His was a modern government. I saw a comment in one of the obituaries in the newspapers that he was perhaps our first modern Premier because he reflected the modern issues and values in our society.

His was indeed a time of major reforms. The emphasis was on the arts, equality and social justice, and the environment. Those are the areas that today are the hallmarks of his time as Premier. I think we have had sufficient time now to say that history shows that his achievements and his policies have stood the test of time and are enduring. They are still relevant; many of them are still in place and are still being used today, if we think about his strengthening of the Environment Protection Authority, his further development of our national park system and of the Melbourne metropolitan park system, his establishment of the Land Conservation Council and the department of conservation. He introduced the Equal Opportunity Act and decriminalised homosexuality. He established an office of women's affairs, began construction of the Victorian Arts Centre and established a ministry of the arts. All of these things are enduring. I want to congratulate the Premier and the Minister for the Arts for naming the hall at the Victorian Arts Centre after Sir Rupert Hamer; I think that is a very appropriate acknowledgement of his work and his vision.

However, in a way I think he actually demonstrated his true commitment to the Victorian community after he left Parliament, because he remained active and involved in a broad range of organisations which other people have mentioned. It is an extraordinary list; the breadth of it is enormous. His hard work and his commitment were undoubted. From the Victoria State Opera to the Friends of the ABC, the Save the Children fund and Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens the list goes on and on. It has been placed on the record today and I will not go over it but I think it does demonstrate outstanding service.

I saw this in recent years, particularly when I was Minister for Environment and Conservation. I launched a book outlining the history of Victoria's national parks up in the Dandenong Ranges National Park and Dick Hamer was there — still committed, still passionate, still enthusiastic and interested in what was being done.

We also saw it during the debate about marine national parks. When that debate was at its fiercest Dick Hamer joined with another former Premier in Joan Kirner to write a strong and passionate letter of support for marine national parks. They wrote that letter to our daily newspapers, and I think it helped convince the public and the Liberal Party of the value of supporting the marine national parks issue.

Mr Perton — You are really rewriting history.

Ms GARBUTT — I think that is inappropriate right now.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Doncaster!

Mr Perton — I am sorry, but I — —

The SPEAKER — Order! This is a condolence debate. I ask the member for Doncaster to restrain his comments, or I will remove him from the chamber.

Ms GARBUTT — Of course Dick Hamer and Joan Kirner combined again to write in support of Point Nepean National Park, so he maintained that commitment and that passion all his life.

I want to mention the establishment of the sister-state relationship with Jiangsu Province. I believe it reflected his broad interest and his far-sighted vision that he established that sister-state relationship 25 years ago. On Thursday of last week I was honoured to host a delegation from Jiangsu Province led by the Vice-Governor of Jiangsu, Mr Wu, and members of the delegation were very keen to place on record their appreciation of Dick Hamer's efforts. They commented to me on his far-sighted vision and said how strongly they value the sister-state relationship and how much they are looking forward to celebrating the 25th anniversary of that relationship. The fact that he had the foresight to do that 25 years ago and to establish another relationship with the Aichi Prefecture in Japan in the following year demonstrates his vision and the breadth of his interests.

Sir Rupert Hamer has left a lasting legacy for all Victorians. He identified issues that are still relevant and still being debated today, and we are still using some of the agencies he established and some of the policies and approaches he used.

I wish to place on record my tribute to an outstanding Victorian and to pass on my sympathies to his family.

Mr PERTON (Doncaster) — This condolence debate discusses one of the great men of Australian

politics and one of the great men of Australian liberalism. The great figures are Deakin, Menzies and Hamer. Hamer was certainly in the tradition of Deakin Victorian Liberal leadership, a man of his times and a man of the future. As my leader has already indicated, the fact that Robert Menzies asked him to take the seat of Kooyong to move to federal politics certainly indicates that he would have been a great Liberal Prime Minister, but today we laud his activities as a Premier and as a great Victorian.

Leonard Hobhouse, in his 1911 book *Liberalism*, talked about liberalism as the liberation of living spiritual energy, and Dick Hamer was certainly a Liberal in that tradition. The day after he was elected as Premier he talked about setting aside the things that were material and developing a politics that was more spiritual, and in fact the Premier quoted that in his comments earlier in the debate.

In those early days as Premier he talked about the environment, he talked about equal opportunity and he did so many things. Today at the funeral and afterwards my friend and former Liberal minister Mark Birrell and I discussed the fact that both of us had been inspired in our teenage years to join the Liberal Party under the leadership of Dick Hamer. There could be no better term for a Liberal than being referred to as a Hamer Liberal, and Mark and I certainly felt that to be the case.

Dick Hamer has been a part of my political life for that period of time — over a quarter of a century. There have been so many times when I have sought his advice and there have been so many times when he gave his advice — perhaps a phone call or a handwritten letter. Where he got the time to involve himself in so many issues just amazes me. So many people were touched by him.

While I was a little taken aback by the comments of the Minister for Community Services earlier, nevertheless when she and I were involved in a very difficult debate about the establishment of marine national parks and the appropriateness of a compensation regime for those who were about to lose their property, Dick Hamer sought to bring about a result that enhanced the environment but also made sure that a proper constitutional process was undertaken. He was utterly, utterly a Liberal.

As I was listening to other speeches earlier and just looking at my notes, one of the things that struck me was that his early period of political activity at university level was in the anti-fascist movement. There was a nice anecdote in the newspapers the other day about how he dug a trench at university and had an

individual and group protest. He was very much against authoritarianism. He was very much for the individual against the state. I quote from an article in August 1971 by John Jost, in which Dick Hamer is reported to have said:

I could never have been a member of the Labor Party, because I strongly believe in the freedom of the individual.

That is what his life was about: freedom and commitment and service. Once the battle against authoritarianism had been fought, when the economy was strong he then moved into these other spheres: building the arts and building education. There are so many great figures in Australian politics and Victorian politics that we think of when we think of the building of education — again, Sir Redmond Barry, Alfred Deakin, Robert Menzies and so, too, Dick Hamer.

At the funeral I also met Richard Thomas. Richard was a staffer in Dick Hamer's office. One of the things he said to me was that Dick had an amazing intellect. Richard said that there were very few people that he had ever met in his life with such an intellect and such an intelligence. What Richard said — and it was repeated later by Mark Birrell and others — is that he combined that intellect with a sense of decency that is rare not just in politics but in life in general.

As I looked at the parliamentary debates at the time of Dick Hamer's retirement I saw a speech in the other place by the Honourable H. M. Hamilton, who said:

As a backbench member of the Liberal Party I still believe he had a towering intellect. He had an ability to analyse a situation rapidly and to reach a conclusion rapidly, and then, with infinite patience, he listened to all the fools like me who argued all the way around the subject until a consensus was reached. That was probably one of his best attributes. In his early days it was a weakness; in his later days it was a strength. He changed from being intolerant of fools to listening with infinite patience to the advice and suggestions and chatter that came from all directions. He brought to the office of Premier at that stage an enormous intellectual capacity which was responsible for the tremendous successes he achieved.

Other members have talked about his great achievements. I recall a couple of years ago I was talking to Dick Hamer about marine national parks, of all things. He told me he was going to Portland to deliver a speech on the south-west forests. I drove to Portland to attend this meeting. It was cold, wet and rainy, as you can get only in the south-west of the state, and it was a wet and cold night. The meeting was in the community hall at Portland, and it was chock-a-block. My estimate is that 200 to 300 people turned out to listen to an 85-year-old talk to them about the environment and his support for the campaign for the

protection of the south-west forests. That is what he was about. He was loved by everyone — Liberals, today it appears by Labor, and by the community in general.

In these sorts of debates we often gloss over some of the difficulties. But let us not forget in these harmonious times that Dick Hamer in his days in politics was subject to vicious attacks by the Labor Party. The Labor Party used tactics that had never been seen in Australian politics before.

It is a pleasure to hear the speeches today, but Dick Hamer was pursued in that period with a viciousness that had never been seen. After his retirement the fact that he continued in public life working with Labor, Liberals and others alike, as the member for Mildura said, is a tribute to him.

Lastly, I refer to an editorial in the *Age* of 21 July 1981, which states:

Few people in our history have stepped down with such good reason to be proud of their achievements. The disappointments in some areas should not obscure the significant legacy, in style and substance, that he has left the community after nine years as Premier and 19 as a minister.

For Mr Hamer has been more than just a successful politician. He has been a scrupulously fair one, a man who embodied humane values, and a leader of social concern and foresight. He was wrong at times; he often pursued misguided priorities; he was not an ideal leader. But neither is anyone else; and he suffered from our tendency these days to make leaders into scapegoats for social problems that have far more complex causes.

So Rupert Hamer was a great man. He contributed to this community in so many ways, and contributed as a Liberal believing firstly in the freedom of the individual, the dignity of the individual and the need to build an environment around him, both social and environmental, that would enable the individual to reach his or her maximum self-potential. That is what he was about. I will always be proud on occasions when people refer to me as a Hamer Liberal. As my friend Mark Birrell, I and others say, 'That is almost the proudest boast for a Victorian'.

Mr PANDAZOPOULOS (Minister for Gaming) — I rise to remember Rupert Hamer and his contribution as Premier, but I shall focus more on his contributions as Premier, Minister for State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism, and Minister of Immigration. We have heard about the profound contribution to Victorian arts through his support for art and cultural institutions. That has helped develop a great brand for Victorian tourism. He also followed a reformist and liberalising course in arts

policy, supporting that nurture of creative human skills, and not being opinionated about what was right and wrong in art, which is very important.

He influenced Victoria's role as a state that values the arts, and recognised the role of arts and events to the community. He helped create the great tourism brand we have around Australia as Melbourne being the cultural centre and theatre of Australia because of the institutions and also because of his great support for arts-related events as part of the cultural fabric of Melbourne and Victoria. Up to recent times behind the scenes I am aware of his involvement through a number of large-scale hallmark arts events in Victoria. Even after he left politics he continued his great support for the arts, and they have helped give Victoria a great reputation throughout Australia and overseas.

I shall comment briefly on his backing and implementing the Melbourne bike plan during the 1970s. As a student of urban and spatial development at Monash University I recall specifically the Melbourne bike plan as part of a new planning approach for communities and suburbs. Now we have bike trails not only throughout Melbourne but throughout the state, including the wonderful tourist rail trails.

We heard from other members about the contribution and formation of the Werribee Park region, another fantastic pre-eminent tourism region in Melbourne's western suburbs. The former Premier was also instrumental in preserving one of Victoria's most loved tourism icons, Puffing Billy. It was during Rupert Hamer's time as Premier that the Emerald Tourist Railway Act 1977 was established setting up the Emerald Tourist Railway Board. In effect this removed Puffing Billy from the Victorian Railways and ensured that this wonderful tourist attraction was managed effectively as exactly that, a tourism attraction. In doing so, Rupert Hamer saw to it that Puffing Billy continues today as one of the state's most popular tourist icons, not only for international and interstate visitors but for Victorians themselves. How many Victorians remember riding on Puffing Billy — a wonderful childhood experience, a great memory, and a memory for generations of Victorians to come.

As a friend of the railway, Sir Rupert's involvement in Puffing Billy continued long after he left political life. He remained supportive of the railway, attending key milestones in Puffing Billy's illustrious life. Indeed he participated with me in the celebrations to mark the railway line's centenary just a few years ago. I know that the volunteers and the management of the Puffing Billy railway would like me to express on their behalf

their appreciation of Sir Rupert's vision of Puffing Billy and his legacy.

I also wish to talk about his contribution to multiculturalism. As we have heard today, he worked across political boundaries with his commitment to the community, to social justice, and he was very conscious of the need to make the Victorian system more sensitive to the needs of disadvantaged and dependent people. His commitment to social justice also saw him interested in issues affecting new and emerging ethnic communities at that time. Rupert Hamer was not only a great Victorian but a great humanitarian, as we have heard, concerned about the issues of today and willing to show solidarity and take a stand against racism.

He was, of course, the Minister of Immigration. This house needs to record that his commitment to the state's diversity is illustrated by the fact that in 1976 he created a new ministry, that of immigration and ethnic affairs. He moved society beyond support for immigration as a settlement process to actually celebrating cultural diversity with that move to recognise immigration and ethnic affairs. He recognised the importance of symbolic support for ethnic communities and how important symbolism is for people's ownership and settlement in society. It is certainly commonly believed the Hamer government was the first government, state or federal, Liberal or Labor, to give statutory recognition to the word 'multiculturalism' by means of a piece of legislation — the Immigration and Ethnic Affairs Act 1977. So again that was the first time multiculturalism was used in statute.

Another symbolic characteristic of Rupert Hamer was in December 1996 during the debate on multiculturalism, immigration, Aboriginal affairs and native title. I vividly recall that he was forthcoming in not only attending but addressing the 'Take-a-stand-against-racism' rally co-organised by the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, the Mirimbiak Nations Aboriginal Corporation, the Victorian Trades Hall Council, the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry and many other community organisations that came together under the banner of 'People for racial equality'. Together with former Premier John Cain and former Democrat Senator Sid Spindler, they addressed tens of thousands of fellow Victorians who had attended the rally. Again that shows the great symbolism of Rupert Hamer.

Finally, the last public function that Rupert Hamer attended was the state reception in Queen's Hall, at which I represented the Premier, to welcome Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf of New York, an Islamic cleric who

is working at bringing Islam and the West closer together in understanding and at creating those bridges in communities. The state reception on Tuesday was Sir Rupert's last official event. Multicultural commissioner John Zika told me that on being welcomed in the vestibule Sir Rupert said, 'Not at all. We need to take the trouble to avoid the hostility and suspicion we are seeing in other parts of the world'. That says a lot about Rupert Hamer. His direct and uncomplicated response typified his instinctive sense of humanity and goodwill to people of all backgrounds. It also demonstrated his unwavering readiness to lead by example — truly a liberal, not a conservative. I pay my respects to Sir Rupert and his family. His legacy will not be forgotten.

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — From a multicultural perspective Sir Rupert recently presided over the launch of an exhibition at the Immigration Museum entitled 'The Heart is Highland'. As he was the chieftain of the Victorian Highland Pipe Band Association, the strains of the Scottish piper's traditional lament reverberating within St Paul's Cathedral served as a fitting background and farewell to a wise and intelligent leader.

Throughout his life Sir Rupert balanced his role in military service during the Second World War with a lifelong interest in and appreciation of the arts. He balanced the intellectual attributes of a Supreme Court prize-winner with a lifelong interest in the cultivation of his backyard.

He balanced a keen interest in the economic development of the state of Victoria with the implementation of a legislative framework that would conserve the state's natural environment and heritage; and from a Hawthorn football perspective he was able to appreciate the power of a Crimmins or a Matthews, and also the heights that a Knights ascended to, and at the same time the cadences, shades and variations within the symphonies and concertos of Mozart.

During his time as Premier he had the initiative of establishing three new ministries at the outset. The first was in the area of conservation; the second in the area of youth; and the third in the area of arts. He also played a significant role in the advancement of multiculturalism in Victoria and Australia through his support, as was earlier alluded to, of the establishment of not only an immigration department within the state of Victoria but also an ethnic affairs department.

He made a keen contribution to regional development in Victoria. He was committed to the development of facilities for those in need. One of his early

undertakings was to build a facility for children in need of care in the Colac region. He was also visionary in terms of the treatment of offenders through a range of sentencing options in the service of penalties.

President Hu Jintao of China spoke recently in the Australian Parliament about the importance of Australia-China bilateral relations and the high level of complementarity between China and Australia. Sir Rupert had the vision and foresight back in the 1970s to establish reciprocal associations with both China and Japan with a view to building friendship and the opportunities for trade that would then flow from that level of dialogue and reciprocity.

In terms of the future challenges that confronted the community, he had the forethought to look at emerging issues. One was the role of work and diminishing work options for people in Victoria. He saw there being great importance attached to different work options for people without work, including community projects, so that people could be gainfully employed and contribute to their community. He also saw the valuable contribution that retirees could make to society and that their skills bases, developed through decades in the work force, could still be utilised in economic development, enabling people to live productive and useful lives.

Last year he took the opportunity to attend the opening of a maternal and child-care centre that had as its emphasis the importance of early intervention in the welfare of young children and the role that mothers were to play in that regard. The function was held in the northern suburbs, and people from over 50 nations attended. There was a variety of foods, arts and cultural performances and crafts on display. Sir Rupert was so impressed with that particular gathering that he made a financial contribution to the cause and to the calling, which was well outside his former political domain, but he saw it as a worthy cause and a cause worth while supporting.

Over the last 10 years or so I had occasion to arrange for a number of parliamentary interns to meet with him to discuss his views on a range of political and social issues of the day. He always made the time to meet with them and give these young students and future leaders the benefit of his insight and political acumen. Sir Rupert was finely supported by Lady April Hamer, who is a gracious and intelligent lady and who strongly supported him throughout his parliamentary life.

There were a number of comments made of Sir Rupert, both today in the chamber in this debate and also at the time that he retired from this house. I would like to

refer to some that capture the essence of the man. He was described as a man of vision who possessed qualities of friendliness and character; he had a quick and analytical mind; he was sensitive to people and their needs; he had the ability to always see the good in people; and one Labor member made the remark that Sir Rupert was the type of person you could always have around to dinner and not have to worry about the family silver!

Sir Rupert was a great thinker, a great leader and, perhaps most importantly, a great servant of this state and of the many organisations that he led.

Mr CARLI (Brunswick) — I did not really know Sir Rupert Hamer and only spoke to him on a couple of occasions. One of those occasions was on the day he died. We were both attending the reception at Parliament House for the imam of New York, Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf. It was fitting that Sir Rupert should be present to recognise the contribution of an imam from a mosque a stone's throw from Ground Zero. Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf helped found the Cordoba Initiative, an interfaith dialogue between Muslims, Jews and Christians to create a mutual understanding. Dick Hamer was present to provide his support for this endeavour at a moment of great historical stress and tension between these three great religions.

Sir Rupert, as we are reminded today, was a social progressive. He was an innovator in social policy. I would like to acknowledge a profound influence he indirectly had on my political development. In December 1978 Dick Hamer as Premier of Victoria at the Work for Tomorrow conference announced a commitment to provide funding for young people to create cooperatives and create their own jobs. I was amongst a group of young people in Brunswick who were attracted to the idea of creating our own jobs and collectively managing our own affairs. We were politically aware students and unemployed youths who wanted to change the world. We set up a cooperative restaurant, which we ran for eight years. We received some start-up funding from the Hamer cooperative development program.

It was a great example to work collectively with people to run a business and do a number of political activities. We ran the restaurant, we had political soirees upstairs and cultural happenings. A number of cooperatives were established from this program. Alternative media groups like OPEN Channel, Gay Publications, 3 PBS-FM, Backyard Press and Correct Line Graphics were supported. A number of food cooperatives, gay and lesbian businesses and country communities were

funded to create job opportunities. Many of these businesses continue today.

Sir Rupert's attribute was his willingness to test new ideas and innovate. I want to highlight one area that directly affected me. Sir Rupert was the patron for the Trades Hall restoration appeal, which has not been mentioned today but which was another string to his bow. I extend my condolences to Sir Rupert Hamer's family.

Mr WELLS (Scoresby) — I offer my condolences on the death of Sir Rupert James Hamer, who sadly passed away on 23 March. Only a few people could honestly say that they had achieved everything in life, and I wonder if Sir Rupert would be one of those who went close to achieving that milestone.

Born on 29 July 1916 in the middle of World War I, he had a distinguished career in the Australian Imperial Force in World War II, serving at Tobruk and El Alamein and in New Guinea. And as was mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, he helped plan the Rhine crossing.

Sir Rupert joined the Liberal Party in 1947 and became a Liberal icon. To become a member of Parliament in the upper house and become a minister just four years later was an extraordinary achievement but a great recognition of a man with so much talent. His portfolios included Minister for Local Government, Minister of Immigration, Minister for State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism, and Chief Secretary. He moved to the Legislative Assembly in 1971 and became Premier in 1972. In 1966, because many people saw Sir Rupert as a Liberal icon, Sir Robert Menzies approached him to take over the blue-ribbon federal seat of Kooyong, but Sir Rupert believed strongly that his heart and soul was in state Parliament and that that was where he would have the most effect on people's lives.

I noted with great interest an interview in the 1990s in which Sir Rupert was asked about Menzies's principles for the Liberal Party. He maintained that they remained the same then as they were when Sir Robert Menzies first developed them. He went on to say that there were two main challenges set for future governments. The first was the impact of technology on jobs. Every country in the world has growing unemployment as technology displaces people. There is nothing worse for those in the community, especially the young ones, than to have no prospects. The second challenge was one that is so relevant today — that is, the growing number of retired people brought about by early retirement and

longer life spans. That challenge is still in front of state and federal governments.

Two years ago I wrote to Sir Rupert asking him to be a guest speaker for me at a fundraiser here at Parliament House. We choose our speakers very carefully for these occasions. He was an overwhelming choice as speaker on this particular night, and it was a great success. He referred to three issues. The first was the need for governments to fully resource the arts community to ensure that the potential of young Victorians is achieved. He believed that such resourcing would continue to lay the foundation for an ongoing and healthy state arts community. The second issue was his passion for the environment, including Melbourne's parks and gardens. Of course he formulated the slogan 'Victoria — The Garden State', which went with his numberplate AAA 001 — and how appropriate! The third issue was water, including its better management and preservation. It was a thought-provoking and visionary speech, and a great night.

The funeral today was a fitting tribute to a great man and I thought the eulogy by former Premier Lindsay Thompson was one of the best I have ever heard — and a lot of his skill has been passed on to the honourable member for Sandringham.

On behalf of all of the people of Scoresby I pass on my sympathy to the family of Sir Rupert Hamer.

Mr WYNNE (Richmond) — I rise to join in this condolence motion for a great leader of the Liberal party, a great humanitarian and a great public figure in the life of Victoria. He was a person who had an extraordinarily dignified career, with achievements in the arts and the environment, not forgetting his great reforming work in the abolition of the death penalty in this state, the decriminalisation of homosexuality between consenting adults and his stand on abortion.

I pick up a statement made by the Leader of the Opposition, that whilst Dick Hamer was offered a federal seat his interests were in fact in the state arena, where he wanted 'to have a direct effect on people's lives'.

I want to highlight one area in which Rupert Hamer had an extraordinary effect on the lives of inner city residents, and that involved a decision he made to cease the slum reclamation program in the inner city of Melbourne. It is not widely known that this was a decision made by Dick Hamer in 1973, when he was the Premier of this state. He met a delegation of people from a hotly contested area of my electorate known as Brookes Crescent, Fitzroy. The residents had fiercely

fought the then Housing Commission of Victoria over the demolition of their houses. The delegation met with the then Premier of Victoria, Rupert Hamer, and among them was a distinguished former member of this Parliament, a councillor of the former City of Fitzroy by the name of Barry Pullen. He was later to become a member of the Legislative Council for Melbourne Province and the Minister for Housing and Construction for some years. He fondly remembers going with that delegation to the Premier Rupert Hamer to put the case against slum reclamation in the inner city. To the surprise of so many people in that area Rupert Hamer, without consulting any of his advisers or the housing commission, said, 'No, you are right; I do not think we should continue with the housing commission's slum reclamation policy. In fact we should have a consultative process with residents, and we should have a development that is more in sympathy with the aspirations of people in the inner city.'

That was the end of the slum reclamation program and the end of high-rise buildings in the inner city of Melbourne. The inner city owes a great debt to Dick Hamer for the wise decision he made at the time, and I join with other members of this house in passing on my condolences to the family.

The SPEAKER — The breadth of the esteem felt for Sir Rupert Hamer is demonstrated not only by the large number of members who have spoken today but also by the very wide areas of policy they have discussed, which Sir Rupert Hamer was instrumental in changing.

Sir Rupert was not only Premier and Treasurer but held a number of other portfolios at the same time, most particularly the arts portfolio — and that in itself is an amazing effort for one person. Today both at the funeral and in this house we heard of the many areas in which he changed Victoria and the many institutions he established which are now firmly entrenched in our society. The job of Premier is a very difficult one, and to complete a term with political parties and the general community having a deep respect for you is no mean feat. That Dick Hamer achieved this was made very clear today.

On behalf of all the members of the Legislative Assembly I extend condolences to Lady April and the Hamer family. We thank Sir Rupert Hamer for his great contribution to the people of Victoria.

Motions agreed to in silence, honourable members showing unanimous agreement by standing in their places.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr BRACKS (Premier) — I move:

That as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honourable Vernon Francis Wilcox, CBE, QC, and the late Honourable Sir Rupert James Hamer, AC, KCMG, the house do now adjourn until 2.00 p.m. tomorrow, and that sessional order 1 be suspended accordingly.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned 6.24 p.m.

