

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION**

**30 March 2003
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FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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Tuesday, 30 March 2004

The PRESIDENT (Hon. M. M. Gould) took the chair at 2.03 p.m. and read the prayer.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The PRESIDENT — Order! On the first day of these sittings the Parliament today acknowledges the lands and tribes of the nations of the Aboriginal people of Victoria.

THE NATIONALS

Change of name

The PRESIDENT — Order! I inform the house that the Leader of the National Party has written to me to advise that the National Party has changed its name and will now be known as The Nationals.

CONDOLENCES

Hon. Sir Rupert James Hamer, AC, KCMG

Mr LENDERS (Minister for Finance) — I move:

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death, on 23 March 2004, 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 East Yarra Province from 1958 to 1971, member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Kew from 1971 to 1981, Minister of Immigration, Assistant Chief Secretary, 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 of Victoria 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 March 1981.

The Honourable Sir Rupert James Hamer, or Dick Hamer as he was known to his contemporaries during his political career, sadly passed away on Tuesday, 23 March. Most people in this chamber were in St Paul's Cathedral this morning for his memorial service and state funeral, and many of us today will express sentiments about his wonderful life.

He was born in Kew on 29 July 1916. He was educated at Melbourne and Geelong grammar schools and attended the University of Melbourne. A distinguished student, he excelled across several disciplines, receiving honours in all subjects. He graduated with a master of

laws at 24 years of age. As a measure of his achievement, Melbourne University awarded him an honorary doctorate in law in 1982.

He served with distinction on the council of the University of Melbourne for 12 years from 1958. He was also awarded an honorary doctorate from Swinburne. He served in the Australian Infantry Forces for five and a half years from 1940. He also achieved another distinction — that of being the first soldier to be admitted to the Victorian bar. Dick Hamer the distinguished soldier 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 a further distinction — that of being mentioned in dispatches for bravery.

In 1944 he entered into a lifelong partnership by marrying the now Lady April Hamer. Their marriage lasted for over 60 years and they had five children, four of whom have survived Sir Rupert.

His formal military career concluded as a major in 1945, but he went on to be commanding officer of the Victorian Scottish Regiment from 1954 to 1958. Following his military service he joined the family law firm of Smith and Emmerton as a 29-year-old.

He joined the South Camberwell branch of the Liberal Country Party in 1947 and served as a member of the state executive prior to his entry to Parliament. He was elected to this house as a member for East Yarra Province in 1958. He joined the cabinet in 1962 and spent the next 19 years there serving in a number of portfolios that included immigration; Chief Secretary; Assistant Attorney-General; local government; Treasurer; arts; state development, decentralisation and tourism; economic development and Deputy Premier.

His political career culminated in spending 3209 days, or almost nine years, as Premier, which made him the fourth longest-serving Premier of this state's 44 premiers. In 1971 Dick Hamer was elected to the Legislative Assembly as the member for Kew, and in August 1972, upon the retirement of Sir Henry Bolte, he became Premier of Victoria.

His keen interest in environmental matters was telling with his key sponsorship of the Environment Protection Authority and the early green wedge preservation. He ensured there was a focus within government for the creation of new national parks and reserves.

Post Parliament he went on to be chairman of Greenhouse Action Australia, president of the Keep Australia Beautiful Council, a member of Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens and inaugural patron of the Regional Parks Network in south-western Victoria. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Victorian Arts Centre and took on a position as first arts minister.

Dick Hamer worked tirelessly towards the development of the Latrobe Valley's conversion from coal to oil energy and was very active in positioning Victoria in the international arena. He was the first Australian leader to establish direct relationships with our neighbours in China and Japan. Victoria's sister states in Aichi in Japan and Jiangsu in China were founded by Dick Hamer.

Sir Rupert was a politician ahead of his time. His social conscience ensured a free vote that saw the abolition of the death penalty in 1975, and he sponsored Victoria's first equal opportunity legislation. He continued his service to the community after his time as Premier by contributing both to his local community and more widely to the people of Victoria. He served on a wide number of community groups and public boards including being director of the Melbourne Underground restaurant-nightclub, chairman 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.

In 1982 Sir Rupert was awarded a knighthood. Ten years later he was awarded a Companion of the Order of Australia.

As those at the funeral today would have seen, the theme of the tributes by his family and friends was a celebration of the six main interests in his life — family, politics, the arts, fairness, the environment and the community.

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

Debate interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

The PRESIDENT — Before calling the next speaker I wish to acknowledge the presence of the Honourable Rod Mackenzie in the gallery.

Debate resumed.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — It is with regret that I join this condolence motion, but it is an opportunity to celebrate a life, not only to mourn. For me it was a shock that Sir Rupert should have died because he was larger than life, a veritable institution of contemporary Victoria, and for most of my adult life he played a large part in many areas of our cultural and social development. Many of us are shocked, because those of us who have seen him more recently recognised him to be an essentially healthy man with a very acute mind who was in touch with the detail of what we in this chamber were dealing with on a day-to-day basis. Up to the minute of his death he had a lively interest in the affairs of the governance of this state.

Dick Hamer will be remembered as a legend. He played a crucial role in the development of Victoria. He leaves behind a legacy of cultural and personal contribution that will be remembered for many years to come. Essentially a Renaissance man, he had 18 distinguished years of military service, achieved academic honours in his study of the law and was respected in business. Although he had 23 years in the Parliament, much of which was in high office in cabinet, after he left Parliament he took on business and community works with gusto. In his roles outside Parliament after he retired from political life he was involved in the Eirene Lucas Foundation, funding medical research, Werribee Park, the Girl Guides Association, 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 Royal Botanic Gardens, the Commonwealth Constitutional Commission, Keep Australia Beautiful and the National Institute of Circus Arts.

For those of us who are, if you like, embryonic in our political careers, I wonder if we would aspire to devote such energy to community service beyond our term in this place. He is a striking example of a man who devoted his life to the community. Dick Hamer was the son of Hubert, a solicitor, and Elizabeth Anne MacLuckie of England. We all know that he married April, Lady Hamer, and was the father of Christopher,

Alastair, Julia and Sarah. He was the grandfather of eight. We should pause and remember that in making his contributions to society he never forgot that primarily the family is the greatest institution of our society, and he was devoted to his children, his wife and, of course, his grandchildren.

He was educated at Melbourne Grammar School and finished his secondary education at Geelong Grammar School, where he came under the influence of the great educationalist Sir James Darling, who had a profound effect on many educational and other institutions in Australia and was particularly influential in the formative years of Dick Hamer's education. Sir James Darling was recognised as a liberal humanist, and I believe Dick Hamer's development intellectually and philosophically came out of the nurturing that was invested in him by Sir James Darling.

We all recognise that he was an academic, and following his secondary studies he obtained a law degree at Melbourne University. He studied a wide range of disciplines and was awarded a master of laws.

Dick Hamer was a major in the Australian Imperial Force from 1940 to 1945, serving in Tobruk, New Guinea and Normandy; he was instrumental in developing the Rhine crossing strategy. In June of his first year in the army, 1940, he was sent to Victoria Barracks to work in the top secret decipher section, with little more instruction than 'Decipher this'.

In 1944 he returned to Australia on leave and was married in March. Only a month later, as the Allies were in the advanced stages of preparing an invasion of the French coast with a view to rolling back the Nazi forces, he packed his bags and headed back off to war. As was often the case in war time, he should have been enjoying his honeymoon with his bride of not even a month, but instead he flew first to the United States and then across the Northern Hemisphere from Newfoundland to Scotland in order to board a Liberator bomber bound for London.

Once in London he was attached to the combined operations headquarters as a member of its 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 he landed on the French coast with a company of royal marine commandos.

Sir Rupert's military days concluded a lieutenant colonel appointed to the Victorian Scottish Regiment as its commanding officer from 1954 to 1958, which was,

of course, a far cry from when he pulled on a digger's slouch hat 18 years earlier.

Following his time in the armed forces he reflected on his time in combat, when he said, 'We survived because of determination, camaraderie, and the good old-fashioned digger's sense of humour'.

This philosophy helped him throughout his life. The first person to be admitted to the bar in uniform, he signed the roll in 1940 and with a master of laws from the University of Melbourne he spent time as a barrister with family law firm Smith and Emmerton. At about this time, in 1947, he joined the Camberwell branch of the Liberal-Country Party and went on to become a member of the state executive of the Liberal Party. He served as an upper house member for East Yarra Province from 1958 to 1971, whereupon he was elected to the Legislative Assembly seat of Kew, which he held until 1981.

While serving as a member for East Yarra Province, Dick Hamer was approached by Sir Robert Menzies to take over the federal seat of Kooyong, and I am sure many other members would have reflected on similar approaches. Dick Hamer did not take up the invitation. He demonstrated his true commitment to Victoria and refused the offer, because he wanted to have the kind of direct effect on people's lives that he felt could only be achieved within a state context.

As has been said by the Leader of the Government, Dick Hamer held many significant posts in government. 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. He then moved to the Legislative Assembly and from 1971 to 1972 was Chief Secretary and Deputy Premier; from 1972 to 1981 he was Premier and Minister of the Arts, and he was Treasurer from 1972 until 1979. Between 1979 and 1981 he was Minister for State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism. In 1981 he was Minister for Economic Development.

From 1973 he somehow found time to put pen to paper, and I find it quite remarkable that he in fact wrote a number of books covering subject matter such as federalism and design for the future of Australia, and the necessity for constitutional change in an ever-shifting landscape. To fit that in with all the other activity with which he was burdened seems a remarkably energetic commitment to intellectual and academic thought.

Dick Hamer as a man was many things to many people, but essentially he was a man of great humility. On his ascension to power in 1972, and following in the footsteps of Sir Henry Bolte, he was referred to by the *Age* as:

The urban and urbane man trying to wear the baggy suit of the bluff farmer from Bamgannie.

We can all understand that comparative observation because Sir Henry Bolte had been such a dominant political figure in this state, and I guess the presumption was that the jury was out on the new Premier. He wasted no time getting to work, which was his style. He hated wasting time. He insisted that meetings should be brief and to the point; he did not suffer fools gladly and was often heard telling people quite simply to get on with it.

He was a strong advocate for change and believed that those in power should do all they could to help young and talented people on their way. Never was this more clearly illustrated than in 1995 when having been chairman of the Victoria State Opera for 13 years Dick announced he would be stepping down from the role that gave him great joy because, as he put it, 'other people have to be given a chance'.

He was responsible for such icons as the Victorian Arts Centre, the ministry of arts and a host of regional cultural developments. His government also instituted legislation for the establishment of the Environment Protection Authority. He essentially leaves three great legacies: arts, environment and equal opportunity.

He was a true and eternal statesman; he was never comfortable with the expectations of opposition parties, and I dare say many premiers have had that same difficulty. While he understood the necessity of opposition to demonstrate the incumbent government as inept, he felt that such an approach was narrow-minded and failed to respond to the changing nature of politics. He attributed his gravitation to politics as a desire to do something to continue the work he had begun as a Rat of Tobruk defending those institutions and ideals that required protection.

Sir Henry Bolte's departure following a 19-year parliamentary career, of which 17 years were spent as Premier, could have been fraught. Instead it proved a seamless if not welcome change supported enthusiastically by members of the party and the community alike. Indeed, Dick Hamer was endorsed in 1976 with a record-winning majority of 51 out of 81 seats in the Legislative Assembly, but he displayed no hubris only humility. He was for all intents and purposes the direct opposite of his predecessor. An

academic, non-gambling, light-drinking, small-l liberal; he did, however, see eye to eye with Bolte on the importance of facilitating the survival of Australian states as distinct entities.

As a Liberal Premier, while continuing to promote the ideals of economic growth and self-determination, he brought to both the party and the office an energising perspective on existing policies becoming enduringly associated with lifestyle liberalism that spoke to a broader gamut of Victorians. His renewed approach to the environment, the arts, urban planning and social welfare redefined the Liberal landscape and necessarily the operation and responsibilities of his government which surrounded it. Under Hamer the party grew in strength, the government in confidence and the Parliament in stability.

His prudent vision saw him ever prepared for what lay ahead. Predicting 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 a government in the 1970s, as Minister for Local Government he froze development along Victoria's coastline all the way from the South Australian border to New South Wales. To the horror of the government at the time his board of works predicted that by the turn of the century Victoria's population would number 5 million people. Four years into this new century our population is now just slightly over 5 million. Thanks to Dick Hamer's realism and foresight plans were enacted many years ago to provide governments today with the best possible opportunity to combat growth in our cities and out through the corridors.

Dick Hamer recognised that the important issues of conservation and sustainability facilitated the growth of Victoria beyond its metropolitan boundaries. During his term of office, Victoria's country roads were arguably the best in the world, natural gas was extended to provincial cities and government bodies began to set up offices outside the central business district. He invigorated country Victoria, making it an attractive and fertile destination for Victorians.

The first senior Liberal figure to speak out in support of republicanism, Dick Hamer felt strongly that renunciation of the monarchy was inevitable, that change was required and that it would require bipartisan support to effect that change. In Dick's own mind Australia faced two major challenges for its future: the impact of rapidly advancing technology on job numbers and employment levels; and the combined effects of early retirement and longer life on the community and economy. He was an enlightened

visionary, well liked and respected by those across the political spectrum.

I want to reflect on some personal experience with Dick Hamer. The recollection of my first engagement with Dick was when I joined the Liberal Party as a Young Liberal back in 1975, which of course dates me. I am not embarrassed to admit that one of the primary people I had regard for in Victoria at that time was Dick Hamer. He represented to me a set of values which I believed were consistent with the development of our community.

Dick Hamer always had time to talk to young people and went out of his way to engage and encourage participation in any forum in which he came across people. He was gifted at putting people at ease, whether it be around Young Liberals or at a Young Liberals meeting where he might have been an official guest. Indeed at the state council of the Liberal Party he would always engage in conversation with people informally, always setting them at ease and encouraging them to contribute to policy debate.

I can recall when inevitably I was the Young Liberal candidate for the seat of Gippsland East in 1979 Bruce Evans was the National Party member, and he had a singularly spectacular grip on the seat with about a 68 per cent margin. Dick was very encouraging of me in my involvement. I recall an informal thing that happened one day. He said, 'Thanks for helping us to support the upper house candidate. You need a photograph with me, don't you?'. With that he called somebody over who had a camera and arranged for the photo to be taken. It was a gesture by Dick Hamer, the person, in recognising that the party had called on someone who was at the bottom of the learning curve about the political process to give it assistance. Dick simply engaged with me spontaneously in a way that today's formality, structures and processes around party organisations sometimes do not give the opportunity for, but he was always spontaneous.

One of his interests was the Gippsland Lakes. He and the Hamer family spent many a happy holiday at Metung before the sea change revolution had changed its very nature, and when it was indeed just a fishing village. One of the things that I noted about Dick's time at Metung on a fairly regular basis was that he left behind an impression of absolute sincerity — of being a normal person and a good family man who enjoyed the benefits of the environment, the natural beauty of the Gippsland Lakes and the people around him in a very informal way. People today still speak very warmly of Dick's association with Metung.

More recently, about a year ago, we attended a function at the Hamilton racecourse to acknowledge the parliamentary contribution of Bruce Chamberlain, a former President of this house. Dick and I both arrived early, and we chatted intimately for quite some time about a vast range of public affairs. For a man who was then 86 and who had been a long time out of public life, he displayed an intimate grasp of detail. He had a keen understanding of the issues and a desire to continue to be involved intellectually in the debates about what is important to Victorians today.

So today we mourn Dick, and we extend our support to his family, but we also celebrate a life and the excellent contribution of a Victorian who was an accomplished parliamentarian, a visionary Premier and, above all, a good bloke. He was very much loved, and he will be deeply missed. I think we should robustly celebrate Dick Hamer's life.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — The Nationals today join with the government and the opposition in expressing sincere sorrow at the passing of the late Honourable Sir Rupert James Hamer.

I think we can all learn a lot by reflecting on the lives of great people, and today we reflect on the life of Sir Rupert Hamer. I have no hesitation in putting the late Sir Rupert Hamer in the category of a great Australian, and I would go as far as to say that even without his outstanding political career Sir Rupert Hamer would still be acknowledged as being a great Australian purely because of the contributions he made to many aspects of public life in Australia. Moreover, the way in which he went about making those contributions in both his political life and his social life demonstrated very clearly that Sir Rupert Hamer was a man rich in compassion; he was rich in innovation and particularly rich in integrity.

I did not know Sir Rupert Hamer personally, but the legacy of his involvement in public affairs throughout the 87 years of his life really does speak for itself. His political career has already been well documented in this debate and earlier today at the cathedral service. It was a career that spread across some 23 years. From 1958 to 1971 he was a member of this chamber and from 1971 to 1981 he was the member for Kew in the Legislative Assembly, during which time he served one year as Deputy Premier of this state and nine years as Premier. As has also been mentioned, he held numerous portfolios including immigration, local government, treasury, arts, state development, decentralisation and tourism, and economic development.

His achievements both as Premier and in those various ministries have also been well documented, and they have included particular interests of his such as promoting the arts. He undertook some pioneering work in the environmental area and brought about some major progressive reforms in what we might describe today as an area of social justice. Sir Rupert Hamer's contribution to public life was far from confined to his years in politics. Both prior to his political career and after it he contributed much to public life, literally right up to the day he died.

A real mark of respect for the man has been clearly demonstrated by the huge number of death notices published in the statewide newspapers by the various organisations in which he had an interest. I note in particular that today, some seven days after his death, those death notices are still appearing. In the *Age* today four organisations expressed grief: the Friends of Churchill Island Society, the Maritime Heritage Association of Victoria, the ALSO Foundation and the Melba Foundation. Each of those notices told a story of the contribution Sir Rupert Hamer made to the purposes of those respective organisations. Over the last six or seven days those death notices have made for absorbing reading. They have described to us in a personal way the many contributions Dick Hamer made to so many community organisations in this country.

When you look at the number of public positions that Sir Rupert Hamer held it is easy to see how committed he was to serving the public. I am not going to name all of those organisations, some of which have been listed previously, but it is astounding for a person who served 9 years as Premier of this state and 23 years in political life as a member of this Parliament to have also, mostly during the time of his political career, served 24 years as vice-president of the former Swinburne Technical College and 12 years as a member of the Melbourne University council, spent 24 years on organisations like the Royal Children's Hospital board, been associated with organisations like the Girl Guides Association and the Keep Australia Beautiful Council, served 23 years as a trustee of the Melbourne Cricket Ground, been a national president of the Save the Children Fund, been involved with greenhouse action, been president of the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition since 1988 — and the list simply goes on and on. So it was not just a simple contribution; it was a long-lasting contribution which clearly demonstrated personal commitment to the organisations he served.

I said earlier that the manner in which Sir Rupert Hamer went about achieving was perhaps what was

most to be admired about him, and that has also been mentioned in some of the contributions. It was highlighted in an *Age* article of 24 March written by William Birnbauer, headed 'The gentleman politician'. Comments in this article include:

More than most political leaders, the urbane and accommodating Sir Rupert is regarded with admiration and esteem by supporters of all political parties.

Later on, the article states:

'Dick' Hamer was a cultured, moderate and unpretentious man ...

There is recognition in the article from Joan Kirner, a previous Premier, who is quoted as saying:

He was a Premier with integrity and is a post-Premier with integrity.

Towards the end of the article it states:

He more than once indicated his dislike for the divisive nature of today's politics. In a sense, he showed Australians another way.

He proved that governments can reform and advance community life without the need for adversarial politics or what he called 'personal vilification and guttersniping'.

As I said at the start of my contribution, I think we can all learn by reflecting on those thoughts about Sir Rupert Hamer. This house's past President, the Honourable Bruce Chamberlain, also wrote an obituary in today's *Age* newspaper in which he concluded by saying:

We have all been enriched by the life of Dick Hamer. He was a civilised and civilising man.

Indeed we have been enriched by the life of Sir Rupert Hamer, and we can thank him for all he taught us by the example he set. The Nationals mourn the passing of this great Australian and send sincere condolences to his wife, Lady April Hamer, his daughters Julia and Sarah, his sons Christopher and Alastair, and their families.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Minister for Energy Industries) — I wish to add my support to this condolence motion, and I do so because I can well remember when Sir Rupert Hamer became the Premier of Victoria. In many ways for many of us on this side of politics I think, as well as on the other side of politics, it really was like a breath of fresh air. At the service today Rupert Hamer was described as a liberal humanist by a number of people, and I really think that is a title which is richly deserved. When we talk about his being a liberal humanist we use the term 'liberal' with a small 'l'. He was a member of the Liberal Party, but there are many people on this side of the house who would also

describe themselves as liberal humanists. He was a man who embodied those values in a number of different ways in the actions he took.

He took over as Premier at a time when Sir Henry Bolte had been the Premier for 17 years and there had been an institutional view about conservatism in Victorian society. Sir Henry Bolte had a certain style which was more akin to a kind of agrarian socialism than liberal humanism. Dick Hamer came into the picture and was able to unite this community in a way that has rarely been done. He was a liberal because he believed in liberalism; he believed in the rights of the individual and the role of the state in supporting the individual. He believed in those things, and nowhere is it more clear than in the example of his support for equal opportunity, because there is embodied the notion that liberalism, if it is about anything, is about all individuals whether male or female and irrespective of background having the same rights and opportunities.

He embodied that. He was also a humanist right to the end, as indicated by the fact that his family has asked for donations to be made for asylum seekers. Many in the community would see that as unexpected. But those who knew Rupert Hamer would not see that as anything out of the ordinary. He supported the idea that we have a responsibility to those who are less fortunate in our community — the Leader of The Nationals has appropriately described that as a commitment to social justice.

I was at the funeral service today. I do not think anybody could not have been impressed by the contribution from another former Premier, Lindsay Thompson, who went to the podium without notes and spoke for 15 minutes in an incredibly articulate and passionate way about somebody whom he obviously had worked with very closely and whom he knew and loved very well. I found that the most moving part of the speeches and the service. Sir Rupert inspired that kind of thing, and all Victorians should be grateful for it.

As has been indicated, Dick Hamer was also an environmentalist. He had a vision of the need to protect our environment, to have open space in our community and so on. He was an environmentalist and a liberal humanist. He understood that humanity is more than just the day-to-day need for existence; it involves something higher. That is why he made such a valuable contribution and pursued the idea of the arts with a passion. When Richard Divall spoke at today's service he was talking about that higher aspect of our humanity. That is why Rupert Hamer was described as a humanist.

But he also had a sense of humour. I can well recall one occasion when I was on radio trying to defend a particular occurrence when the bronze bust of Rupert Hamer was dislodged from its normal place and replaced with a comical one of Jeff Kennett for a period of time. I was on the radio talking about this, and I made a comment like, 'I think Rupert Hamer would see the comedy in this and would find it humorous'. The radio presenter immediately said, 'Let's ask him, he happens to be on the line right now'. I went completely red and thought, 'What is he going to say?'. He came on the radio and he saw the humour in what had taken place; he made a comment about the need for some humour in this place. So he was a man of humour as well as being a humanist.

I conclude my remarks by simply saying that, as we have heard in comments by Joan Kirner, there are people on this side of the house who deeply respect Rupert Hamer's contribution. I offer my deepest condolences to his wife, April, and to the rest of his family.

Hon. ANDREA COOTE (Monash) — This morning, together with over 1000 Victorians, I attended a memorable state funeral for Sir Rupert Hamer at St Paul's Cathedral. It was a celebration of a life — I think all of us who were there had that feeling. I had considered Sir Rupert a friend, and I was very impressed to think I was amongst so many others who also called him a very good friend. It was salutary to see, and I felt it a great honour to have known, befriended and been befriended by Sir Rupert Hamer.

There is a railway bridge in Camberwell with a sign that has been there for over 30 years. It says 'Hamer makes it happen'. That was a slogan from the 1973 election campaign. We all know, and have heard from many of the speakers today, that Hamer did make it happen. In fact he had been making it happen ever since he left the political arena as well as when he was Premier of this state.

I ask the members in this chamber to cast back their minds to the post-Bolte years. Think about Victoria and Australia in the 1970s, which puts Sir Rupert's premiership into perspective. In the 1970s the Labor Party came into power federally for the first time in 23 years; South Australia appointed the first Aboriginal governor; the Australian Democrats were formed; a Melbourne group of women launched the Women's Electoral Lobby; there was a huge controversy over the purchase by the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra of *Blue Poles* by Jackson Pollock; 1000 people lined up in Melbourne for divorce on the first day of the new Family Court of Australia; cigarette

and tobacco advertising was banned on radio and television; the Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian churches joined together to form the Uniting Church; and the bionic ear was developed by Professor Clark. It is against this background that we must remember Dick Hamer as Premier and acknowledge the enormous humanitarian, cultural and environmental gains he made for this state.

Under Rupert Hamer the Liberal government made some enormous and long-lasting changes to our political tapestry. It is salutary to note some of the achievements in the first years of the Hamer Liberal government. For example, there were a record number of teachers in training — 18 000 — and 1600 teachers were recruited from abroad. This was the biggest program of training and recruitment in Victoria's history. At that time Victoria's teacher-pupil ratio was the best in Australia and one of the very best in the world.

Hamer gave an additional 25 per cent funding to mental health. Alcoholics and drug addicts were offered treatment and rehabilitation instead of punishment and degradation. There were 100 new trams, and 30 new buses were delivered. Under Sir Rupert Hamer the contracts were let for \$43 million worth of tunnelling and station construction for the Melbourne underground, which we take for granted now.

Sir Rupert Hamer opened the police academy at Glen Waverley. It was Hamer's Liberal government that introduced the first no-fault liability scheme in Australia for compensation to victims of motor vehicle accidents. It was at this time, under Sir Rupert Hamer, that the victims of motor car accidents had to be tested for blood alcohol levels. He also established the Prisons Advisory Council. Also, as was said before, the gas transmission line to Ballarat and Bendigo was constructed. He gave approval to build Victoria's largest single hydro-electric plant at Dartmouth Dam.

One of the most well-known things Sir Rupert did was to establish the first Ministry for the Arts, and the first director of the arts was appointed in July 1973. Sir Rupert was always to be remembered for granting permission for the construction of the 2500 seat Melbourne Concert Hall. The first Victorian College of the Arts was established under the Hamer Liberal government. He ensured that certain medical records were protected under legislation.

As was said before, Sir Rupert Hamer established the very first Ministry of Conservation in Victoria. It is important to understand that this brought together several government bodies, all of which had dealt with

conservation. He put soil conservation, fisheries, wildlife, national parks and environment protection under one umbrella.

It is important to know exactly what he did with conservation while he was in that portfolio. He established 38 wildlife reserves, 105 forest and park reserves, 6 new forest parks and over 22 246 acres of protected natural land as well as purchasing Westerfolds, Cape Schanck and the Dandenongs for future generations of Victorians. Sir Rupert Hamer spent \$2 million protecting the habitat for the Victorian emblem — the helmeted honeyeater. Dick Hamer also established the first consumer affairs ministry.

As has been said during this condolence motion, many members of our community have praised Sir Rupert Hamer. I would like to quote some of them. One of the leaders of the Victorian community, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, said:

I think that he was one of the very greatest of Victorians in every area of significance to this state. He was very wise and long sighted in government and he did so much for the arts, music and, of course, horticulture.

Janet Calvert-Jones said:

I think he was a most wonderful Australian, he gave such wonderful leadership in humanities and the arts.

The media has been extraordinary in its outpouring of commentary on Sir Rupert Hamer. The tributes to a very special man have been amazing and touching. I shall read just one quote, which I think is important for us to remember. Winsome Roberts in the *Australian* of 25 March said:

Following Rupert Hamer's death on Tuesday, warm tributes to the long-time Victorian Premier have flowed from both sides of the political divide. During his lifetime he had been honoured by key cultural institutions, notably with a sculpted bust and a lecture series at the University of Melbourne's Trinity College.

This is fitting because he valued public life and understood that the institutions of cultural life are integral to the political community. What is memorialised, transcending the personal, is the importance of public life.

Hamer's commitment to civic duty embodied this. Politics, for Hamer, was more than just a career, although that career was long — he served as an MP from 1958 for 23 years and as a distinguished Premier from 1972 to 1981. Above all else, he wanted to serve the public good.

The comments by various politicians have also been very moving and indeed reflect the huge regard that the whole of Australia held for Dick Hamer. The Prime Minister said:

I lament the loss of a fine Victorian who served Australia with a great commitment in war and in peace.

The Leader of the Opposition in the other house, Robert Doyle, said:

He was committed to and worked for a compassionate society, his priority was an improved quality of life for all.

Dick Hamer will be remembered for his commitment and passion for issues and causes associated with education, the arts, the environment and young people. His vision of Victoria as the Garden State is as true today as it was when Dick was Premier.

Lindsay Thompson's oration at today's funeral was remarkable. The interesting part about Lindsay's comments was at the end: he stood there and after a very powerful speech, gave a poignant salute to his friend and his Premier. As the Honourable Theo Theophanous said, it was a moving part in today's ceremony.

From the other side of politics it was good to hear Joan Kirner say:

Sir Rupert Hamer was much loved. As a Labor person I found him great to work with on issues of mutual interest, like ensuring Point Nepean became a national park, promoting the arts and issues of social justice. He was a special kind of politician — one who worked with the community for the community.

Barry Jones, a former federal Labor minister, said:

Sir Rupert was compassionate, courageous and deeply intelligent. I think Dick Hamer was the finest flower in the Victorian Deakinite liberal tradition, and I admire him greatly, and I worked with him very closely on a number of causes including the arts and the abolition of the death penalty.

So many people have been touched by Sir Rupert Hamer's legacy. The death notices in the newspapers showed the variety of organisations that he continued to support. There were notices from the officers of this chamber, the Legislative Assembly, the former parliamentarians association, the Returned and Services League, the Ringwood Highland Games, the Taralye Deaf Society, the Hawthorn Football Club, the Rats of Tobruk, Field and Game Australia, the National Institute of Circus Arts, the Royal District Nursing Service, Fintona Girls School and one that I was particularly involved in with him in the latter stages of his life — the Chances for Children program in Mildura, an excellent organisation to which he had given an enormous amount of time and effort. It is a very special cause and he made a pilgrimage to Mildura every year to support Chances for Children.

Today in the church we heard the Melbourne Scots association piper and the Trinity College choir. Joan

Carden paid a choral tribute and Fay Marles represented the University of Melbourne. As we left St Paul's Cathedral we saw across the road, in Federation Square, high on a trapeze the National Institute of Circus Arts performers pay tribute to someone who helped to sponsor and support them. It was very fitting, very moving and a lovely tribute to a very special man.

Sir Rupert died in his sleep, aged 87. The finest tribute came on the day after his death from his daughter in a radio interview on the ABC. Julia Hamer said of her father:

He really enjoyed life.

How lucky we, as Victorians, are that he made our lives so much better along the way. My sincerest sympathies go to Lady Hamer, Christopher, Julia, Sarah, Alastair and the grandchildren of Sir Rupert and Lady Hamer. I would like to thank them for sharing him with us.

Hon. C. D. HIRSH (Silvan) — I want to contribute to this condolence debate in terms of two elements of Sir Rupert Hamer's very community oriented life. According to Sue McLeod, president of the Ringwood Highland Games where Sir Rupert was the chief for many years, the first Ringwood Highland Games were organised in his lounge room. Sir Rupert was to have been at the games last Sunday as their chief, so a very moving tribute was made to him at the games. On behalf of Sue McLeod and the other people involved with the Ringwood Highland Games, I pass on my condolences.

In the 1970s when Dick Hamer was Premier he took a great interest and involvement in Kew Cottages. Prior to his involvement and his support of the Ages Minus children's campaign, the residents of Kew Cottages were considered ineducable and lived a very stark life in many ways. Sir Rupert Hamer ensured that both educational facilities and money poured into that institution. Many teachers were appointed there, and the lives of the residents of that place were improved dramatically under his support and with his great financial and heartfelt contribution to that organisation. I certainly extend my deepest sympathy to Lady Hamer and his family.

Hon. D. McL. DAVIS (East Yarra) — It is a great pleasure to be associated with this motion to honour the life of Sir Rupert Hamer. Dick Hamer was somebody I knew well and somebody I respected greatly. I know that I speak on behalf not just of the people in this chamber but of many in East Yarra Province, the electorate I share with the Honourable Richard

Dalla-Riva. Both he and I know of the affection that so many people across the electorate felt for Sir Rupert Hamer.

Dick Hamer was extremely well known throughout the province and throughout the electorate of Kew, which he represented in the other house. When he was elected to Parliament in 1958 he was already well known. There was a family connection to the Swinburne family and a member of that family had been a member for East Yarra Province, so there was some significant link across time in the province. However, at the same time Sir Rupert, who had been one of the Rats of Tobruk, had made an amazing contribution to his country through his service during the war not only at Tobruk but also in Europe for his planning of activities on the Rhine and in military intelligence and planning.

It is clear that his administrative skills in later times, both as a minister and as Premier, owed a great deal to the lessons he learnt in military life — the patience, the understanding of people, the ability to plan and the ability to work cooperatively with people, as well as the ability where necessary to stand up for what he truly believed in and to make the right decisions and judgments.

Sir Rupert Hamer was somebody who showed great judgment in so many ways in his ability to move with the times and understand what was necessary in the community and society that we wanted to live in at certain periods. As has already been referred to not only at the service today but also in this chamber, when he came to the premiership in the early 1970s he was in every way a man for his time. He was able to encapsulate the progressive nature of that period and understand that the community needed to move forward on a whole series of different issues. Towards the latter end of the 1970s a different time was in evidence, and he was able to change the nature of the administration that he led as Premier. That ability to understand the community and its needs was a great skill. I certainly found as an MP elected in 1996 that he was keen to talk to me. He had as much time for me as I was able to give, and he was certainly prepared to advise me in any way that I sought. He was generous with his thoughts and views. From time to time he would ring me and say, 'No, you should think about doing things this way or that way'. I confess a great deal of learning was occasioned by his comments and his general advice.

As has been said, he was also a man with genuine community links who gave to his community locally. I do not propose to list the enormous number of organisations he was involved with, and the contributions of others in this chamber today have

made those points very clear. That ability to link with his community and to remain engaged — as has been pointed out in the newspapers and elsewhere over the last week or so since his death — means that in a sense he died with his boots on. He was a man who was still engaged with his community. He was linked with so many different organisations where he built up enormous goodwill towards both himself and the Liberal Party.

I note particularly a few areas where it is important to list his specific achievements. His progressive stance in areas like multiculturalism has not been sufficiently recognised in contributions made in the press and elsewhere to date. I know even at the local level he was a leader in engaging with multicultural communities of our area and the state. He was prepared to lead that process in the 1970s. Even down to branch level he was prepared to foster and encourage people from whatever background. It was reflected in his understanding of equal opportunity and the need to ensure that both women and people from all backgrounds were given the fairest opportunities and chances in our society. Sir Rupert Hamer was prepared to back up his views in this area with actions. I know that the contribution today by the first Equal Opportunity Commissioner appointed in Victoria, Faye Marles, was something that touched all of us. It reflected the strong and generous nature he had. His enormous contribution to the arts — and a great deal has been said about that over the past few days — put the arts in Victoria on the strongest possible footing. He left us a legacy that will last for a long time, particularly with performing arts venues and galleries, including the National Gallery of Victoria itself, and in so many other aspects of the arts, whether it be the opera or chamber music. I could go on. Sir Rupert's humanistic understanding of the importance of the arts is a lesson, and he is a role model for each and every one of us.

I know that his preparedness to engage with younger people has been spoken of at great length. There is no doubt that his fostering of younger people, his encouragement of them, his preparedness to spend time with them and his steps in government to mark the importance of younger people and ensure that they were incorporated into the activities of our community in the most encouraging and generous way are hallmarks of his administration through the 1970s.

His remarkable foresight concerning the environment will stand as the greatest marker for his period as Premier and beyond. I know that his reforms involving the Land Conservation Council, town planning and protecting both our immediate built environment and

our wider environment are something that I believe will withstand long-term scrutiny. When people are writing the history of Victoria in 100 years time they will look back to that period in the 1970s when Sir Rupert led the government as Premier and had such a powerful impact on guaranteeing the protection and future of our environment, no matter whether it is through the green wedges, the national parks that have been protected or the work of the Environment Protection Authority. I can only place on record my views on these issues, and I can only say that he has made a remarkable impact on our society, has made a remarkable impact on me as an individual and is someone who will be sorely missed.

I shall conclude by quoting Sir Rupert in 1976 when he was asked why he entered politics. He rather self-consciously replied:

I was studying political theory and political philosophy at the university just before the war, and because such things were then highly relevant we spent a lot of time looking at arbitrary systems of government — Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin ... I came to the conclusion that democracy, with all its faults, was the only system for a free man in a free society ... The Labor Party approach didn't appeal to me. It tends to be authoritarian, putting the state above the individual when it should be the other way round ... Government exists to serve individual need, to allow individual choice, to help the individual reach his full potential ... I know that sounds a bit pretentious, but that's what I believe and that's why I got into politics. That's all.

Hon. J. G. HILTON (Western Port) — I only met Rupert Hamer on one occasion, and that was at the citizenship ceremony in the Shire of Cardinia in January. However, he always impressed me as a thoroughly decent, genuine and compassionate person. He was a member of that, at least in the public's mind, somewhat rare breed, an honourable politician.

Dick Hamer's life can be summarised as a total commitment and dedication to public service. He served his country at Tobruk, El Alamein, Normandy and New Guinea. He served his state initially as a MLC but then as a MLA, and of course as Premier. Then he served the community, and among his many commitments he was president of the Victoria State Opera, president of the Friends of the ABC, president of the Save the Children Fund of Australia and chairman of Greenhouse Action Australia.

When he stepped down from the premiership he retired, but his version of retirement was not sitting by the fire. In an interview he gave in 1984 he is quoted as saying:

Consider retirement as the opening of a new door, a new world where the pressures are less, where enjoyments can be much greater, and the feeling of satisfaction much greater because you can do the things that you want to — and

achieve something too. And, of course, keep in touch with other people. I hate the idea of people being huddled in front of their television set or gas fire. That's an existence, but it's not living.

Rupert Hamer has been described as Victoria's first modern Premier. He always understood the need to balance social, economic and environmental considerations. Dick Hamer did not see these considerations as being necessarily in conflict. Indeed in 1973 as Premier he is quoted as saying:

Economists gave us the concept of gross national product, and interest has centred on the rate at which it grows. It is 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. Is it time —

asked Dick Hamer —

to think about gross national wellbeing?

Thirty years later, unfortunately, with the rise of the economic rationalists, we are still looking at success with a very blinkered view. Success is viewed in the context of how much wealth we have or how much money we make. I am sure Dick Hamer would be very disappointed that our thinking has not advanced over those last 30 years.

A quote from *Macbeth* says:

Nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it.

And although the comparison is not exact, Dick Hamer's leaving of the premiership can be viewed in a similar light. Not many leading politicians who achieve the Prime Ministership or the premiership leave office voluntarily. They are defeated at the ballot box or in the party room. Having tasted the fruits of power they seem to find it hard to give up the trappings of that power. It was not like that with Dick Hamer. He left with dignity and grace, with his reputation enhanced rather than diminished.

Although at the time of his resignation it was becoming apparent that the 27 years of Liberal government were coming to an end, as indeed at some stage all governments come to a end — and there were some rumblings within his party that possibly there should be some changes, and ambitious young men, as is their entitlement, were considering how best to further their interests — there was no concerted push to remove Dick Hamer from the premiership. Indeed, as Jeff Kennett is quoted as saying in his biography, when Dick Hamer made his announcement:

You could have blown the stuffing out of us. He was head and shoulders above anyone around the cabinet.

He resigned because he felt it was time. I also believe he resigned because he knew that life does not necessarily end when you step down from being Premier. For the next 20 years Dick Hamer provided evidence of that.

As I previously mentioned, he involved himself totally in the community. He championed many causes, and one was Point Nepean which is, of course, very relevant to my province of Western Port. Dick Hamer wrote a letter to the *Age* in the middle of last year, co-authored with Joan Kirner, establishing his views that Point Nepean should be retained as one national park.

Finally, Dick Hamer was fortunate in the way his life came to an end. He was sharp minded and active until his death. I understand that in the week of his death he was present at the annual Hawthorn Football Club dinner when the jerseys were presented to the players for the upcoming season. I am sure he would have been very proud of his beloved Hawks, of whom he was the no. 1 patron, for their victory at the weekend.

Thank you, Dick Hamer, for a wonderful life, a life totally committed to public service and for being an example to all of us in public life of how we should conduct ourselves and the commitment we should make. Victoria was fortunate to be blessed by Dick Hamer's commitment, and the state is certainly a better place for his life.

My condolences to his wife and family. Thank you, Dick Hamer, and God bless.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — Dick Hamer made a difference. He made a difference to people's lives individually but also to the state in which we live. He made that difference in an extraordinary range of areas, many of which have been articulated here today. I just want to touch briefly on two. One, of course, is deaf people. Last week I had dinner with some deaf people, and they spontaneously spoke of his contribution to the deaf community. I had no idea of Dick's involvement with the deaf, but it goes back many years. It is just another example among the many that have been given in this chamber today and were given in St Paul's Cathedral earlier today of the extraordinary commitment he made to causes but more particularly to people and to individuals including, as the Honourable Carolyn Hirsh mentioned earlier, to Kew Cottages.

Dick Hamer made a habit of trying to involve himself in organisations which helped people less fortunate than he was. He recognised that he came from a background that had given him some privileges, and he saw that as

equally giving him responsibilities, which he picked up and carried all his life. Throughout his long life whatever he did he tried to make a difference, and the evidence of that is there for all to see.

In particular in my electorate, which I share with Ms Argondizzo, we have Westerfolds Park. If it had not been for Dick Hamer the hills of Doncaster would be alive with little houses. Westerfolds Park, which is an integral part of the electorate we share, is entirely there because of the commitment he made and the fact that he took on the developers, because there were people who had their eyes on the apple orchards out there and they were going to turn them into houses. That is just another example of the lasting legacy that he leaves behind for us all and for generations to come.

But it is not just the difference that he made, it was the manner in which he made it that was the mark of the man. Again, many people have spoken of his character and the way he conducted himself in both his public and private life. He was a man of absolute integrity. He was a man of commitment, a man of real character. He served his country, he served this Parliament, he served the state, but he served the people of Victoria very well for a long time. My sincere condolences go to his family.

Mr GAVIN JENNINGS (Minister for Aged Care) — Today the Parliament of Victoria is honouring the life of Sir Rupert Hamer. Indeed, we are joining with many in our community in celebrating a great and full life. Today is a very rare occasion on which the condolence motion of the Parliament of Victoria coincides with the day of the state funeral, which was held this morning. All who attended that funeral this morning were much moved by the tributes, the insights and the great stories that were shared with us all about the great capacities and talents of Sir Rupert Hamer.

I would like to reflect briefly on something I have not heard in any public commentary, the public persona of Sir Rupert, or perhaps more colloquially recognised as Dick Hamer. This is a measure of one of his great political and personal achievements. It is the reconciliation of two personas: one, the classically trained, educated and lover of high arts, Sir Rupert; and indeed the man of the people, Dick.

I was particularly mindful of that when I saw file footage shown on TV over the weekend of Dick Hamer kicking a football with one of his children in his front yard. He did a drop-kick — probably those of us who are aficionados may have thought it was a stab pass — and it was a demonstration of the steely man of the

people who was referred to so eloquently and lovingly today.

In the contributions to the ceremony today there were no contributions of the family beyond some readings by Sir Rupert's children Sarah and Christopher. They gave readings, so their stories of their father were not shared with us all. But the readings were very telling for what they said of the man and of the children's relationship with their father. The classical nature of their relationship was demonstrated through a reading by Sarah from Tennyson's *Ulysses*. It says so much of what she understood to be her relationship with her father and the man who is celebrated today:

Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honoured of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met ...

That was a measure of the man — the cumulative wit, wisdom and wherewithal from all that he encountered. Much has been made by students of political science today of the phrase 'liberal humanist'. I thought probably from the tradition of Dick Hamer he may have thought that the humanist part was merely an exclamation mark to reinforce his small-l liberalism. It may have spread during the course of today's discussion or in light of the debates that may occur within the Liberal Party as distinct from his tradition. If my understanding of liberal philosophy is correct, humanism is an integral part of the philosophy and the make-up of the man.

Much of that commitment and philosophy is shared with people on this side of the house and is demonstrated by a number of the things Dick Hamer will most be remembered for in his time in the premiership: the elevation of a sense of culture and heritage within our community; an emphasis on the protection of the environment and its sustainability; and important key measures concerning civil liberties that we all cherish in the modern Victoria of today, ranging from the removal of the death penalty, decriminalisation of homosexuality, and no-blame compensation, which has already been referred to in this debate. They are fundamental aspects of our modern and civilised Victoria and are elements where people of all philosophies in Victoria can hopefully find common ground to share and applaud.

The aspect of the state funeral that I would like to refer to is the most vivid memory I take — namely the contribution of Lindsay Thompson and his glowing tribute to his friend. For those members who were not

there I would like to paint a picture of a weathered and withered man who slowly but determinedly climbed the stairs into the pulpit and took the podium. If the scene had been lit by a film director the image could not have been more stark — the right half of his face was in brilliant spotlight, and the left half was in complete darkness. It was a very vivid image. He put his hand on the pulpit and started to speak about his friend, Dick Hamer. He seemed to gain about a foot in height as he spoke eloquently and passionately about his friend. In his measure of the man he chose three contributions to public life that he wished to pay particular attention to. They were from Sir Rupert Hamer's first budget — the emphasis and the commitment to the Melbourne Arts Centre, to the Environment Protection Authority and to green wedges. As any member of the Legislative Council knows, green wedges are near and dear to our hearts — some 30 years later we can stay up all night to express our support for a similar concept! Sir Rupert played an important role in making that contribution many years ago. At the end of the service as we were leaving the cathedral of St Paul, as Lindsay Thompson described it, I turned to him and congratulated him by saying, 'Oh, to complete a life and to have a friend such as you'.

I say to the people of Victoria that we are very fortunate to have had such a life and to Lady Hamer and all the family who were at the state funeral today with their total resolve and dedication to their lost loved one, I give my best wishes.

Hon. RICHARD DALLA-RIVA (East Yarra) — It is a great privilege to rise today to make a contribution about a great man who, as we have all heard before, was a member for East Yarra Province in this chamber from 1958 to 1971 and later moved on to become the member for Kew in the other place. All those issues have been dealt with quite well today in this chamber. As the Honourable David Davis also indicated, I knew Sir Rupert Hamer. I called him Dick because of the relationship we had. It is fair to say that former members seem to hold the current incumbents closer, dearer and nearer.

It was perhaps fitting that in the service today I sat next to a former member of this house, Mark Birrell. He is another man from whom I often take comment and advice. It is because of people who have quite extensive experience in this chamber and who have dealt with the capacity of Parliament that we can provide a vision for the future.

Today I listened, as I am sure did many members of this place, to the many contributions made during the service. People read through the extensive bibliography

and biography of this great man. It was only then that you realised that the person you would sit and have a coffee with, the person you understood to be Dick Hamer, was only a fraction of what he was in the hearts and minds of Victorians. There are areas in which he was actively involved for decades, longer than I have been alive, yet none of the discussions that I recall came to the fore. I discussed with him my new role as a member for East Yarra Province. I asked many questions about where to go, what to do and how to go about it.

Even the day before he passed away there was an email from him to say that he would be attending a function in Parliament House on the following night. For those of you who are not aware of it, he, along with his wife, Lady April, was a member of the Canterbury branch of the Liberal Party. He was a dedicated member of the Liberal Party in East Yarra. His level of commitment was such that at the age of 87 he still was attending Liberal Party functions, and he was making the effort to continue what he saw as an important part of his role.

I gave some thought to what I should say today about this great man. Many people have spoken about history and what he did, but I would like to go back to the time prior to our entering Parliament. What is it that we enter this house to do? What is it that we seek election for? It was said earlier that Dick Hamer saw entering Parliament as having the capacity to make a difference to individuals, to communities and to a state. Today at his funeral that is the challenge Dick left with me — that is, we all enter this chamber with starry-eyed views, but very few actually have the capacity to go beyond having starry-eyed views. There are very few who have the capacity to make a significant difference and to be visionaries. It does not matter which side of politics we are on; we need to have the capacity to be visionaries and to deliver long-term outcomes for individuals, for the community and for the state.

We have heard quite extensively about Dick Hamer's contributions, so I would like to place on record my sincere thanks for having met Sir Rupert James Hamer — or Dick Hamer, as I knew him — and I mourn the passing of a great man who was born on 29 July 1916 in Kew, who served the East Yarra electorate, who served the people of Kew and who sadly died on 23 March in Kew.

Hon. M. R. THOMSON (Minister for Small Business) — I consider it an honour to be able to rise and speak on this condolence motion. I, too, was moved by the contributions made at the service today, particularly that of Lindsay Thompson. It was not just what he said, but the way he said it. There was humour

and compassion in what he had to say, and there was certainly a sense painted of the man Dick Hamer was to all of us. I did not really know Dick Hamer, but I was fortunate enough a couple of years back to share a luncheon table with him. I was loath to leave because it was worthwhile sitting there, talking with him and listening to some of the things he had to say about what was happening in the world and what was happening in politics more broadly.

I want to go back to the 1970s, when I was growing up. The Honourable Andrea Coote mentioned some of the things that were occurring at that time, but for me it was the rise in our sense of national pride — about what it was to be an Australian. Gough Whitlam was Prime Minister in 1972, and he had a real vision of what Australia should look like. His vision was for an independent Australia, an Australia forging its way in the world. He was a leader of his time, and Dick Hamer also was very much at the forefront in leading Victoria at that time. It was a time of excitement; to be growing up then was exciting. We were proud to be Australian, proud of our cultural achievements and proud of the way our society was developing.

In many ways the leaders of that time were creating that environment for us. They were visionaries, and Dick Hamer himself was a visionary. I remember what he did for the environment when I was a teenager. If anyone says to you, 'What do you remember him for?' I would say it would be for his contribution to the environment in Victoria. National parks would not have been established without his premiership. His establishment of green wedges means that Melbourne does not look like Los Angeles — and thank heavens for that! The fact that you can walk through the streets of Melbourne suburbs and enjoy green open space is because he had a vision of what our society should look like in the future, and he was prepared to commit to that in the 1970s.

We have heard a lot about his contribution to the arts and to the community, to things that mean a lot to a whole lot of people, but he was very much a person who contributed not just at the policy level — many of us have contributed over many years at that level — as he also contributed to individuals, and that is where he stood out as a leader, and he never lost that. He never lost his compassion for the individual with an issue or a problem, and that made him unique. Often you become quite complacent about individuals. It is very easy to become distanced from the individual, but Dick Hamer never did, and that was the measure of the man.

Today we have heard about the number of organisations he was involved in. I had no way of

knowing the length and breadth of his commitment to community groups. We heard from the Honourable Bill Forwood about Dick Hamer's commitment to people, from deaf people right through to asylum seekers. The other thing for which Dick Hamer should be remembered is that not only was he at the forefront of his times in the 1970s when he became Premier but that he was still at the forefront of his times when he passed away at age 87. He was still thinking about the future; he was not looking back on his achievements, as many leaders do and as many more elderly people in our community do. They look back at what has been achieved and at what life was, whereas Dick Hamer looked forward to what life could be and to making a contribution to what that life should be for very many people. I certainly think he has enriched the tapestry of Victorian life and made a wonderful contribution to Victoria. He probably was one of the only people about whom we can get up and say that he was respected by everyone who knew him — as he lived and for the life he lived. He certainly has enriched everybody's lives, and I send my sympathy to his family.

Hon. B. W. BISHOP (North Western) — It is with regret and sadness that I rise today to join with the other speakers in the condolence motion for Sir Rupert Hamer. I have listened today to a great celebration of Sir Rupert's life. Speakers have covered very well his life in politics, his community involvement and his family, but I want to take another tack. I am very proud to be in the house today so that I can speak of the wonderful contribution Sir Rupert made to the Mallee and to Mallee Family Care in his distinguished role as patron of that organisation.

Sir Rupert was approached in 1984 to become the patron of Mallee Family Care by the then member for Mildura, Mr Milton Whiting, a request that he enthusiastically accepted. He was many times described as 'not a passive patron', which was a good description because he sang the praises of Mallee Family Care right around the state and the nation.

One of his roles as patron — and there were many — was to officially open the Milton Whiting family centre in Mildura in 1996. The centre provides, amongst other things, counselling and support to those affected by marriage separations, and it has been a valuable part of the Mildura community for many years.

In recognition of his interest in family values, support for the disadvantaged and — as my colleague and leader, Peter Hall, said — social justice, Sir Rupert was asked to help recruit patrons for the scheme Chances for Children mentioned by my colleague Andrea Coote. In fact he became patron-in-chief and, as was his way,

he enthusiastically supported Chances for Children at every opportunity he got. It is only a short time ago that he and Lady Hamer were attending another celebration of Chances for Children where they both had a wonderful time catching up with old friends and acquaintances. Indeed Mallee Family Care's chief executive, Vernon Knight, said that Sir Rupert 'changed the face of child welfare and protection in the state', and he was responsible for initiating an inquiry into the welfare and protection of children in Victoria.

Sir Rupert was a frequent visitor to Mildura, and everyone who came into contact with him was fortunate to have spent time with a consummate gentleman and a great Australian. The Mallee, Mallee Family Care and Chances for Children are all the richer for their association with him, and we extend our sympathies to Lady Hamer and the family.

Mr VINEY (Chelsea) — I am honoured to join this recognition of the life of a great Victorian in Sir Rupert Hamer. As someone who has taken an interest in political history, I have observed that very often political eras in Western democracies throw up leaders for the time. I think it is fair to say that Sir Rupert Hamer in Victoria was very much a leader for the time of the 1970s. As is the case for many other members here, that was the era of my youth and early adulthood, and it was therefore a very formative part of my development and interest in politics. A number of members have indicated that Sir Rupert was very much a man ahead of his time, and I think many of the decisions that have been recognised here today and the policies implemented during Sir Rupert's period as Premier of this state were ahead of their time. As it was an era of great change these were often decisions that were long overdue, and it is odd to think both that the decisions were being made by a government that was ahead of its time and that the decisions were overdue. I think what links these concepts is the fact that Sir Rupert was very much a premier of the era, a man who saw the change required and the pressures on our community and had the courage to implement change.

With all due respect to those opposite, I think one of the great hallmarks of Sir Rupert was achieving that kind of process in a democracy from the conservative side of politics. That is a very significant feat, and I say that in genuine recognition of what he was able to achieve as a leader of the conservative side of politics in this Parliament. In reflecting on the impetus of those great forces of change and the recognition that has already been given here today, if one looks, say, at the area of the arts in that period in the 70s when Australians were coming to terms with the end of what was known as the

cultural cringe and were celebrating the great contribution that Australians have made and can and will make to the arts, it is clear that Sir Rupert was at the forefront with many policy implementations, as has been acknowledged with the Victorian Arts Centre and many other works that were achieved in that field.

It has been acknowledged also that the environment in the 1970s was the period when society was coming to terms with the fact that we existed with finite resources and as a community we had to do things better and recognise the impact of humanity on our environment.

In social reform probably the highlight — in my judgment — of Sir Rupert's achievements was the end of capital punishment. As someone brought up in a very political household, my views on politics were based around what I learnt in my family environment, but there were two external events that formed my views of politics more dramatically than anything else: they were the Vietnam War — and it took another leader from this side of politics to end Australia's part in that; but the other was the hanging of Ronald Ryan. The effort Sir Rupert made, being, as I understand it, one of the few members of the cabinet at the time to do so, to vote against that hanging and subsequently, on becoming Premier, to take through this Parliament the ending of capital punishment is to me the hallmark of his social reform agenda.

What has not been mentioned as much is road safety in that period. I believe 1970 had one of the highest road tolls Victoria has ever seen. From the period of Sir Rupert's premiership there was the beginning of the decline in that tragic toll, and it is a mark of great leadership that he was able in a bipartisan way to bring road safety programs into Victoria.

Finally, as has been acknowledged, he achieved much in town planning. What we had seen up until the period of the 1970s was the great migration growth of cities like Melbourne and the rapid expansion of our suburbs. It took Sir Rupert Hamer to recognise the sorts of services that needed to be delivered in our suburbs and that the protection of our way of life through town planning controls and green wedge programs to provide decent urban living were an integral part of our community.

Those examples are testament to the fact that Sir Rupert Hamer was very much a man who was thrown up to lead Victoria: he was the right man for that era. As I said at the outset, it is an honour to contribute to this debate. In my four and a half years in this place I have not previously contributed to a condolence motion, so I take my contribution here today very seriously. With

other members I wish to pass on my sincere condolences to Lady Hamer and her family.

Hon. A. P. OLEXANDER (Silvan) — I rise today to pay tribute to the life of a very great man. Sir Rupert Hamer was first and foremost a man of service. He served family and community; he served this state and this nation. He was a proud champion of the liberal cause and I say that in the truest sense of the word; he really was a true believer. He was a believer in liberalism but even more than that he had the bravery, the courage and the intestinal fortitude to implement what he believed about liberalism. He took action.

As my friend and colleague, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, has said today, Dick Hamer was a man who made it happen — and that was the hallmark of his career. It was not enough for him to believe in something, to talk about it or to have a vision, he also had to act on it. If we take one thing away from the passing of this great man, it is that he was prepared to act and to implement policy that influenced a whole range of policymakers over the years. He has influenced the course of social progress in this country enormously, and that is a very important legacy indeed.

It has already been explained today that Sir Rupert had an enormously distinguished career in this Parliament — 23 years, with nearly 10 years as Premier. During that period he and his team gave Victoria and Australia a legacy of contribution to public policy which was at once sound, responsible and progressive. He proved that it could be done. Today we recognise him not only as a great Premier and leader but we pay tribute to a proud Victorian who dedicated his life to working for a better state and nation for all people.

Sir Rupert embraced difficult issues — he always embraced the very toughest of issues — and carried a vision of the future of Victoria and our society which had as its basis his unshakable sense of right and wrong. On so many issues it was all about what he believed to be right and wrong, and that was quite simple — but not simple in practice; in practice it is very difficult to get that balance right. Under his stewardship his vision saw the Victorian government tackle issues of equal opportunity, social justice, the environment and culture, and he was deeply committed to the economic development of country Victoria. These issues are still at the forefront of our minds and we are grappling with them in so many pieces of legislation that we look at today and so many policy issues that we seek to come to terms with. He dealt with all of those issues back then and gave us a strong example of how we should proceed into the future.

The arts were a passion and a love of Dick Hamer, and as shadow spokesperson for the arts on behalf of the Liberal Party I want to pay tribute to him on behalf of the very many Victorian artists who have contacted me, seeking their tributes to be placed on the record. I do not seek to do that today because there are so many of them, but suffice it to say that I carry with me today tributes from established and emerging artists who will continue to benefit from the commitment and vision that Sir Rupert had for the arts in Victoria. I want to convey tributes from most of the artistic bodies and institutions which exist; many of whom owe their very existence and current established excellence in Victoria to the support and actions of Sir Rupert Hamer. Those people, artists and organisations mourn his passing very deeply, and I place that on the record. It has been said many times today that Sir Rupert created the first role of arts minister and as a member of Parliament, Premier and then past Premier his work was tireless for and inspired the arts and cultural sector.

Sir Rupert supported and served Victoria's large artistic institutions such as Opera Australia, the Melbourne Theatre Company and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Ann Tonks, the general manager of the Melbourne Theatre Company, told me last week that its home in South Melbourne, where the sets and costumes are prepared and where it does its rehearsing, was gifted to it by Sir Rupert Hamer in the 1970s. His contributions to the organisations are still fondly remembered. Sir Rupert recognised the importance of artistic forums — opera, ballet, theatre, music and virtually every other form of expression. For many years after his premiership he was the chairman of the Victoria State Opera and it was his dream, and still is the dream of many Victorians, to see the re-creation of a Victorian opera company of some type which would have as its highest priority the growth and development of that art form in Melbourne and particularly in country Victoria.

He believed, as I do, that we need such an entity to enable the enormous talent which exists to stay in Victoria so that people do not need to go interstate or overseas to develop creativity, ideas or importantly to develop their careers. To the end of his life he maintained that dream and I believe it is incumbent upon us who follow him in a policy sense to look very seriously at those ideas and to try to see them through to fruition.

Sir Rupert led a remarkable life of excellence and service. He held an enormous number of portfolios: his experience in government was quite amazing. He brought passion, commitment and a particular brand of

progressive policy to every area that he became involved with — and we desperately need that today in so many areas. The arts, decentralisation, tourism, local government, state development — there is so much more that can be done and so much more that we can learn from him. Commentators have described the period between 1972 and 1981 when he was Premier as the quiet revolution in Victorian politics because so many changes were made with little fanfare, and that was pretty much Dick's trademark; he did not want the fanfare, he did not want to be trumpeting everywhere. He wanted reform and to move with the times and have a progressive society, and that is why people refer to his premiership in Victoria as the quiet revolution.

Dick Hamer never left the Victorian people even after he left politics. He kept his involvement going not because he felt that he had a duty to do so; he did it because he loved people and he loved the organisations that he worked with. I want to pay tribute to his family, particularly Lady Hamer who shared Sir Rupert with us and who herself has contributed and supported Victoria in the same way that he did for many years. I want to honour Sir Rupert and Lady Hamer's 60th wedding anniversary — a truly wonderful relationship and friendship of 60 years. Sir Rupert celebrated and enjoyed life with his family, sharing his passions and celebrating those of his family equally. I wish to pay tribute to Lady Hamer and offer condolences to all members of the Hamer family.

Sir Rupert was a gentleman. He cared more for others than for himself. He cared more for the success and prosperity of the people and the institutions he supported than for his own success or prosperity. He cared more for the recognition of others than he cared for his own. At a very difficult time here in Parliament, when we were grappling with some policy issues relating to equal opportunity, he said to me, 'It is not enough to believe in something or to have a vision or to have a plan; the key thing is that you have to act on it and you have to make it happen'.

I will always retain that advice, because I think it is the most important advice anyone can ever give you, particularly as you serve your role in this place. Every Victorian has benefited from what Sir Rupert made happen from the tough decisions he made. For his bravery, his vision and his dedication I say a personal thank you to him.

Mr SCHEFFER (Monash) — Sir Rupert Hamer was the Victorian Premier my generation grew up with. For those of us who came to maturity in the 1970s, Dick Hamer was the face of Victoria and expressed in his dignified and measured bearing a way of doing

politics that was rational, human and modern. For many of us from the left, he was a welcome relief from the confrontational style of Henry Bolte. Dick Hamer came to the premiership of Victoria at the time of the election of the Whitlam government, the end of the draft, the beginning of the pullout from Vietnam and the beginning of the great wave of social and cultural reform that transformed this state and the nation. In my own mind I positively associate Dick Hamer with all that was best in those turbulent, often confusing but always exhilarating times.

Speakers at the memorial service at St Paul's Cathedral earlier today paid tribute to the contribution that Dick Hamer made to the positive development of Victoria — protecting the environment, establishing the Equal Opportunity Commission, abolishing capital punishment and decriminalising homosexuality. We have much to thank him for.

On a personal note I will always remember the first time I met Dick Hamer. It was at the 21st birthday party of Harriet, one of his nieces. I came from, shall we say, one of the smaller streets in St Kilda and it was the first time I had been in one of the more salubrious homes in Canterbury Road, Toorak. It was one of the first times I had seen original Australian oil paintings on walls. At that time he was Deputy Premier and I did not have any idea who he was. He asked me what I did and I told him that I worked in a bookshop, and we talked about that for a while. Then he asked my friend what he did; he said he drove a truck, and we talked about that for a while. And then I said, 'What do you do?', and he said without the slightest condescension, 'Oh, I am with the government' — with a twinkle in his eye, probably.

That is what I think a lot of people referred to in the house today as his deft handling of young people and his always being caring, even in the smallest way. I will always remember him for that. Also I have known Dick Hamer's daughter Julia since our university days. Through her I have always felt a personal connection with Dick Hamer. He was a great man in all the ways people in this chamber have said today. I recognise and pay tribute to him on behalf of the people of Monash Province. I offer my deep condolences to his family.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON (Koonung) — The accomplishments of Dick Hamer in public life effectively stand as an inspiration to all Victorians. This man earned the respect of people in all walks of life from across the political spectrum. This man was one of Victoria's greatest politicians by almost any measure. As people have indicated, in the turbulent 1970s his stewardship in government provided a significant legacy for Victoria and Victorians upon which we can

build in taking our state forward into this bold, new century.

Dick Hamer was deserving of all the tributes that have been paid in this house today. There have been significant remarks made. I think every one of those remarks has been made with genuine affection for the man and for the contribution he has made not only in public life, in this house and to the Parliament in a range of offices culminating in his period as Premier of the state but also broadly throughout Victoria.

I had the privilege of knowing Dick Hamer perhaps better than most people in this house because I was involved in the Young Liberal Movement at the state level when he was Premier. Indeed the time when I was state president of the Young Liberal Movement was within the term when Dick Hamer was Premier of Victoria. I and many of my colleagues in the Young Liberal Movement at that time had unbelievable access to this man in terms of opportunities to put our ideas, to discuss issues and to seek his advice and counsel on a wide range of topics. As has been alluded to today, he was a learned man who had experience in many areas outside just the political areas. I and others had such access — I include present members such as Mr Andrew Olexander and the member for Brighton in the other place, Louise Asher, and the Honourable Mark Birrell and others who have been in this place.

Dick Hamer served as a strong mentor to every one of us and started each of us on our careers because of the support, the encouragement and advice and learned experience that he passed onto us. I actually had the privilege of standing as a Liberal Party candidate in 1976. I stood in the seat of Melbourne against the formidable Barry Jones. I think Andrew Olexander handed out how-to-vote cards for me.

An honourable member interjected.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — We got a swing. As he said in his contribution earlier, Mr Philip Davis stood at another state election three years later. My experience was very similar to that of Mr Philip Davis in terms of the encouragement Dick Hamer gave to the people who were standing effectively in Indian territory, who had been roped in to fly the flag for the party. He saw that as a process of developing those people. It is interesting how many of those people have gone on to positions in Parliament and other leadership positions in the community. I dare say that their advancement was very much encouraged by Dick Hamer.

I also had the opportunity of organising the Minus Children campaign that was referred to earlier in the

debate, a campaign that was started by Dick Hamer and which very much showed his commitment to people's services and the expansion of community services for the support of people who were disadvantaged. Taralye, which has also been mentioned in the context of these tributes, is situated within my electorate, in Blackburn. I remember very well when Dick Hamer made that happen — that was one of his election slogans — because the people who had been supporting deaf people in the community and the Taralye schooling concept, which includes a range of outstanding programs to support the deaf, were struggling to find a property, a base, on which to continue their work. A property became available in Blackburn, but there was no government program to support the establishment of the facility at that time. But, as I said, Dick Hamer made that happen.

Dick Hamer was always attentive to members of Parliament who took issues to him that involved any aspect that might advance opportunities for people who were disadvantaged and that would enrich our community and make things better for people. At that time I also recall — because I was on the Nunawading council for quite some time — that another one of the contentious issues out that way was Blackburn Lake, which was part of the area and which also involved the deaf community, because it was owned by the Adult Deaf Society. The society was looking to sell some land to fund some of its other activities and programs. The cost of buying the Blackburn Lake land was beyond the capacity of the council, but it was seen as a very important local area and resource — a reserve that in its own right deserved conservation from an environmental point of view. Again Dick Hamer stepped into the breach and came up with funds to ensure that the Blackburn Lake Sanctuary would be established.

I know Dick Hamer worked very well with a range of candidates across the eastern suburbs in 1976 and 1979 in particular, when I was heavily involved including the Honourable George Cox, who was in this place; John Richardson, who started his career in Parliament in 1976; and quite a range of other members who went on to make significant contributions to this place. Just as the Young Liberals were mentored by Dick Hamer, each of those members of Parliament were mentored by Dick Hamer as they started out their careers. Many people on our side of the house were encouraged and developed by Dick Hamer and have gone on to give tremendous service to the Victorian public as well.

Dick Hamer was a visionary. He was a very dynamic man; he was a very intelligent man; he was a man with

a keen sense of humour; and he was a man who mixed easily with people. I am not surprised at some of the stories that have been told about people's meetings with him at different events, because I attended many events — particularly through the Young Liberal movement — where Dick Hamer would simply walk up, sit down at your table and start talking with whoever was there. He had no problem with meeting people, to use the phrase I used earlier, from any walk of life. Everybody was touched by his genuine interest in what they were doing, what some of their aspirations were and where they thought government might be improved and might contribute more to the advancement of Victoria, because this state was very much at his heart.

Dick Hamer was a person who encouraged young people. As I said, he was a very accessible man — probably the most accessible Premier that we have seen in Victoria before or since. He was a person who had time for everyone. As people have indicated as they have run through a range of policy areas, he was a visionary in terms of many of the policies that were developed, certainly for the environment, the arts — as I said — community service, multicultural policies and programs and also in some of the areas such as transport planning. Mention has been made of the underground loop that was started during the Hamer government.

His contribution to local government was very significant at the time too. He worked to bring local government into a new era in many ways, particularly in regard to town planning. Mention was made in one of the contributions this afternoon of his approach to planning and what he has left Victoria as a legacy with the environment we have in an urban context, not simply in parks and reserves. I think that was brought about by some substantial changes that were made in planning during that Hamer period. We benefited very much from his vision in taking the state forward and setting out a town planning framework which has helped achieve a much better quality of life for all Victorians.

There are hallmarks for each government. The hallmarks of the Bolte government — which was a very different government, led by a very different man, as has been described today, but nevertheless a very great man and a great Liberal — were, no doubt, infrastructure projects. It was a government that coped with the rapid population growth of Victoria and went about building much of our basic infrastructure, particularly schools, water facilities and supplies,

Tullamarine airport, our road system and so on and so forth.

If infrastructure characterised the Bolte years, then the thing that characterised the Hamer years was certainly quality of life, some of the other areas of human endeavour and accomplishment and indeed a view of us perhaps living in greater harmony with our environment — of our being more mindful of the use of energy and recognising the value of our environment particularly with the creation of parks and so forth. He was indeed a man who in many ways was ahead of his time.

I had some school students in my office the other week. They were school captains, and I spoke to them about leadership. I asked them what they thought was important in leadership, and the insight of young people in grade 6 is a remarkable and interesting thing. One of the observations I made in summarising what they had said was that a leader is somebody who is part of the team and is not above the team. One of the hallmarks of Dick Hamer was that for all the accomplishments that have been attributed to him today, both during the funeral service and here, and indeed for all his achievements that have been commented upon in the press, Dick Hamer would be the very first person to say, ‘They are not my achievements, they are not my accomplishments — they were the accomplishments and achievements of my team’. He was very much a leader of a team and a part of the team at all points.

I would like to conclude my remarks with the observation that Dick Hamer was a very distinguished Australian. We have recently adopted a concept of talking about living treasures to recognise the achievements and contributions that people have made. I think that with the passing of Dick Hamer, Victoria has lost one of its greatest living treasures. We are all the poorer for that loss but nevertheless his legacy is well established, well defined; it is something from which we as Victorians all benefit today; and Victorians in the future will benefit from his legacy because this man was indeed a visionary who established opportunities for people going forward, which we are starting to really appreciate in what we have as Victorians. I extend my condolences to Lady Hamer and her family on what is a very great loss to them and indeed to all of Victoria.

Hon. W. A. LOVELL (North Eastern) — I am honoured to rise today to pay tribute to the life of Sir Rupert Hamer. Sir Rupert was Premier of Victoria from 1972 to 1981, yet his love of and passion for serving Victoria continued throughout his life to the day of his passing last Tuesday.

Sir Rupert served the community throughout his entire life. He was a man for Victoria, not for himself.

Sir Rupert lived a remarkable life of excellence and service. He served our country in the army during World War II, seeing action in Tobruk, El Alamein, New Guinea and Normandy, and rising to the rank of major. Upon returning home he embraced academia, achieving honours in law and the classics.

Sir Rupert’s achievements as a member of Parliament and Premier were many. His distinguished career in the Victorian Parliament spanned 23 years, from 1958 to 1981. He held the ministerial positions of Minister of Immigration; Minister for Local Government; Chief Secretary and Deputy Premier; Treasurer; Minister of the Arts; Minister for State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism; and was Premier of Victoria from 1972 to 1981.

Sir Rupert made Victoria flourish. His talent for treasury and economics saw Victoria’s economy thrive, enabling him to invest for the future in the arts, the environment, education and many other areas. Right to the end he worked for the causes and institutions which are fundamental to our community. Perhaps most fittingly, on the day of his death he attended a multicultural function here in Parliament House.

As the Liberal spokesperson for women’s affairs, I wish to recognise and thank Sir Rupert Hamer on behalf of all Victorian women for his dedication and commitment to the right of women to equal opportunity. It is due to Sir Rupert Hamer that women of my generation have gone through life with recognition and opportunities and without the indignation and injustice experienced by our mothers. During Sir Rupert’s time as Premier the office of women’s affairs was established and equal opportunity legislation introduced. Sir Rupert also appointed a woman as commissioner of the Hamer-established Equal Opportunity Commission.

Sir Rupert was a quiet achiever and a gentleman who contributed much and found recognition in the achievements of the causes he supported. Sir Rupert Hamer was a statesman, a man who was both a leader and a listener, both a supporter and an initiator of ideas, issues and institutions throughout Victoria. Sir Rupert was a man of vision and was not afraid to deliver his vision to Victoria, for which we are and will remain forever grateful. The list and legacy of Sir Rupert’s achievements is significant. Every Victorian continues to benefit from his service to our state. This is a measure of magnitude for every Premier, every politician, every public servant. Sir Rupert served every Victorian and his legacy is lasting.

Sir Rupert celebrated and enjoyed life at all times with his family. He shared his passions and celebrated those of his family. I wish to pay tribute to Lady Hamer and offer condolences to all of the Hamer family. Sir Rupert Hamer was a truly great Victorian, a leader, a listener, a supporter, a soldier, a family man, a Liberal man and a gentleman for whose life's work all Victorians are truly fortunate and thankful.

The PRESIDENT — I also wish to join the condolence motion before the house for the late Sir Rupert Hamer, former Premier of Victoria. Rupert 'Dick' Hamer served the Parliament of the state of Victoria for 23 years, beginning his celebrated parliamentary career here in the Legislative Council by representing East Yarra Province from 1958 to 1971. After successfully contesting the lower house seat of Kew, he moved to the Legislative Assembly in 1971 where he stayed for a further 10 years until his retirement from Parliament in 1981.

Shortly after his move to the lower house, Sir Rupert became Premier following the retirement of Sir Henry Bolte. During his time as one of Victoria's longest-serving and most popular premiers, Dick Hamer also served as Treasurer; Minister of the Arts; Minister for State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism; and Minister for Economic Development. Many people have today spoken of Dick Hamer's numerous achievements during his time in office. However, a mark of the impact he made on the state of Victoria can be found in the great praise he attracted for his untiring efforts in his community work after politics and after leaving this Parliament.

He continued his strong patronage of the arts and supported many conservation efforts around the state. As indicated by the Honourable Wendy Lovell, it was only last week that he was here in Queens Hall at a function for multiculturalism and multicultural tolerance.

As the fond remembrances have flowed for Dick Hamer, a common theme has emerged in the comments made by his peers on either side of the political divide. He was a man admired for the way he went about his work with integrity and purpose, ever seeking to reform and advance community life.

Sir Rupert Hamer will long be remembered by many Victorians for some of the most significant contributions to public life in our state's history, such that we will now benefit from the fruit of his labour. On behalf of all members, I wish to express deep sympathy to his wife, Lady Hamer, and family.

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

Hon. Vernon Francis Wilcox, CBE, QC

Mr LENDERS (Minister for Finance) — I move:

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death, on 13 March 2004, 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 a member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Camberwell from 1956 to 1976 and as Assistant Chief Secretary, Assistant Attorney-General and Minister of Immigration from 1964 to 1965, Assistant Attorney-General, Minister of Labour and Industry from 1965 to 1967, Minister of Transport from 1967 to 1973 and Attorney-General from 1973 to 1976.

The Honourable Vernon Wilcox sadly passed away on Saturday, 13 March. He was born on 10 April 1919 in Camberwell and was MP for Camberwell for 20 years. Educated at Carey Baptist Grammar School, he was school captain from 1935 to 1936. He was the winner of the Henry Meeks Medal for Leadership, Scholarship and Athletics in 1932 and 1935 and a member of the school council from 1963 to 1970. He always maintained a lifelong interest and support of Carey Grammar, and that school commemorated his departure a few weeks ago.

He graduated from the University of Melbourne in law prior to World War II and served as a lieutenant in the Royal Australian Navy Volunteer Reserve from 1942 to 1945 and was a liaison officer to the United States Seventh Fleet in the Pacific.

Vernon Wilcox completed articles on his return to Australia. He was called to the bar in 1946 and practised law with the firm Hall and Wilcox, of which his father was one of the founders.

Vernon Wilcox became increasingly interested in politics. It is interesting that Geoffrey Blainey noted in his foreword to *Minister for the Crown*, written by Vernon Wilcox in 2001, that his inclinations were to Labor in the 1930s. However, by the 1940s Vernon Wilcox had become active in the Liberal branches of Melbourne's eastern suburbs and first stood for Parliament in 1952. In 1956 he was elected to the seat of Camberwell, which, as I said, he held for the next 20 years. He was succeeded by Jeff Kennett who won the renamed seat of Burwood in 1976.

From 1964 to 1976 he was a cabinet minister in both the Bolte and Hamer governments, and he succeeded Dick Hamer as Assistant Chief Secretary, Assistant Attorney-General, and Minister of Immigration from

1964 to 1965. From 1965 to 1967 he was Assistant Attorney-General and Minister of Labour and Industry. He was Minister of Transport from 1967 to 1973 and Attorney-General from 1973 to 1976 during the time when the private members bill that abolished capital punishment was passed. He held positions on a state Law Reform Committee from 1956 to 1961 and on the Qualifications Committee from 1973 to 1974. He was very proud of the city rail loop which he saw as a major achievement of his time in government. It was one of his great achievements. Indeed, on the announcement of his retirement he cited the turning of the first sod for the city rail loop as one of the highlights of his time in government.

Vernon Wilcox retired from Parliament in 1976. In the same year he was awarded the Commander of the Order of the British Empire. In 2001 he wrote a book called *Minister of the Crown*. This publication served largely as a commentary on his political career with a focus on how various outcomes were achieved. In 1998 he was elected as a delegate to the Australian Constitutional Convention to debate the proposed republic. He wrote extensively on this subject, particularly in terms of his own personal experience in the years following the convention.

On behalf of the Labor Party and government I offer sincere condolences to the family of Vernon Wilcox: his wife, Jean; his children, Richard, Murray, Sue and Gerry; and his 14 grandchildren — Kate, Andrew, Susie, Tom, Edward, Lizzy, Jen, Emily, Simon, Sally, Meagan, Catherine, Lucy and Rose.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — Again it is with sadness that I join today in the condolence motion but this time to recognise the contribution of the Honourable Vernon Wilcox through his life of service to his country in the state of Victoria and the local community. Vernon Wilcox was born on 10 April 1919 in Camberwell and died on 13 March 2004, aged 84 years — less than one month shy of his 85th birthday. He dedicated his life to public service and was a member of this place for 20 years, serving in both the Bolte and Hamer governments for 12 of those 20 years.

Vernon Wilcox was the son of a solicitor and was educated at Carey Baptist Grammar School and Ormond College at Melbourne University. He served as a lieutenant in the navy during the war and was seconded to the United States navy to work in communications. When he returned from the war he practised law in the family business Hall and Wilcox, of which his father was a founder; but he was increasingly drawn to life in politics. He became the member for Camberwell in 1956, a position he served

with distinction for the next 20 years. During his term in Parliament he served as Assistant Chief Secretary, Assistant Attorney-General, Minister of Labour and Industry, Minister of Transport and Attorney-General.

Vernon Wilcox believed in a strong legal system and particularly in the separation of powers. He spoke often of the importance of the rule of law, and I quote:

The supremacy of the law over all individuals and bodies in the community is essential to our system of democracy.

So it is fitting that Vernon Wilcox's very first speech in Parliament was in support of the judges salaries and allowances bill. In speaking on the bill, Vern supported the proposed salary for the Chief Justice at the time, which was the princely sum of £6250.

He was appointed Attorney-General in 1973 and held the position until he retired in 1976. His friend Professor Geoffrey Blainey last week described Vern Wilcox as 'utterly dedicated' to his role of Attorney-General. Professor Blainey also spoke of Vern's strong belief in the role of juries, and he quoted Vern as saying:

I have always thought that people were more important than any system.

May we be informed by that comment! Ever passionate about the legal system, when Vern announced his retirement in July 1975, he spoke of his determination to fix what he must have considered as unfinished business — to tackle the problem of delays in the courts. But there is little doubt that Vern Wilcox's greatest achievement in his parliamentary career was the Melbourne underground rail loop, a project that he drove as transport minister.

Vern turned the first sod on the project in June 1971. What remains a huge success in rail infrastructure to this day was not initially welcomed, but the project went ahead and was ready for service in 1982. Queen Elizabeth II was touring at the time and was able to open the Museum station. The city loop project effectively opened up the northern part of the central business district to office development. One only has to look at Casselden Place, Telstra tower and Melbourne Central, three of the city's tallest towers that now house thousands of workers.

Another subject Vern Wilcox was passionate about was the question of whether Australia should become a republic. Vern was elected a delegate to the 1998 Constitutional Convention where he declared himself neither a republican nor a monarchist, but a constitutionalist. I would say he had learnt something

from his years in Parliament! He was not opposed to Australia becoming a republic but strongly felt that safeguards in the constitution must be carried forward in any changes.

As a politician Vern had some refreshing views. I go back to 1956, to his first speech in the Legislative Assembly, where 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.

Professor Geoffrey Blainey also referred last week to Vern's 'respect for many politicians of other parties'. In an interview given when he retired, Vern claimed he:

... had more friends among the older Labor men — the traditional trade unionists — than some of the intellectuals.

Things have changed perhaps! But there is no doubting Vern Wilcox was a Liberal through and through, a tag he wore with pride.

In the same interview 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. Mark his words! He was widely known for his opposition to socialism, best summed up in his quote:

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

Vern Wilcox was also strongly opposed to the interventionist style of government. Upon his retirement he spoke out against what he thought was too much government. He lamented what he thought were excessive restrictions on people's freedom, saying:

You can hardly move without being restricted by government.

Instead he advocated a move for the simple life, particularly where government was concerned. Vern Wilcox was dedicated to serving the public. He was a parliamentarian, a councillor of the Law Institute of Victoria, president of the Camberwell Returned and Services League, both a member and president of the Old Carey Grammarians Association. He was also involved with the Institute of Public Affairs, the Dame Pattie Menzies Centre for handicapped persons and a life councillor of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria.

As we have heard, he was also an author, publishing the book *Minister of the Crown* in 2001. From time to time I met Vern Wilcox informally in what I describe as social environments and found him to be an incredibly affable person. Like many men of his generation he

retained a very keen interest in the development of our community for which he had made a significant contribution in the armed forces during the war. Hence he had an earnest belief to the end of his days that he should be acutely involved in discussing public events.

Vern Wilcox was a man with vision, a dedicated, honourable man with wisdom and 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 wife, Jean, and their 4 children and 14 grandchildren. They are in our thoughts.

Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern) — I am privileged on behalf of The Nationals to contribute to this condolence motion to mark the passing of the Honourable Vernon Wilcox. I believe I can say that I am the only serving member of Parliament who served with Vern Wilcox. I consider that I was very fortunate to have been able to serve with a man of his calibre and standing.

I came into the Parliament in 1973 as a 26-year-old. Vern Wilcox was a senior minister in a long-serving Liberal government. I was a member of the then Country Party, and they were the days when the Country Party and the Liberal Party were at each other's throats most of the time. Vern Wilcox could easily have given me the brush-off — a young member in another party and someone he did not need to have particular regard to. But that was not the nature of Vern Wilcox. I owe any skill I might have as a non-lawyer in my capacity to understand the statute book and read an act of Parliament to Vern Wilcox's tutelage, because as Attorney-General he took me under his wing and showed me some aspects of the law and parliamentary procedure that I might not otherwise have cottoned on to at all, or at least not so quickly.

I always remember Vern for that, and because of that. I have been privileged from time to time since he retired in 1976 to have conversations with him, as others have, as he has visited this building. He was an impeccable man in a grey suit and brown felt hat, a man of absolute high standards which he demonstrated all the time.

As has already been noted, he was for 20 years the member for Camberwell. I understand he stood in 1952 as one of the Hollway Liberals at a time when the Liberal Party, as the other two parties have from time to time, was a bit divided. He was not successful in 1952, but he was elected in 1956 in a by-election for the seat of Camberwell, I think as a result of a sitting member being killed in a road accident.

Vern held that seat for 20 years and made this great contribution to the Parliament. He was party secretary at one stage and became Assistant Chief Secretary at a time when the Chief Secretary's responsibilities were a grab bag of everything including the police, the courts, births, deaths and marriages, and all sorts of things. As assistant to Sir Arthur Rylah, I am sure he carried out many of the mundane duties that the Chief Secretary, now a defunct office, then generated.

He spent six years as transport minister. As has been noted several times, he was the driving force and the instigator of the building of the Melbourne underground loop. As Mr Philip Davis indicated, it was not the most popular piece of infrastructure building at the time. I understand the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria did not like it, because it thought it would compete with cars. The then Country Party of course could not see how it would assist the country, so we were against it. All sorts of obstacles were put in his way.

But Vern persisted. As Mr Davis has just noted, can you imagine the central business district now without it? We would not have had all that development in the north of the city. It might have degenerated into an even more derelict few blocks than it once was. We have to recognise that Vern Wilcox was a man of great vision in those respects.

As Attorney-General, Vern Wilcox instituted a number of reforms. He was particularly concerned about long delays in the courts and that justice delayed is justice denied. He took some steps to try to alleviate that. I am not sure that we do not need to take a few steps now to overcome some of the very long delays in our court system.

It is fair to say that Vern Wilcox was a man of Camberwell: he was born in Camberwell; he represented Camberwell; and he continued to live in Camberwell for the rest of his life. But he was a country man as well, keenly interested in agriculture with properties at Alexandra, a wool property in the Riverina at Balranald and for 10 years an interest in a sheep station in the remote parts of Western Australia. He served for many years as a councillor on the Royal Agricultural Society. So while he was suburban by birth, by training and in his whole manner of living, he had a great interest in country Victoria. He played a particularly valuable role in the Alexandra district with his property there and at one stage was the local agricultural society president there as well.

I look back on Vern Wilcox as a man who was indeed a fine citizen. He was a great parliamentarian, but above all he was a decent man. I feel privileged to have spent

a short time with him in this Parliament and to have enjoyed a close personal friendship with him since.

I was honoured to represent The Nationals at the state memorial service last Tuesday along with a former leader of the party, Mr Peter Ross-Edwards; a former leader of the party in this house, the Honourable Stuart McDonald; and the former federal member for Gippsland, the Honourable Peter Nixon. It was a moving service. The eulogies delivered by Professor Blainey and Vern's brother-in-law, Mr Anderson, were moving tributes indeed. I pass on the condolences of The Nationals to Mrs Wilcox and members of the family.

Hon. D. McL. DAVIS (East Yarra) — I am willing and honoured to associate myself with this condolence motion and am happy to pick up from where the Honourable Bill Baxter left off by saying that the Honourable Vernon Wilcox was a great parliamentarian and a good man. He was a locally based man. I knew him as local member, and after I was elected he made it his business to seek me out. I spent a number of occasions talking to him and his wife Jean, who was a great support to him.

I also was deeply impressed by Vern's affable nature and his wise counsel and deep understanding of the law. He was in many ways a lawyer's lawyer. He had a fine understanding of legal matters, not only through his background but through a genuine commitment, as the Honourable Philip Davis has said, to a constitutionalist focus and framework. That is an important matter to which I will return in a moment.

It is clear that Vern Wilcox was, in the same way as was Sir Rupert Hamer, one of that generation of Australian people in public life who served in the forces with distinction. As has been pointed out, he was in the Royal Australian Navy Volunteer Reserve and was liaison officer to the United States 7th fleet. But when he returned from the war he went to the Victorian bar in 1946 and joined the family legal firm of Hall and Wilcox.

In many respects today's condolence motions reflect the passing of that generation — a generation of citizens in every sense of the word: citizens in the sense that they gave military service; citizens in the sense that they were grounded in their local communities; and citizens in the sense that they became parliamentarians and contributed to public life. But they understood, and Vern is an exemplar of this attitude, that public life in this Parliament is a continuation of public life in the community more broadly — public life that is focused on the activities of community organisations.

The Honourable Philip Davis has already referred to Vern's association with Carey Baptist Grammar School, where he was educated, and with the Camberwell Returned and Services League. His associations with the Royal Agricultural Society have been referred to, and he genuinely had a foot in both the country and the city. That gives a significant balance to the life of a parliamentarian, and I believe Vern Wilcox's life exhibited that balance.

His wife, Jean, and his family were a great strength to him. Jean, a very decent and clever woman, was at the funeral the other day, of course, and people who had not seen her for a while were reminded of the strength of her commitment to Vernon, and his to hers, and theirs as a family. In many respects that is no different from Dick Hamer and his wife, April, and their family, as we heard earlier. That generation had a strong place for family.

I will pick out some of the great achievements of Vern Wilcox as a minister and as a parliamentarian. As has been said, he was the member for Camberwell between 1956 and 1976. As the Leader of the Government correctly pointed out, after a redistribution he was succeeded in the closest matching seat by the Honourable Jeffrey Kennett, who later represented that area.

In his time in Parliament Vernon was not only Attorney-General but Minister of Transport. He correctly has been credited with the strong support he gave to the city loop and that enormous development that has meant so much for Melbourne in the development of the northern side of the city. As the Honourable Bill Baxter pointed out, there was opposition to the development of the city loop, but Vernon Wilcox and a small group of supporters pushed forward and were successful in having that city loop, a basic piece of transport infrastructure that has made a huge difference to Melbourne, completed.

I note also, and I want to return to this, his memoir *Minister of the Crown* is a very worthy read, and I commend it to anyone in this house. I make the point that his constitutionalist focus was a significant one. His election as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1999 was an important step in his conviction on politics that surrounded his views about the separation of powers and the rule of law, as the Honourable Philip Davis pointed out. Where constitutional change is made in our system — and I note the distinctly significant changes that have been made in this state in recent periods — those changes need to be made, and I think Vernon made this point clearly to us, with an eye and a careful thought to the future, understanding that the

protections provided by the rule of law, the separation of powers and the constitutional conventions that surround our system have provided a very valuable protection for a long period, and that without proper reflection we do not want to change those conventions. Vernon made that point very sharply at the Constitutional Convention, and he certainly made it to me in person on a number of occasions. I can only but agree.

The constitutional framework that protects and embodies the traditions in our system is something that Vernon correctly pointed out to me the Liberal Party can claim as a core belief. Liberals have somewhere deep inside them an understanding that a commitment to proper constitutionalism is very important, and Vernon will go down in history as somebody who protected the constitution in the way that most of us would believe is correct.

In completing this contribution I pass on my condolences to his wife, Jean, his family and all those who knew Vernon, and I indicate my great sadness at his passing.

The PRESIDENT — I also wish to join the condolence motion before the house for the late Vernon Wilcox, former Attorney-General and member for Camberwell.

Vernon Wilcox served as the Liberal Party member for Camberwell in the Legislative Assembly for 20 years between 1956 and 1976. During this time in the Parliament he served in a number of key cabinet positions as part of the Bolte and Hamer governments. He was Assistant Attorney-General, Minister of Immigration, Minister of Labour and Industry, and Minister of Transport, and he concluded his outstanding parliamentary service as Attorney-General of Victoria between 1973 and 1976.

Vernon's dedication to a life of public service was also demonstrated through his involvement with many community groups in his electorate, the Returned and Services League, the Camberwell cricket club and Carey Baptist Grammar School.

Vernon Wilcox will be remembered, among many of his other admirable traits, as a true advocate of justice. One notable demonstration of this was a decision he made while Attorney-General to allow the Defence of Government Schools challengers to bring potentially controversial material into court, putting his political career on the line for the sake of due process. On this matter he once said, 'Government must act in the interests of the people'. This serves as a fitting

commemoration for a man who always displayed strong principles and true commitment to his public life and in his ventures after Parliament and with his family.

On behalf of all members I wish to express deepest sympathy to his wife, Jean, his daughter, Sue, and his sons, Richard, Murray and Gerry.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mr LENDERS (Minister for Finance) — I move:

That, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honourables Sir Rupert James Hamer, AC, KCMG, and Vernon Francis Wilcox, CBE, QC, the house adjourn until tomorrow at 2.00 p.m.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned 4.51 p.m.