

AN INTERVIEW WITH BILL GILES CONDUCTED BY BERNARD O'NEIL ON THE 11TH OF MAY 2004 AT PIRSA'S BUILDING AT GLENSIDE IN RELATION TO THE HISTORY OF AGRICULTURE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

[0:20] Thanks for agreeing to be involved Bill and taking time out from your working day to spend some time with us. Perhaps if we just kick off with a little bit of personal background and how you fit into the PIRSA structure.

Yes. It's a great opportunity Bernard to talk about my career. Full name is William Grant Giles, better known as Bill all my life. Born at Brighton, a couple of streets back from the beach. Grew up there and consequently interesting that I finished up in agriculture, but my mother came from a farm in the Mid North, South Australia (at Yacka) and from a very young age I used to travel up there to see my uncles and aunties and spend holidays on the farm. As I got a little bit older, I would go up on one of the old green and yellow railcars and they had to meet me at the station at Yacka. It was great excitement for me, of course, at probably 8 or 10 years of age. Then spend a week or so on a mixed farm and go out with my auntie or uncle early in the morning to milk the 10 or so cows and then probably go out with my uncle on the tractor which was a great excitement for me. Then probably, if I remember rightly, at about 10 o'clock, get very tired, my auntie would come out and I'd come back to the farm for a while and then go back in the afternoon and spend more time with them or play with the pigs or whatever was on the farm. Giving me a great love for farming and agriculture and from then on just really wanted to be a farmer.

Was it just the one uncle and aunt there?

There were uncles and aunts in the Mid North but one that I particularly went and stayed with. Burfett was his name and Auntie Doss. They've both passed on now. Then first returning after the school holidays, back to school and continued through Brighton Primary then Westminster School until I completed matriculation. At that stage I got a scholarship into Roseworthy and continued through Roseworthy to complete my Diploma of Agriculture there. End of the three years there, they didn't give me a farm, they gave me a piece of paper so I had to go and find a job! My initial job was to go to a property in the Mid North or Lower North really at Balaklava and worked as a farmhand-cum-stockman on a property which was owned by a family by the name of Neville who had a commercial cattle stud. They're quite a mixed sheep and cropping operation. I carried out pretty much all of the farm operations there under the guidance of the owner and remained there for 18 months.

[4:00] Just to put a little bit of context on it Bill, before we get too far into the story, let's get some dates down.

Yes.

Date of birth?

Date of birth: 28th of March 1948. Roseworthy would've been 1966, '67 and '68.

Did you come from a big family or a small family?

No, a medium-sized family for those days. I have a brother who's five or six years older than

myself. He went into air conditioning and mechanic area, the refrigeration/mechanic area. He was born during the war and then I was born in '48, as I said, and then I had a sister born in 1952, so we were fairly well spread as far as having close brothers and sisters to play with. Most of my friends were school friends, and we had total free run of Brighton where I grew up in those days. Parts of the area were being sub-divided – the old farm, the almond orchards and grape vines and things but, generally, I spent all of my spare time mucking around in the garden or playing a bit of sport and obviously being close to the beach, spending time on the beach.

[5:30] The other thing with agriculture was in that my father was an accountant and he had a large number of clients throughout the Mid North and into the far north of South Australia who were farming families and so it was a very common topic of discussion, farming, around in the household, kitchen table.

Did he work in the city or the suburbs?

He was based in his own accountancy business in the city.

Did he go up to the country at all to see the place?

Yes. Every month he went to Kadina to do tax returns and things for farmers or for other businesses in that area and then at tax return time from July to September spent many a week at a time in the Mid North – Jamestown, Orroroo right through to Carrieton, Orroroo, Hawker were the places that he used to spend several days, he and his brother and other partners in the firm.

Going back into that family history here, given we are talking about the history of agriculture, I can remember him telling me about times before cars when they used to go up by train to places like Hammond and meet in the pub under a single 40 watt globe and do people's tax returns. They were farmers, would all come in to do that. Then a couple of days later it might be Sunday so he'd hook a ride with the Catholic priest across to another town and then set up in the pub there and work for another few days doing farmers' tax returns, lugging those old 28" cases with him full of paper and things like that. He tells some interesting stories of life a field when he was alive, those sorts of things of staying in Carrieton, Orroroo type hotels and freezing, easterly northern winds. Used to be windy days up there and then it was bitterly cold. So there's been a mix ...

Certainly going back a way if he's talking before cars.

Yes. Before he owned a car, it would be after the war, but in the first years after the war when he had his accountancy business after coming back, in the early 1940s through to 1950.

Did you go out and about with him at all on the country trips?

Not on those northern trips so much but, periodically, I did have a cousin who had a business in Kadina, a paper business in Kadina. Occasionally I would go up, if it was school holidays, with dad in the car for the day and spend the day with him and then come back.

[8:30] So you were getting to see a fair bit of the State, the Mid North area and ...

Certainly, yes. And we had many holidays. Mum had close friends down at ... The soldier settlers at Wrattenbully, the South East. I can remember going down there for Easter and holidays like that and having fun once again on a different sort of farm. Any opportunity I could get to get out of the city and on to a farm was always interesting to me.

Not academically inclined, yourself?

No. It was interesting. It's one of the great things about my parents that they never, given that dad had an accountancy business, he never forced any of us kids into that area, that he was always looking for what would be best for us. Academically, Roseworthy was certainly, probably the limit of my academic skills at that stage, or my interest in studying and things like that. My interests were really being outside and mucking around in the dirt rather than studying and certainly that's what I went through early and from then on I hadn't ... I did go back to Roseworthy and do one further year of postgraduate study in 1980, but other than that that's been about the extent of my studies.

Just from the family point of view, Bill, did your parents ... What was their reaction to you going to Roseworthy? Were they supportive?

Yes. As I said, they could see that my interests were firmly in agriculture and farming and, at that stage, were obviously not in a position to buy me a farm or anything like that (laughs) and could see that if you were going ... They were interested in making sure that we all had some training or some career in something that would stand us in good stead and, consequently, encouraged us to get some sort of tertiary training. In my case it was Roseworthy.

Yourself – what did you see evolving for you through Roseworthy? Did you have your heart set on a farm, for example?

I find it hard to remember now. I don't think ... I guess I saw myself eventually as a farm manager rather than as a farmer. It was interesting as all farmers, as most of us would know, most farmers think they've got a tough life and don't really want to be a farmer but they all seem to stick at it. I can remember my aunty and uncle always saying, 'Why would you want to go and be a farmer?' and things like that and I couldn't think of anything better. (laughs) But, as I said, I went on to work on a property and I loved that time it was driving tractors, mixed cereal farming, rounding up cattle, chasing cattle on horses and trying to do the usual stud work that went with a cattle property and things like that.

[11:55] After I went there, one of those strange quirks of history happened in that my parents were away and my brother and I had to go to a family funeral at Naracoorte. We finished up with a half-a-day to spare and because of my interest in cattle and things I drove out to Struan Research Centre in the afternoon and to see if we could have a look around. The owners weren't ... the manager, Ron McNeil, was out at the time, but his wife was home. We knocked on the door and she gave us permission to go drive around. I must've been talking to her and said I was interested

in getting a job in the South East at some stage in property management or in overseeing. We had a bit of a look around by ourselves and then headed off. Then two weeks later I had a ring from Ron McNeil, I think, or it might have been from ... Pretty sure it was from Ron McNeil to say, 'Are you interested in a job in the Department down here?'. I said, 'Yes'. [break] Yes, I think it was actually Harold Chamberlain, who was superintendent of research centres at the time, this would've been 1970 or thereabouts, yes it was June 1970 we were just completing seeding at Balaklava where I was working and I had a phone call to say that 'Are you interested in a job as a technical officer at Struan?'. They'd somebody leave and they badly needed somebody. I said, 'I can't really get down for an interview or anything, but I'll be in Adelaide on Sunday afternoon to see my then girlfriend and we could, if that would be suitable ...' That suited Harold fine. I went out – I can't remember what suburb it was, it was an eastern Adelaide suburb – and met Harold Chamberlain, had a cup of tea with my girlfriend and his wife and two days later got a ring to say, 'Would I like to join the Department at Struan?'. That's how jobs were interviewed and things were done at that stage. I started a career that I thought at that time was going to be probably three, six months, maybe 12 months at the most in the government before I got a job back on a property. And here we are some 33 years later having had a career as a public servant, which has been fantastic.

There are still properties out there, of course! (both laugh)

Yes.

You need all the training you can get before you go on to the ...! (both laugh)

Yes.

That's interesting how it unfolds. Of course, we're going to follow some of that career through, step-by-step. You weren't committed to the property where you were working: that's a job to get some experience I presume?

Yes. I can remember being terrified about telling the owners that after 18 months I was going to leave, thinking I was vitally important to their operation. I can remember the wife saying, 'That's fine. There's plenty of other fish in the sea', or something to that effect. 'There'd be no problem getting a replacement', or something like that ... deflate somebody's ego. (both laugh) Probably a very good lesson at the time too.

[[15:40] Went on from there to be a Technical Officer at Struan, which involved ... At that time, they were just mating for the first time ... There was the introduction of Charolais cattle from France and the cattle were being mated by artificial insemination. It was a breakthrough. After a long time, due to foot and mouth where no cattle were able to be imported into Australia, they were the first of the new breeds to come into Australia. It was a major project to examine how these European breeds would perform. They were a much more muscley type of animal than we had seen in Australia. Struan was at the forefront of the research to evaluate how they would perform.

How did that tie in with the study you'd undertaken at Roseworthy? We didn't actually cover what sort of areas you were interested in there?

Yes. In those days at Roseworthy it was an extremely wide, cross-section, course. There was virtually no specialisation so you studied basic biology and all those aspects right through to car maintenance and engine maintenance and electricity and everything. It was very broad, generalised training course, although in third year we could choose between sheep and cattle or livestock or horticulture. That was about the only specialisation. I chose livestock, but that certainly didn't mean that I had really specialised knowledge of livestock in any extent. My view still is that your tertiary education really teaches you how to think and how to be objective. For those that went to Roseworthy it really depends on your ability at the time and your interest at the time – it certainly stood me in good stead.

Really practical experience on top of the ...

Yes. That's one thing that Roseworthy certainly had a lot of. You spent, early in the course, at least 50% of your time on what was the farm, called 'the farm', either milking the cows, chasing sheep, students did the shearing, all of those sorts of things. From the point of view of working on a property, you got a very good cross-section of knowledge to start you off. But, at the same time, gaining from those, research techniques and the need for rigour the way that you dealt with research things. Then going to a technical officer at Struan was sort of a ... In the Department, at that time, quite a natural graduation in the training operation that you would do three years there. A good many of the people that were becoming extension officers spent time at Struan: not Struan necessarily, the Department had research centres spread from Minnipa to Turretfield to Northfield to Struan and other places. We usually went with two or three technical officers who stayed there for a few years before going onto generally to become extension officers.

Working their way up?

Working their way up. It was reasonably informal, but normal, part of the system.

How far down the bottom were you as a Technical Officer, Grade? (laughs) You had to begin at the bottom of all this?

We'd certainly began not totally ... If you're talking pecking orders and things like that, the bottom of the pecking order were the stockmen and some of the field staff. But in many cases they were ex-farm lads or farm workers and they were far more experienced and knowledgeable in many things than us young upstarts from the agricultural college were. We learnt a lot from them. But in the hierarchy of the Public Service, you were starting pretty much at the bottom of the team. That's Struan in my case, where you had research officers: three research officers at Struan at the time – Ron Ellis, Mick Deland and Wayne Hawthorne. Wayne concentrating on agronomy areas; Mick Deland on this particular cross-breeding project that was going on; and Ron Ellis on some sheep work and on some purebred Hereford selection trial type work and heifer nutrition areas.

We, and then the, sorry, the property was, managed by Ron McNeil, who was highly experienced person and a great motivator of staff and a great leader for the team at the research centre. At that time the Department's Advisory Services were stationed in Naracoorte and we were out at Struan Research Centre in a transportable building, about 10 miles (16 km) south of Naracoorte and interestingly we didn't have a lot of interaction with the people, with the extension people in the town, that's been one of the funny things, over the many years of the Department and the silos and things that happened and go on.

People tend to work on their own little patch, sort of thing?

Yes. We lived in our own little world in the research centre and the extension staff in the town had their own tasks and their own projects that they operated with and there wasn't as much liaison as they could've or should've been at that time and people would say that's continued on throughout the history but, it's just one of things that happened in a big organisation like the Department.

Did you know other people at Struan or Naracoorte, either?

Interestingly enough, we did build up very close friends with, and are still probably some of our closest friends, the administrative person, women in the office, Heather Parker, who name was, had been Heather Badman and her family also had to, parents family had come from the Yacka where my mother had come from, so there was a remote family linkage there and we got to know, and become very good friends with her and her husband, Rob Parker. One of the things that I guess I cemented that was that we, my wife, Chris, and I lived on the research centre in a transportable home there and the Parkers lived on the adjacent farm and so being similar age we became quite good friends with living closely as well as professionally through work and yes, we could go and on about that friendship and the things that we did over the years I guess it was interesting because at times, we would transfer knowledge, Heather would pick up knowledge back to their farm and they were, had started off with a relatively small farm themselves, close to Struan and introduced cattle and all the cattle were born in Struan and followed many of the ideas from Struan in how they operated and things like that and we got involved in working with them on the way their property developed and things like that. As I said, we had great times mixing together and when their children were born, we were very close friends with them and so on.

[59.49] As she was working in the Department?

She was actually working in the office at Struan, at the time. As far as other people in the town part of Struan, I guess we didn't socialise great deal, I guess. I'm a bit of a loner in some respects and tended to stick out with the research centre side of it. My wife, when we got married, I started there, in July 1970 and we got married in January '71, the Departmental side of the time had to take a weeks leave without pay to go on a honeymoon because you weren't allowed to be

advanced leave in advance and my wife came straight from Teachers College to marry me and take up occupation out in the country as a secondary schoolteacher at the Naracoorte High School, so it was a fairly hefty change in lifestyle for her, an ex-town girl and so we had made many of our friends, most of, many of our friends with the school teaching fraternity and there were certainly a few around Struan.

[61.13] How long did you stay at Struan?

I was based there for 3½ years and the shift to next years to Ceduna and that came about on about Christmas Eve, we were the last public service *Notices of Vacancies* came around in December and I can remember Ron McNeil coming into the office and saying, 'Now, Bill, I know you want to be a Beef Adviser, but I can tell you sometimes in life you have to go out on a limb to get where you want to ultimately be and there's a position here advertised as an animal health adviser at Ceduna, I reckon you ought to have a look at it and have a go at it'. I can't remember when the applications closed, they must have closed presumably in January, I think, the first week or two of January and so over the Christmas break, Chris and I came to town for Christmas and then drove over to Ceduna, spent 24 hours looking at Ceduna, then came back and put in our application for the position as a stock inspector/animal health adviser at Ceduna and, one of the positions, so that meant change of headquarters, as we said, 3½ years, roughly, then after I was going to Struan.

[62.30] So, it would be about 1974, is this presumably?

It's '70. There was a 6-month training period in Adelaide, I could work on the stock there.

[62.43] Perhaps we'd just have a quick look at that Struan experience and you know, three and a half years there, when you thought you might be only there for six or twelve months. Need to know, what happened?

I absolutely loved my time at Struan. We were glorified farm hands, I suppose, so we were spending quite a bit of time out on the farm, chasing cattle, chasing sheep, doing general farm work. Often weighing the animals and doing reasonably scientific stuff and then coming back into the office and writing that up and helping the research officers record the data and analyse the data and things like that, so we were working as technical officers and to help us we're getting, a bit of both worlds of what we really loved. At the time, at Struan, we were doing this introduction of the new breeds of cattle and it was done through artificial insemination, so at that time mating was occurring, starting in early June running right through the middle of, the worst of the winter on the Struan plains, which about as cold and miserable as you can get in South Australia and we were riding around, checking cattle at 6, 7 o'clock in the morning on horseback and the horse was plugging along up to their knees in mud and slush, so it was quite chilly, but great fun belting around on the horses and having that sort of fun and then bringing the cattle in and we were then trained to do the artificial insemination and doing that part of the work as well, so it was a really good learning experience and a lot fun. So, that went on through the winter

period and then at times I were, I guess, more attached to Ron Ellis' projects and he had a couple of projects off the research centre, run on other farms and we would go out onto large properties, I can remember the name, for an example, Peter Fisher's property up near Marcollot where we would, be weighing cattle in a trial that had, there comparing, high growth rate bulls and low growth rate bulls is the, one impact it had on their constitution and how they performed and we did that periodically and so it involved carting mobile scales up there, putting them in place, weighing the cattle and then returning them, back to Struan and ending. So, there was a whole range of things that we did there at Struan, as I said, working on the sheep for the cattle and the farm in general.

Yes, so as a young bloke who wanted to work on the land and in closely involved with farming it was terrific for me to working with the likes of Ron Ellis, Mick Deland, Wayne Hawthorne and Ron McNeil went back, gained an enormous practical knowledge of livestock production and farming in the south east which, I think has stood me in good stead for the rest of my career. And, of course, learning the ins and outs of the public service and how the system works and all the things that go with that, it was a great opportunity because you weren't, you were only exposed to a lot of periphery, you were generally out working and people told you what to do and how to do, so it was a great learning experience.

I wanted to ask you Bill, how much interaction you had with the Department?

One of the things, there was an informal training process that they put you through so that if there were periodically courses put on by the extension branch in Adelaide, which might involve a couple of days photography course, or something like that, 'How to Use a Camera'. We would be sent up to do that, if there was an annual livestock conference, which my memory was held, in the conference area of the State Administration Building in Victoria Square and the livestock group was so big at that stage that we had this great auditorium and went a long way to filling it. These days you could meet in a post box.

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Tape 1, Side B

Some missing audio here.

[0:05] The perception of carcass competitions and prompts another thing was one of the real learnings from the Struan work. As the calves grew up they would be killed and we would evaluate their carcass types, the type of muscle, comparing the muscles between the Herefords. the Charolais and the Shorthorns and things like that and, but also there were, there was at that stage, an annual state beef carcass competition which Ron McNeil was the chief judge and which all of us were the hands who ran around and did the measuring and recording. The competition involved hundreds of cattle, including station cattle and local cattle and they were slaughtered at Samcor or Metropolitan Export Abattoirs as it was known at that stage, and we would come up

and make sure that the numbers on the animals matched the carcass and then do the various eye muscle measurements and fatness measurements that were required as part of the judging and then manually calculate all the results, which used to take two or three days and then, so you'd be in Adelaide in those days for something like [phone rings] five or six days.

Yes, we would have, go up and assist with the judging of the carcass competition and that was a terrific experience, it's a learning experience and obviously, the ins and outs of beef carcass, the beef carcass and also exposed us to the abattoirs and what went on there.

As, you know I think I said that would take us something like We were in Adelaide for something like, well over seven days to do the competition, and partly because it was all calculated manually and checked and everything whereas today, with computers we can effectively run a, judge the paperwork side of the competition in one day, whereas it was taking three or four days to make sure we got everything right previously, so that's been certainly our one big advantage, advanced that's happened through technology.

[2.56] For the record Bill, what is the point of the carcass competition do?

Carcass competitions were two-fold, they gave people an opportunity to come and see what their animals looked like and to get inside an abattoir which they rarely did because pretty much all the animals were sold at a sale yard then and that was the last you saw of the animal. You got an auction price for somebody brought it and if you had to get a good price for it, then you assumed it was a good animal. One of our aims was to get farmers to see what their animals looked like and to evaluate and give some evidence of what were the best types of animals for the different markets and over the years of course, the markets have changed enormously, probably in those early days, with export steers – I can't remember now – but the cattle, some of the beef would certainly have been going to Europe for certain markets there, whereas in, over a period of time during my career, America became the prime market for producing just bulk beef for hamburgers, to today they're providing really high quality beef into Japan and Korea and the Asian markets so, yes, there's been significant change there in the Department, certainly been in the forefront of working with farmers to evaluate how the different breeds operate or perform best for best different markets at the time.

[5.00] So part of that process with the competitions earlier was to pass information around and to, firstly generate the information, who's done well and who's done poor and then

Yes, the information would be generated as we said, on how the animals were formed, through all these measurements. There was a national beef carcass classification system or judging system that had been developed which put, stick to weightings on the fatness, the size and the age of the animals and things like that and we had an open day and the beef producers could come and see their particular animals or the public could come and see the animals, would be well written up in the media and obviously there were numerous prizes and awards given and ribbons and things like that and cups with the various breed winners and things like that. It was a major event, probably the major event, I guess, in the beef cattle year outside the Adelaide Show.

After a while that competition waxed and waned over the years and more recently the only carcass competition that's running has been one that's run in conjunction with the Adelaide Show, which is for steers from pure bred animals, so it's probably not as commercially valuable as the previous competition was, but it certainly does give people an opportunity to see how their animals are performing.

[6.52] Maintained some continuity haven't they?

Yes. And, of course, with the current health status and the need for abattoirs to be cleaner and more healthy than hospitals in some ways, it's not, not easy at all for farmers to get into the actual slaughter areas or the chilled areas to see their carcasses, so these days we're having to look for, resort more to photography to actually show the carcasses and also with the risk of them picking up some of the diseases that can be transferred from animals, abattoirs don't encourage people to go onto the actual slaughter floor these days.

[7.45] They wouldn't have of thought it'd be a number one best seller as a guided tour though to go the abattoirs?

No, it's an interesting experience to spend time in a large-scale abattoir and to build up a bit of a knowledge of the type of people who work there and have a such a different life to the sort of lifestyle that I've had and ... it was fascinating back in the '70s, when we, or the end of the '70s, at the end of what was the biggest beef boom in Australia's history and when it collapsed and there were thousands and thousands of cattle to be killed, abattoirs were working many, extra shifts and seven days a week and the workers, we would go there looking at our trial cattle and the same bloke would be on the same spot doing the same couple of knife cuts, time after time, it was interesting to talk to those sort of blokes and realise that they were happy to their job, get their dollars and presumably get their thrills in life by outside work, playing sport or bowls or something else, but their job, was just a job, not the terrific pleasure that we gained from the experiences that we had in our jobs.

[9.16] Do you remember your, earliest experiences of abattoirs?

I guess we had been through them at Roseworthy or at, as part of Roseworthy, we killed the rations for the staff and students on the college so we had been experienced to the process of killing and slaughtering animals but it certainly always is an eye opener the first time you go into an extremely large export abattoirs and just see the production line process that goes on there.

[9.58] I didn't ask you before 'cause we were, experiences over at Brighton with you into fishing, or anything else???

That's right.

[10.15] Well, look, might just focus too much on that particular competition, but that's one thing bringing you to Adelaide and when you're there were you having contact with staff or Departmental staff

One of the topics that was mentioned on our list here, the Northfield to Monarto and things like

that. When I first joined the Department obviously very rarely you would go into Gawler Place. What was the head office called, the Simpson Building in Gawler Place and from the first time I went there, there was this big spread along the wall of the plans of the new Department at Northfield and that remained there for a good many years and going into that building was a real experience, because I think it was originally the Simpson Washing Machine factory or something to that effect and people have a better knowledge than I have of that but, the building was very dark and glum, people were in the old timber paneled rooms which were as dark as dark. The lift was one of those open –wire cage type ones which you took your hands and your life, life into your hands as you went up the lift to whatever floor you had to go to and then met the particular people that, in the building there. That's my main memory of that. I was, as a prospective personalities I guess we would've been catching up with Harold Chamberlain as a person who interviewed, interviewed me first to join the job and that would've been my main contact in head office at that time. Although work had exposure to some of the extension training people at the time, my main memory slips me of names at the moment, but, as I said, we did some training courses in basic extension and photography or public speaking and things like that.

[13.08] Conversely did you get the extension people coming down to Struan?

I don't remember there being ... No. Generally, most of those courses were probably held in Adelaide and we went to Adelaide to those courses rather than them coming to us.

[13.38] What about other people in the Department? Did you tours from higher-up the ranks?

That's a good point. The chief, can't remember if he was head of the Department or head of the Livestock area and would've been Chief Livestock Officer, Livestock Corrector, I needed to check up on a few things there, was Marshall Irving, a vet and, he would periodically come down to Struan and have a look around and visit the other animal health staff in the South East as well, but, generally we were I think, pretty much left on our own. The only other person who would periodically come down would've been Harold Chamberlain who would come down to see how the research centres were going, and of course at that time, there was Kybybolite Research Centre which was pretty much all sheep, which was east of Naracoorte and they would've have reason to visit both Struan and Kybybolite.

[15.03] Marshall Irving, of course, is a vet who was heading up the Department so in a sense, he's unusual.

Yes.

[15.08] So he had a bit of an interest, but you said you were interested yourself.

At that time whether he was – I can't remember what the structure was – as a Technical Officer

[15.32] ... it makes more impact if you know it's the Director coming to see you got to be there

Yes. I guess when they were coming down probably the main thing we had to do was wash the cars or something like that.

[15.53] ... bigger places, Struan at the research centre it is?

At that time, it consisted of the high ground of the sand hill country, which would've been roughly 1000 acres and that was still in the stage of development. Much of it was covered with bracken and projects were underway to try and get on top of that. And the most productive plant was the plains area which, from memory, was about a 1000 acres spread out just past the Struan plains where the Mosquito Creek floats out. As far as that still is highly productive farming country. The farm's been added to since that time when two or three particular bights, I think, I'm not too sure what the area would be now, but it would be one of the bigger farms in there.

[17.06] And it's grown rather than contracted? It's grown rather than contracted?

Certainly has grown rather than contracted and whilst your workers change and it's still regarded obviously is important cattle operation, research operation, but today there is some of the pasture work and pasture selection work that's been done there would, which are the most valuable work that's come out of the pasture area.

[17.45] And how many people would've worked there in the early '70s?

At the time there in the early '70s, there were the three research officers, manager, an assistant manager – I didn't mention – Sam Inglis, he was a real character, a terrific bloke to work with, two technical officers and three or four, maybe five farmhands, which brings me to one little anecdote. At that stage we used to be provided with meat and milk because the farm hands under their award were provided with meat and milk. So every week we would be either killing an animal, a beast or some sheep and everybody used to get half a sheep a week and one of the farm hands used to quietly run a few cows, couple of cows on the side and they were milked, so we were provided with milk at 5 cents a pint or something exorbitant amount (laughs). Then any surplus milk would be quietly pushed into a couple of pigs, which at Christmas time, when that was a little bit of a bonus as well, so there was a bit of black market there in those days.

[19.12] So, fringe benefits or something?

Fringe benefits, yes, that's right.

[20.24] Did you go back to the research centre?

At various time, through the job and socially, certainly visited. I've certainly gone back to Struan. Over the years, where we were on the eastern side of the main road, what was the main road at that time in the research centre on the south side, the old Struan House was vacant. It had previously been a reform school for boys and with that half of the farm part of that, that area. In fact, it was left for that operation and when they eventually became out of favour, the research centre took over operating the farm. The house remained vacant for quite a long time. It was then renovated by the government and converted into offices. That's when the Naracoorte office moved out into Struan House. The research centre people actually never moved into Struan House. They were always either housed across the road or in a separate transportable building that was built adjacent to the house. That actually occurred after the time that I left. But I've been

back many times to meetings and to be involved with the projects, either involved on the research centre or with beef cattle projects in the south pasture projects of the South East.

[20.49] Well that's given us some insights into Struan and your involvement with what going on - that is probably going to be enough.

Yes. To go on with the next. Get down there and ??? a few people

[20.54] You can always come back on the transcript to add more if we think of more.

Perhaps if we could have a look at the role of the stock inspector over in Ceduna.

Yes. So in either January '74, we must've gone, well we actually moved to Adelaide for a six month period. In those days my wife was in education as a teacher when they got wind that she was going to Ceduna, they were more than happy to give her a six-month placement in Adelaide before she went over there, just to get anybody to go to Struan was a ... but to go to Ceduna was a plus for the Education Department. I spent six months in Adelaide working in the Animal Health Branch learning to how to be a stock inspector and animal health advisor. Subtle difference there between a stock inspector and animal health advisor, I suppose, should be explained. A stock inspector: you're an inspector under the Act and are required to police the *Stock Inspection Act*. But when they moved to having Roseworthy graduates, stock inspectors, they changed the name to animal health advisor and you had a component of then playing policeman, policing the Act, but also a role, a strong role as extension officers trying to encourage the animal health practices and techniques by encouragement rather than by enforcement through the law. So you had a foot in both camps, which some people had great difficulty with. It never greatly bothered me. In that way I felt that both roles worked together quite well. You had an Act to police and if you had to call the big gun in and go with the Act and take evidence and prosecution you did that, or, ideally, if you could encourage people through extensions, through the field days or radio talks or whatever to learn to dip their sheep properly or do it that way rather than be caught with sheep lice and have to prosecute them was a much better way to approach them. So that six months in Adelaide was, obviously, spent learning how to carry out the evidence for prosecution, to get kitted out with the government towel and scalpel and other sorts of things. When we went to a place like Ceduna where there were no vets at the time on the West Coast at all, Eyre Peninsula at all, so you were given a blind turned to or you were encouraged, in fact to carry out post-mortems on dead animals or to treat animals as appropriate, you could issue some scripts for some obvious diseases and things like that. Some of the more experienced animal health advisors, we would have to say, were as good as veterinary officers in what they were able to do and carry out in the health field, as a green, young, officer I certainly would not put myself in that category in any way, shape or form.

[24.15] That's a real combination of roles, the reinforcement, education, the vet.

Yes. It was a fascinating, enjoyable, challenging time. Obviously, once again a great time to learn and at that stage then be thrown out with the public first exposure really after stepping out from

the research centre to everyday exposure to the public and being the real ins and outs of being an extension officer and advisor in that sense.

It was interesting that both of us continuing on, with the time in Adelaide, the six months, one of the things that was being encouraged at the time was mulesing and for, as an example, I would go out and learn how to do mulesing and then be provided with a kit of equipment and things like that to carry out mulesing and demonstrated on the farms and on one of the most vivid memories I can have of that was, we had an incredibly experienced and respected person who trained farmers in using the practice of mulesing, which is cutting skin off the back end of sheep with shears to prevent them getting flystruck and grow over and give a better patch of skin around the end of the tail of the sheep. We would ... my training trip there was to go over with this highly respected person to a field day being held as I remember at Orroroo and set off in the day was an ex-fighter pilot who suffered badly in the war, as I remember it, I could well be corrected on this, I can't for the life of me think of his name, but he did generally like a drink and he learnt quickly that I was a non-drinker so he thought all his Christmases had come at once, because I could drive the car and we had a very slow pub crawl all the way to Orroroo that day, this is being – I would think – at least half a dozen pubs with him having around probably a whisky or something to that effect followed by a schooner of beer and then we'd be on our road again and we settled into the Orroroo Hotel. He took with him one of the most enormous retriever-crossed dogs I can remember, that spread from one end to the other of the back seat of the car. I guess it was against all departmental rules and regulations at that time. Stayed overnight at the Orroroo pub and then went out the following morning to do the mulesing demonstration. He would've had a very good evening in the hotel, catching up with old mates no doubt. I can remember his hands shaking like I could, never seen anything before. It was a real eye-opener to a young lad such as myself and he, however as soon as he took those mulesing shears in his hand and started on his spiel about how to go about mulesing he was just terrific to watch and did an absolute marvelous demonstration, had the farmers eating out of his hand and mulesing to perfection. It's a little side anecdote, that was a real learning experience and indicative of some of the staff that we had at time. He wasn't the only -person who come back from the war and had a job in the Department and had the odd issue with drinking and things like that, but in many cases, still delivered a very worthwhile contribution to agriculture and the Department of Agriculture at the time.

[27.10] Well, they would have been getting on a bit, getting towards retirement age, perhaps?
Well, it depends on the ??? time now.

[27.20] No, no. Then, they would've been getting on.
By that time, yes, I guess they remained around for another five or ten years after that, then most of them gone by the early 1980s I would imagine.

[27.28] Because there were quite a few departments, that all took people in and ...

Yes.

[27.30] Quite a few came in under reconstruction training schemes and ...

Yes, whether they were trained - I think they were pretty much trained in some ways. Some had been stock inspectors before the War, particularly in the South East working on footrot but some would've been Roseworthy graduates or I think, they were a crash course for people returning from the war at Roseworthy, maybe a two-year diploma or something like that, but they certainly generally hadn't had some training. So they were an interesting six months in Adelaide and then we moved over to Ceduna where we took up residence in a house on the edge of Ceduna, it was just a northern region hospital I remember, but on a little private Bay, almost, and we were in typical asbestos, Government house at the time, just my wife and I and we were able to put out, we bought a little tinny boat and pull that up on the, out the front of the house and one of the locals said, 'You're never going to be a great worry to the whiting in the area', and told us a couple of ideal spots to catch whiting and we'd come home from work, row out, catch a feed of whiting and come back for tea, so, there was a pretty good life there and I guess the other thing, was, that we mixed in very much with the local teaching community who were the biggest non, or itinerant community in the town apart from the people who worked off the radio telescope there and so I was lucky because I was the only Departmental professional officer there. There was the fruit-fly station, which was manned by locals and so I mixed closely and socially at that time with the teaching fraternity, played basketball and things like that, but settled into a wonderful time in Ceduna. Twelve hundred miles from home to definitely had to, you weren't running home to Adelaide every weekend or anything like that, so you had to make the most of your life there which was terrific.

[29.36] Where were you based in Ceduna, is there, was there an office for the Department?

Prior to my taking up the appointment there, the office had been vacant for a year or two, I think, and I moved into a new Government building which had two or three different agencies there a demountable type building, which was a, quite a nice modern building but prior to that, the Department office for the previous stock inspector who had been Bob Clare, an institution of the Department, his office was one of the harbour master, or Harbours tin sheds on the edge of the jetty, the beginning of the jetty. He had a partitioned-off room in that, which as you can imagine in Ceduna would've been either freezing cold or 120° in the shade and so he had a big bell outside the office and that he didn't have anything specific need to be in the office, he would take up occupation in the front bar and if anybody wanted him they would ring the bell and he would pop over and see them or he could be down the jetty having a fish. So I didn't pick the private office, which may have been a pity, but as I said, mine was a quite a, good public service type office that had been built on the edge of the town.

[31.05] And the fruit fly people had their own?

Fruit fly people just worked at their office – or they may have – the administrator was the boss

had a room in the building that I was in, but generally they worked out of the fruit fly block on the edge of town where the cars had to stop as they came through and they tended to whether, pretty much, they were local part-time people that worked around the clock and they pretty much occupied themselves there in their own, social world.

[31.42] So there was just yourself and ...

So I was there, as a Stock Inspector who had now had a Departmental staff based there and so as my first appointment had to create a job, work out what an extension officer/stock inspector did and virtually build a, build the job for myself.

During that time, I think I only had one, if not, two visitors from Adelaide, which was the Senior Inspector for staff, John StLedger Kelly, who was held in awe by all the stockies and things around the State and he made a couple official visits to me to see how I was going and other than that, you communication was generally either by letter or by telephone and manual exchange at that stage, so you will have three minutes or at the most six minute telephone call to Adelaide to follow up on a query or something like that and so, if you got called out to diseased stock or something or other you were pretty much on your own, or they, what was the Gospel of stock inspectors there at the time or hooked by, Phil ??? the veterinary diseases book by the, *Diseases of Livestock* it was called, by Hungerford and you would pour over that and try and work out who it was and whatever the disease was and followed through to eventually trying to, hopefully work out ...

**[33:23] End of Side B, Tape 1
Tape 2, Side A**

[0:12] Bill, you were just talking there about Ceduna and you're about to mention the Port Lincoln, officer at Port Lincoln ...

Yes. My closest associate and highly experienced officer was Des Harbel at Port Lincoln and during that time I would contact him if I had any queries and also we met a couple of times in our boundary area and caught up with things and I would've learnt things from him.

The other position on the Eyre Peninsula from a livestock perspective, well from an animal health perspective, was Mike Reilly, the health advisor at Cleve. So there were actually three staff during that time spread across the peninsula. At that time the person who had been the manager, the Assistant Manager, at Struan, Sam Ingles, was the beef and livestock officer at Port Lincoln and obviously went out and had quite an association with him.

The job at Ceduna was, in some ways, a political appointment. As I said, Bob Clare had left a few years earlier. There'd been political wranglings to try and get somebody back there. John Kelly when he sent me there said, 'This is really a training position and a political appointment there and we need somebody else there. You'll be immediately transferred out of Ceduna to somewhere else'. So I knew it wasn't necessarily for a long-term view, although I had expected

I'd get several years there.

[2:10] Was that political in the sense of the local community being ...

Yes, the local community had been stirring to have their stock inspector replaced. They didn't like the idea of being 300 miles away from somebody at Port Lincoln and certainly it was less than satisfactory to have ... Given that at that time there were a big number of stock there and there was also stock west of Ceduna. So I settled in to doing that and Bob Clare had been more of a stock inspector and I guess I became more of a health advisor looking for an extension role. However, the majority of the work I did, I would have to say, was related to purely stock inspection, certain amount of quarantine, putting farms under quarantine for sheep lice. Generally, that was as a result of them selling sheep in a sale probably at either Cleve or Adelaide and lice being detected on the sheep and then had been reported back to me at Ceduna and having to go the farm, show the farmer that he did have sheep lice, put him under quarantine and then go through the process of helping them to eradicate the sheep lice by making sure they were dipped and then ultimately lifting the quarantine.

Only if there'd been a blatant obvious break of the law, then it was my duty to take evidence for prosecution and then the decision was made in Adelaide to proceed with prosecution. To my knowledge at the time I was at Ceduna I don't think there were any taken to prosecution at the time.

[4:10] Were you going out and about to properties?

Yes. Like I said, to do that you would need to make contact with the farmer and tell him that sheep had been found infected with lice at the market and that I needed to come and inspect the sheep and put him under quarantine and go through that process, so you would go and visit the farmer. The difference between being a policeman in the policemen sense and being a stock inspector? Generally, the farmers aren't deliberately trying to have a misdemeanor. Generally, the sheep lice were quite low in the level of infection and it would be a genuine mistake by the farmer that for some unknown reason that he had sheep lice. Obviously they might have been aware of it and thought they'd get away with it, but it wasn't malicious type attempts to do it. So generally it was – from my perspective anyway – a gently, gently approach to policing the Act and things like that. Generally, we were pretty successfully.

I was going to ask you Bill, about checking other properties. Did you have a routine to do an annual inspection or a six-month tour?

No, you certainly didn't, we didn't go on individual inspections of make sure that we visited every farm or anything like that. It was generally on feedback on the fact that there was suspicion of lice. Once you had them under quarantine, then periodic inspection, checking that they dipped them properly and that eventually they would get rid of them and you would lift the quarantine and that would require an inspection after they'd been shorn and dipped. If the source of the lice was a neighbour then in that sense you would go and visit the neighbour and follow it through

until you tried to find the sources of the lice.

So that was ... If people had crook animals that weren't doing too well they might contact you to come and have a look at them. You'd try and help through and come up with a reason why they weren't doing well, whether it was poor nutrition or some disease. You might take plants and get them tested in Adelaide and come up with some reason like that. Or it might be weed poisoning, soursob poisoning or potato weed (if there's been summer rains). So you had that aspect of the work as well to try and help farmers, livestock producers, follow through any health or disease problems that they had.

The other thing that was starting to occur at that time was eradication of TB and brucellosis campaign. You probably need to follow through on different aspects of that with other people, but from my perspective I decided giving that to a new officer on the block and do something methodically and started on the most western part of the district and work through and that was a case where we tried to contact everybody who had cattle and go through a process of testing the cattle from west to east. During my time there we actually tested and cleared the whole of that of my particular district, but there were a lot of cattle there and a lot of very small farms. It was interesting stuff because generally the cows had hung around from the time that they'd been milking cows, and they'd given up milking them and turned into beef cattle. So they might have 10 to 15 animals, which was probably not a particularly large herd, but the yards and facilities were almost non-existent: there'd be a couple of beds tied together and the animals were rarely brought in for having anything done to them. So to bring them in to be TB tested was sometimes ... Some pretty exciting times in dealing with some fairly surly cattle and some pretty rough yards. We had a bit of fun there and some interesting experiences.

They weren't accustomed to the human ...

Human intervention that's for sure. (laughs) The process was that, because the TB testing had to be done by a veterinary officer, our vets would come over from Adelaide, generally come over with another stock inspector, and I would take them, I'd set up the run around for the places we'd go to. You'd inject cattle over three days under their tails to see if there would be a reaction and then three days later you would have to go back to the farm and get them back in again and you'd have to look under their tails to see if there was a reaction or not. In our case, as I said, I don't think we had any positive TB reactors, so it's a relatively simple case. But, once again, we had one of these ... One of the vets that came across then – not sure if he'd been in the war or not – but he had reputation that came with him. The stock inspector that came with him said, 'Now we can't stay in the hotel with this particular vet. We need to camp out somewhere'. He rang me up on this before they came over. So we camped at Fowlers Bay, which was then just a jetty and virtually nothing else. We camped on the beach there to do the first test. When we arrived there, Neil Kowalick, who was the stock inspector who came across from Adelaide, said to me, 'Now,

you take what's his name and go for a walk along the beach and I'll set up camp here and get the billy going' or whatever we're going to do, which I proceeded to do, which allowed him to go through the vet's kit and bag and everything and dispose of his supply of alcohol or at least 50% of it and top it up with tea so he couldn't tell any difference, so we could keep him sober for the three days, (both laugh) which worked quite successfully and we proceeded to carry out the tasks. So, another small anecdote, carrying out the job in those days. That was probably typical of what we did at Ceduna and ...

[11:30] What about the transport of livestock? Any interstate movement at that time that you had to look into?

Not a lot. Just occasionally there was some movement of stock going from the east into Western Australia. It's a very good point, Bernie. The West had some very strict requirements, particularly on weeds, and so any animal going across ... They had an inspection point near to their agriculture area, a bit like our fruit fly inspection points, and all animals going into the West by train or road were inspected. If the weeds were found on them they were sent back to Adelaide or back to South Australia, particularly if they had ... similarly if they didn't have the right certificates and paperwork to go in. Occasionally somebody would turn up at Ceduna and want me to inspect the animals or whatever. But generally it wasn't a big problem: there weren't many, very few sheep that went to the West from Ceduna. Occasionally there may have been: there was a couple of studs there and I would inspect some bulls and things like that.

There was a probably an interesting anecdote when we get to Port Augusta that we can talk about there of having to clean a ... We'll talk about it now. When I was at Port Augusta somebody came through and got me ... They had to have ... They were shifting farm I think, so they had a menagerie on board on the truck, on the trailer, a few cows and a couple of horses and chooks and everything and came and realised that they had to get this inspection and the cattle looked, they had half-a-dozen cattle and a couple of horses ... No, only two or three cattle and a couple of horses. They were ... Had quite a bit of Bathurst or Noogoora burr on them – I can't remember which one it was. So I instructed them that they had to get them clean before I was giving them a certificate to move across to the West and certainly if they got there with anything on them, they'd be in strife. So they bought some currie combs that you use for brushing horses, took them out to what were the old railway yards at Port Augusta or Stirling North and unloaded them and proceeded to try and throw these animals on the ground and scrape everything off, but every time they threw them on the ground, they picked up more burrs that were on the ground there and I'm not sure if they ever got them clean or not, but eventually we gave them a certificate to go across. (both laugh) Interesting sort of anecdotes that happened, all sorts of things.

[14:30] That was in your Port Augusta days.

That was at Port Augusta. But back at Ceduna, at the end of about 11 months, 11 or 12 months, I got advice from Adelaide that the officer at Port Augusta was moving on and that I was to be

transferred to Port Augusta. I can remember initially, when my wife and I were travelling to Ceduna, driving past Port Pirie and through Port Augusta on our way to Ceduna and saying, 'God forsake, if there's two places in South Australia we'd never want to live one would be Port Augusta and the other would Pirie' and here we were 12 months later being transferred to Port Augusta.

Did you have a choice in that transfer? Could you have said, 'No, I want to stay in Ceduna'?

I doubt if I did have a choice. No, no, in those days it was normal practice to transfer staff around. It was generally in ... from head office's point of view to have most of the more demanding districts filled with experienced staff and it was a gradual promotion (not so much promotion financially but certainly experience-wise) to proceed from somewhere like Cleve or Ceduna to maybe Jamestown or Port Augusta and then probably the busiest district and the district with the most status probably would've been Naracoorte and Mt Gambier, where you had a lot more animals and a lot more potential for disease in the wetter country. So there was a gradual graduation towards those particular positions or those areas as you gained experience over a number of years. Having said that, some people dug in their toes and stayed where they are. Des Harbel, I mentioned, spent pretty much all his career in Port Lincoln and stayed there the whole of his life. Others moved quite regularly over the years in various places. At that stage it didn't faze us. We had a wonderful time at Ceduna and I had gained a lot of experience. They were incredibly friendly people, so pleased to have somebody there and really held my hand and helped me gain my footing in both the experience as an Extension Office and an Animal Health Officer.

One last anecdote on the Extension side of it. Soon after we went there ... It was daylight saving I can remember and it one of my first country visits to talk at an Agricultural Bureau. I was talking about beef cattle husbandry not animal health. They said, 'No point getting here about 9 o'clock, because it's daylight saving'. Of course, on the West Coast it's even more daylight than over our side, over here. So I rocked up to the Hall for an Agricultural Bureau meeting, some 100 km east, northeast, of Ceduna, I think it was. Might've been 150 km probably, even further. Got there in time to see one of the first of the farmers there and he had to initially start the engine so we could have some light for the night for the meeting: it did eventually get dark. Eventually two or three other farmers turned up and they got the generator going in the hall, which is always good fun for the farmers to teach each other how to start a generator or something. The meeting must've got underway at half past 9, 10 o'clock or something to that effect. I proceeded to have my spiel; they had the business associated with the Agricultural Bureau meeting; and then at the end of the meeting we were all sitting around in a circle and out came a flagon of port and nobody could leave until the flagon of port was empty, which was probably well after midnight, probably nearer 1 o'clock I would imagine. Having had a wonderful social evening and a little bit of education and training, stepped outside to head home in my government car to be greeted by an absolute 'pea souper' of a fog and proceeded to drive back to Ceduna at about 15 to 20 km an hour or 30

km an hour or something quite slow, getting home somewhere around 3 or 4 in the morning to an absolutely distraught wife. From that time on she never worried about me being late home from a Departmental meeting. (both laugh)

[19:50] There wouldn't have been too many farmers at the meeting I guess [to share] the flagon. I guess generally those Bureau meetings were always an experience. They were interested in what you were saying, but they'd had a long day in the field and sometimes were fairly tired and so ... There would've been probably 10 or a dozen, middle-aged, old-aged farmers there.

Would they attend as a matter of courtesy, a matter of routine as much as anything? I'm speaking there more generally.

The Agricultural Bureau movement and its linkage with the Department is an area that you'd only need to pop your head over and a complete separate section, only because it's had a vital part in the history of the Department of Ag. and probably of agriculture in South Australia. It has a long and illustrious history. It's an association which goes back well over a 100 years. There's probably been the history written of it, but it was the main technology transfer facility for farmers way back in the horse and buggy days. In fact, many of Bureaux met on the full moon, nights of the full moon, so that they could have some light to drive, to ride, home after the meetings on their horse with buggies or whatever they used.

On the West Coast, being so isolated, they were quite important social events and also technology transfer events as I said, so that generally they would have a range of field days, probably monthly meetings, had quite a formal structure of minutes and chairmen and secretaries and all those sorts of things. I can't imagine or remember off the top of my head, but probably in my district in the West Coast I would've had 10 or 15 Agricultural Bureaux ranging from the far west of Ceduna out towards Wirrila and Wudinna to the east down towards Streaky Bay in the south, southeast.

[22:00] So that was your designated district?

Yes, that was pretty much my district. It went from the West Australian border, although there was very few stock out there, it wasn't all national park at that stage, so that was a reasonably good district then.

Did you go up north to ...

I eventually did. There was nothing north of ... Once you got outside the edge of the cropping and into the dog fence area, there was that area. Once you got into the pastoral area was handled from the Port Augusta office, as I did later on. That probably pretty much picks up some highlights from the life at Ceduna.

[22:25] One of the other things, when we reflect on it, but one thing that came out a few moments ago there was, what would've been the situation if your wife had wanted to stay in Ceduna? I mean in terms of her employment for example? Was it automatically assumed that because you're being transferred to Pt Augusta she has to go with you?

Yes. They were the good old days, as we're wont to say, at a time when, particularly if you're a teacher in the country – they were desperate for teachers in the country, so if you're particularly talking about some of the more isolated places like we were, then you could ... most people who wanted to go. Of course, the Education Department would've loved Chris to have stayed in Ceduna. We could tell you some of the interesting and funny stories about her time teaching there and things like that. She loved that time there.

Ceduna is a fascinating town, because you've got the traditional Anglo-Saxon farming community, you got a group-based fishing community at Thevenard, you've got an itinerant professional with the community there with doctors and nurses – doctor suppose, nurse – teachers, the people that worked for the Telecom station there, those sort of people and then you've got the Aboriginal community, so where they all came together, of course, was in the schooling system and so there were some quite interesting times there in the schooling system, but probably that's the Education Department's book isn't it, instead of Ag's?

So, at that stage, it was relatively easy for a married person to tag around. Well, if you were in nursing or teaching, which are supposed to be 'women's work', to tag around and follow along with her husband and they dutifully did. It would be quite different today, yes. There would be examples where some of our people have stayed where they are or, because of their wife's situation and vice-a-versa, some of the women that married farmers in their areas have had to resign and stay with their families ...

We were, in fact, didn't come to a head, because at the time we left Ceduna, Chris was pregnant with our first child. She'd made the decision that she didn't want to teach and we shifted in July and Kate our elder daughter was born in September, so that fitted our plans ... turned out quite well for us.

So you're down to Port Augusta, in ...

July we were ... September '75, so we must've shifted there in July '75, so we were at Ceduna only about a year, just over a 12-month period.

[25:20] Had you been replaced in Ceduna by another ...

No. The position remained vacant for several years until there was a bit of stirring locally and then we had an officer back in Ceduna, a professional officer back in Ceduna ... We had at that time ... their livestock people, but we had an agronomist at Streaky Bay who'd been there for a good long time, Tom Davidson. It was interesting that he was a lone officer operating out of Streaky and I was a lone officer operating out of Ceduna. Basically we were the same district, living 80 km apart, operating out of offices at 80 km apart. Eventually, another officer, Locky McLaren, was appointed to Streaky Bay – I don't think as a stock inspector – as a sheep advisor, went there as a sheep advisor at a time when there were a lot more sheep on the peninsula than there are at this stage. So Locky spent a few years as a sheep advisor. I would need to talk to him mostly, very often he had animal health responsibilities as well, and he would've covered pretty much that same district that I covered from Streaky Bay.

But no-one of them replaced you?

Nobody replaced me specifically. Once again based in Port Lincoln or Cleve as required.

Very instructive. (both laugh) We've got you to Port Augusta, almost. Perhaps there's a little bit more about Ceduna ...

We have touched briefly on the fact that you're out there by yourself. That's not unusual for a new officer in the Department at that time. It was one of the real challenges that made you sink or swim, that you're left there pretty much on your own and you had your 6-months training in Adelaide and you were expected to get on with the locals, get on with the job and just learn how to be an effective officer. There was certainly opportunity at the end of the phone to ring up and get a query or to follow through on whatever, but generally you were amazingly left on your own to develop your own skills and things like that. Consequently, your knowledge and involvement or concerns about what went on in head office were minimal. You're your own boss. That's where much of the culture of Ag. Department and today's views have developed from that. You saw yourself as more closely related to the farming community than ever to the government or as a public servant. You never saw yourself as a public servant: you worked for the farmer. It was a horrible shock to be told at meetings, by Radcliffe, that you actually worked for the Minister rather than the Department. But this individuality of the officer and the rural culture of the farmers worked 12 hours a day, so we worked 12 hours a day, that you were available at the end of the phone to the farmer from 6 o'clock in the morning, because that's when he was up and doing his business, just became natural, became built into you ... As I said, there was no thought of really being a public servant: that was very secondary. There was a culture of working with and for the farming community and trying to help them how to ...

Of course, in this case where you are so far distant from Adelaide and ...

Yes.

... telephone and fax and ...

No, we didn't have fax, I don't think. We had telephone. Did we have ... What were those other things before faxes – teleprinters?

Telex?

Telex.

Telex and telegrams and ...

There was probably telex in the town would've been the only way that we would've ... But generally it was handwritten letters. I didn't have any typing support. All my communication was by handwritten letters: thank goodness my writing's a little bit better than today. Yes, you had your filing cabinet, your desk and your phone, and car. I mentioned cars: they provided me with a Valiant station wagon which if you took it out in the paddock, on those limestone paddocks, was an interesting exercise over there – rumble rumble and scratch, scratch underneath. It seemed to be OK at the time, but it was great big car for one individual to be belting around in but on those open roads it was pretty ...

Perhaps a limited choice then?

No. Eventually ... Probably could be my first appointment I didn't make any choices, but eventually I did choose to have a ute when I was later on in career. At Port Augusta I had a 4-wheel drive which was essentially for the job there.

[31:10] Did you get someone from head office coming up to see you or did you go into town?

Certainly during that year. I can't remember, but I would've gone to town a couple of times: there would've been the annual branch conference and maybe I went over for some training. I probably went down to Port Lincoln two or three times. I had one or at the most two visits from John Kelly, who was the supervisor of the stock inspectors at that time, and came to see me over there.

So you had to be self-reliant and you're pretty well left to yourself?

Certainly were. Yes. As I said, ... an officer and hopefully learnt to work reasonably professionally on your own, be a self-starter and problem solver on your own.

Did you get any explanation about the move to Port Augusta? Why ...

Certainly I was advised that the person at Pt Augusta had left and they were keen to fill that position and it was a move for me that would be appropriate for me to go. I do not recall if I had any choice to go there or not.

I remember discussing the move with Don Woods of the Bureau and saying that I had not been fully occupied all the time.

[32:10] **End Side A, Tape 2**
Tape 2, Side B

[0:04] [All] I remember getting on it was I hadn't been fully occupied here at the time and given that we've eradicated the TB and things, it would be really a waste of taxpayers' money to leave

me stationed here at this particular time. So I was fully aware of the background to why I was shifting to Port Augusta. So onto Port Augusta.

One quick one to round it out. You mentioned before with Struan, you were separated from Naracoorte – you had your own community so to speak. What about in Ceduna? How did you get on with the local people and become part of the community?

Socially, yes. In this building ... This was the Methodist Church ... Certainly pretty strong members of that. We mixed in with that community. Mixed in probably mainly socially with the school teaching community, of course, with Chris being a teacher and gave me the leg in there to mix with them. In these isolated country towns the itinerants – of course that's for want of a better word – people who come in and move on eventually, generally mixed together in their own social groups, that was particularly obvious there, and in Port Augusta in particular. We did have relatively large number of people who came for a few years and then moved on and the locals tend to shrug their shoulders and you get to know a few of them.

I did mix. There was a Department of Social Welfare bloke – I can't think of his name now – who worked closely with Aborigines. I got to know him quite well. In fact, played in the Nunga basketball team with the Aborigines and he and I played in their team in the local social round of basketball there, so we mixed in socially pretty easily and in those situations everybody does because they are so isolated and communities generally welcome you there and if you're prepared to get stuck into it in and enjoy it and show you're interested they'll accept you with open arms. The one thing that didn't help me was the fact that I was never a big, brawny footballer so I didn't play football. If you happened to play football, then you don't need any introduction, you're accepted with open arms, you go straight into it, although they try and grab you ... any of the local ... You buy a footy team, try and grab ... I certainly didn't have that advantage 'cause I wasn't a footballer, but if you talk to most blokes who have gone to the country that's one of the quickest ways to get to know people and get to mix up a group of friends.

[3:25] I was wondering about that level of involvement because of your earlier comment about the political aspect of the people in the area, farmers in the area, wanting someone from the Department. Yes.

How readily were you welcomed – there's this man from the government? (both laugh)

Yes. But because if they had problems, it was 300 miles to get somebody up from Port Lincoln and to have somebody nearby was a terrific boon for them to be able to ring up somebody and get some help immediately, as inexperienced as I was. At least I gave them a conduit into the system and into Adelaide if there was a serious problem and things like that, but West Coast people are fantastically friendly and would welcome anybody with open arms. They were great people to work with.

[4:25] Port Augusta.

Yes. So I moved to Port Augusta. Was probably a bigger contrast for me and a big, equally large, learning experience because I had, apart from one or two holidays in the Flinders Ranges, never seen or been exposed to the outback and moved to Port Augusta, once again in as the one professional officer in the town, there was no other Departmental staff other than once again, a team of fruit fly officers who used to, made an office adjacent to mine, but operated pretty much their own life in that they used to go out on the train to the East–West train and go through the passenger trains, picking up fruit and advising people about bringing fruit into or out of South Australia. So once again I was a loan operator in Port Augusta and my district was bounded by New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia. My area was three-quarters of the State and so consequently it involved enormous amounts of travel and the need to plan your work in a very time-efficient manner, and that's certainly an important part of it, because once you set off on the road, you would be on the road for a week: probably the most time I would've been away from home would've been approximately a fortnight, and at that time very few accommodation opportunities. Occasionally you would stay overnight at stations, but you tried to avoid it because it wasn't encouraged and you would tend to be totally self-sufficient and you would live out of the swag and camp for the night on the side of road by yourself there, something I'd never done in my life before the sale, it was a very exciting and interesting learning time for myself, to own a swag and work out of that type of situation.

[7.52] Did you get any, help or have any involvement with the Pastoral Board and those sorts of people who were travelling around?

Yes. Minimal travelling mixed in with the Pastoral Board. They operated at that time purely out of Adelaide and most interaction with them would occur at a place at meetings such as, at Marree or Oodnadatta, there might be a meeting of the Farmers Federation or South Australian Stockowners Association; I think it was called in those days, that the Farmers were members of and there would be a meeting of the, on the same day, because they all would be travelling in some hundreds of miles themselves, there might be three or four meetings, one meeting would close and somebody else would step up to chair the next meeting, then they'd carry out on to the next meeting, the same people would do the same meetings, so there might be a Farmers Federation meeting, there might be a Marree Progress Association Meeting. There might be a Stockowners Association meeting and they would all be carried out on the same day and I might also be addressing them on the allocation of TB or something like that, so everyone came to town and the meeting was held and you caught up with as many people as you could and there would probably also be Court held that day, so you'd have to work around the, ... one of the station owners would be the JP, so he would be around the meetings around when he was holding Court and things like that as well, so a totally different, different approach to life.

[9.56] The Pastoral Board, I know it's not a Department, it's Land Department and so on, but I suppose,

because they stay in their own territories?

Yes. We were pretty much solo orientated there, they tended to travel ... I don't think they used to travel alone as much as we did. They travelled in pairs more, they had more experienced and senior staff who Rod Everett and, Jim Vickery was the other bloke who would've been a senior inspector and ...

[0.36] Jim, Jim Vickery?

Jim Vickery. that's right. They would be travelling the rounds, visiting properties and certainly there was never any conflict or anything. In fact, we worked closely together when it was appropriate but, they tended to do their job and certainly I did my job and I got to know them, you know, professionally and socially at, when we were, you know staying overnight in Marree and things like that, at various places. But I cannot remember actually doing a trip with the Pastoral Board and my time there which was probably a pity, because they were very experienced and knowledgeable people. This is going to be a bit disjointed at times talking about the trips and who I did trips with. I can remember one of my, one of the trips that I did do with somebody was with a fellow by the name of Bob Burgess, who was in Apex with me at the time at Port Augusta, I got to know him very well. He was the AMP insurance rep. salesman in the area and highly regarded person and I know he had one of the first Range Rovers up there and I went with him on a trip, my first trip anyway up the Strzelecki Track, we went right up the Strzelecki Track, Innamincka and looped around to Birdsville and then back down the Birdsville Track and so that was a very sociable trip, travelling with somebody like him who knew all the people on the track and had good communication skills and we got on really well and that was a trip that I did with him. In that area much of work was showing that the Department had an interest and had a presence up there and just keeping an eye on what was happening in a sense rather than, certainly in the early days, the type of strict animal health and stock inspection work that was being carried out at Ceduna. Having said that, the key ... I had two key tasks there, from the animal health perspective. The first one was sheep lice control and we're talking about large properties with 20, 30 000 sheep or more and so it was, and the rules that applied to the stock inspection there and for infected sheep was quite different to what applied elsewhere and the other broad aspect of the work there was, it was the early days of the TB and brucellosis eradication program, which at that stage, when I moved there it, was still being operated totally out of Adelaide and I would have to say it wasn't a 'token effort' in eradication, but it was very spasmodic and it was, I probably as much targeting as trying to establish the extent of the disease across the country as it was, to mount a fully blown eradication program in the early days. So my task, in the BTB sense, therefore in the cattle area outside the dog fence was to develop a liaison and relationship with the people, station owners or managers and inform them that this big bogey was coming and talk through them how it might be addressed and build up liaison and facilitation for what was eventually going to come and that they were going to have to face major changes to the way they operated, so it was, less of a hands-on practical doing things and more of a liaison and building,

building rapport with the people.

[3.51] A big opening, the vets would have to come in because, for the eradication campaign

Yes. At the time that was going on, I was working, as I said, as a lone operator out of the Port. There were teams, the eradication program, or programs had already started on some of the Kidman properties, for instance, particularly Anna Creek and teams would come up from Adelaide, maybe test two mobs of 800, 1200 cattle each. The cattle would be injected one day, he'd go onto another, set of yards maybe 50, 100 miles away on the same property, test another mob and then come back the next day, or, probably have a rest day and then come back and read the reactors to see what reactors there were, and that went ... The aim in the initial stages were working with Anna Creek was to try and establish how much and get rid of the TB in a particular section of the property and try and hold that as a clean section and then move on to other areas or use those clean animals to sell into, move into other parts on the Kidman properties.

I was occasionally involved in that, but generally they were planned trips from Adelaide and I'd be aware that they were happening, but weren't directly involved with them, with the exception of two or three trips, my, when I first moved there, my first trip up there was to go on one of these TB testing trips and it turned out to be an extremely good learning exercise for me in the isolation and the risks involved with being, luckily not alone in the bush. In those days the team would consist generally of a vet and a stock inspector, heading off from Adelaide, I think there was generally only one of each, maybe more if there was a bigger project, in a Land Cruiser, Toyota Land Cruiser Wagon and they were, I think, allotted something like ten days to do the trip, but if you drove like mad, you could, achieve a spare day along the way or some time to do other things, touristy type things along the way and nobody in town worried too much about that. So, my first episode, I was picked up in Pt Augusta, should I say and headed north to do a test at Lambina Station, which is about one property south of the northern territory border, so we had a, bearing in mind, there were no bitumen roads that went to Port Augusta. We headed up to, I think it was Mt Willoughby, we got to, I think it was Mt Willoughby at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon Now I must take a step back there we drove like mad to get to Coober Pedy, where we spent basically a whole day noodling for opal and finding it, mucking around in the opal fields there.

[7.44] Examining the landscape from ...

Examining the landscape, yes, shall we say and then drove like mad north and made camp on the side of the road, had made camp on the side of the road, I guess, the night before, so the next day we got, to Mt Willoughby and we were running late, to get to Lambina, certainly weren't going to get there in daylight and testing was due to start, probably, I would have the cattle in the yards, ready to start at six or seven, maybe earlier, five or six in the morning, the next morning and we'd start at daylight and in the old road, at Mt Willoughby, which is heading north and then the road

headed, sort of north-west to, what was then, Marla Bore and then you had to come back north-east to Amata and our fellas reckon there was a track across, from Mt Willoughby straight through to Amata so, when we filled up at Mt Willoughby and we asked the bloke there who was, just a casual bloke there, the owner wasn't there at the bowser 'You go across the gate to the edge of your farm, then go to that and then just follow the track and you'll eventually find your find road', and we're talking probably, off the top of my head, 100, 150 miles probably, of going, basically cross country and it turned out to be quite an episode in that, we got our first puncture and proceeded to get the spare tyre from underneath, which was held up by a chain, only to find that'd been scraped off somewhere back in the past by, a rock somewhere and we only had the spare tyre on the roof, so we took that off, put that on, went on another ten or so, miles or something, got another puncture and left without any inflated tyres. The so-called 'kit' that we had with us was insufficient to fix the puncture, we want to, make repairs, so we had to proceed to take the tyre off its rim, pack it with grass so we could continue going in which we, did into the dark and we had along the way, totally run out of track, but knew if we kept going, keeping the sun on our left we would eventually hit this road we had to hit and of course, the reason that the road doesn't go due north was in fact, because there was enormous gully and gulfs in between where a big creek goes through and it was only by the lack of seeing the sun on the other side of this gulfs that we didn't finish up driving into this gulp right on sunset and turned right and found our way around it and, so as a young kid who'd never, bloke who'd never really experienced the bush, this was episode in how you can survive in the bush but also how to make sure you were well and truly prepared, and from that day on, I made sure I was well equipped for being alone in the bush. The end of the story was that we did have a 2-way radio with us but nobody seemed to be listening in, eventually in the morning, after we'd camped overnight, ... Oh we come out, we got nearly to the, got to the road, where we headed to, we didn't have clue whether we had to turn left or right, where we were in relation to the station, so we were able to talk to the local station people who were on the radio and he' saying, 'Has anyone seen those bloody Department people on the road' of course, and we were able to come on and eventually got tracked.

[10.23] I thought you were going to say you had the two-way radio, but it didn't work.

Yes. I had a ball. I'm not sure, why we couldn't pick up people during the night, but it was my introduction to the bush. It's a story that I will never forget and if I was a good story teller it would sound a lot better.

[10.40] Well, it sure ended OK, could've been worse.

Could've been a lot worse, that's right.

[0.34] Covering enormous territories, and I mean sometimes, you say, so old ...

Yes. The other major task that I there as I said, was sheep lice, and some of the largest sheep stations in the world, certainly the world sheep station, sheep stations owned by the McLachlan family out there and sort of they used to – I'm trying to remember the name – Mulgathing and

Commonwealth Hill, which are the two properties, which they had cut out of the edge of the Nullarbor Plain and they used to shear there from January through to Easter they used to shear on their stations up there for something like three months, and a couple of times I had to travel to a siding called Malbooma on the railway line to Western Australia because I also had properties in Western Australia and they might be shifting sheep there and they had to be inspected before they went to the West, so at the end of summer I'd be driving up there in an unconditioned, non air-conditioned, Toyota wagon and, inspecting some thousands of sheep that have been there and help load them on the train and send them on their way to Western Australia. One of the most embarrassing times for the McLachlan is they got sheep lice in that area and it was the result of some massive fires, which allowed the fences to come down and the sheep had strayed in from neighbouring properties and I had to go up and put the station, Commonwealth Hill Station, which I think had 70 or 80 000 sheep under quarantine for sheep lice. That was probably one of my more interesting episodes in diplomacy with the manager there, who would've prided himself on never having sheep lice. It is probably the one station that, in fact, was able to get rid of sheep lice because there is no surface water in that area at all, because all depended on bores, pipes and troughs and windmills. Once they turned the water off at a trough, the sheep aren't there and they perish, so they turn it off, muster the sheep and then come back the next day and pick up what was left. So, they are able to be totally clean, the paddocks, out, which in many other areas is difficult where you've got surface water and things like that. So within 18 months, I think, we had cleared the property of sheep lice and ...

[2.35] Most of the couple of times, you were having to inspect the livestock, sheep, cattle, whatever, you physically inspecting each animal?

Yes. Well, yes and no.

[2.40] Let's talk about some of these huge numbers.

If they are not shorn and they are lousy they are generally easy to pick up because they generally get rubbed on the fences or whatever, so their coats are quite distinctive, so you would grab one of those and once you have found sheep lice, particularly if there's a goodly number of them, then demonstrated them to the farmer, you could say, 'they are endemic in the flock in that particular mob', so once you've found the lice, two or three sheep and you are, that's all you had to do. However, when you came to inspect them to release them you needed to be pretty confident and they were off, that they would be shorn and they would be dipped and then you'd go and look at one of these 6 or 8 weeks after that and they were much harder to find and you just to, you had to look for the samples, for sure, so if it was a small farm of, you know, a few hundred sheep, then you might look at 20 or 30 if they were clean and you'd be confident in a big mob like that you might tip 50 or 60.

[3.52] Before you'd have to come back and do a subsequent inspection?

If you were confident that you got them clean, you'd release them from quarantine and generally

that would be enough to stir the farmer up to make sure they did the right thing next time, kept an eye on himself. I mean, many farmers would report themselves, as had happened with this case, at McLachlans they hadn't, we found inside them.

[4.15] It was in their interests to ...

It was in their interests that they got rid of them. There'd be an inoculation for the brucellosis, and I can understand you got to inoculate each of the cattle.

[4.24] Well you can start with that 80 000 sheep ...

So that was the ... and then there was, a year or so had a sale yard at Wilmington, monthly sale, I used to go there and check those for sheep lice and the like that and we had some smaller, mixed farms around the lower Flinders Ranges, Quorn, through there, that we were also in the district that, the vast majority from the work at Port Augusta was travelling in the Far North.

[4.58] But how far south did you come...

We had a person at Jamestown, so he would pick up presumably as far as Oororoo. I would've done Wilmington, Quorn, Hawker. Melrose was about as far south as they come. Then Jamestown we would've come across to Pirie and we cut through there.

[5.16] And we got a bit of district for you, with your animal work as well as people doing agronomy and weeds and ...

I was the only livestock person, the only department person at Pt Augusta, there was quite a large office in those days at Jamestown, that looked after that pastoral country east of Jamestown, up toward Broken Hill, but they had a Soils Officer, Agronomist, probably a Weeds Officer as well, had quite a team at Jamestown and they would've picked up the farm, they, their district would've included Hancock.

[6.00] I knew they had them in Jamestown, just didn't know how far.

They would've come. The cropping people would've come over and done any cropping area into my district area. The Department boundaries, certainly at that stage were more dictated by this relative position in the staff, rather than any strict rule which was great between any particular area.

[6.20] ... there in Pt Augusta in the mid-70s, and starting to get to this regionalisation concept, I just toss it in for the moment - that's probably a big one for another session,??? sort of

As when we were talking about Ceduna, to the nature of my work, I wasn't strongly impacted by regionalisation. Yes, no, having said that, regionalisation had a much greater impact, certainly in the South East, which was the first region established and so, people who worked in there would be strong, strongly impacted by it. I guess I would've been impacted by it more when I moved to the Kadina office and was in a region at that point. At Port Augusta the major impact that changed the job there, towards the end of my time, was the move of the staff from Adelaide, that were involved with TB and Brucellosis to Port Augusta, the creation and of, I can't remember whether, I presume we must've had a northern region, well that was created at that time, but certainly we

put a regional veterinary officer at Port Augusta to cover the northern region and, whereas I had Ceduna and there had been totally freelance, my own boss doing my own thing, I can remember being brought into Adelaide, or coming down to Adelaide to meet with the Chief Inspector of Stock at the time with the Chief Veterinary Officer, Pat Harvey, and to be told that he was shifting a veterinary officer there and he would be the officer-in-charge and that I would be responsible for him. That was a bit of a shock to me and we went from there in my time to probably having eight or ten people, based in Port Augusta, stock inspectors and vets working on the TB and brucellosis program.

[8.52] No getting into the bureaucracy after all?

Yes and I did not get on well with that person and had great difficulty associating ...

[:] **End of Side B, Tape 2**

Tape 3, Side A – session of 18 May 2004.

[0:30] OK Bill, last week, we got to the point where you had moved, well, you had just moved to Port Augusta in around about July '75, so perhaps if you can pick up the driest account of his career. I would associate matters that shaped into the world of agriculture and the world of the Department as we go along.

Yes in a, an interesting time for me because we arrived in July of 1975 into what was called Snobs Hill, a very nice, country house there, government house, a government provided house and settled in there. My wife, I think we said earlier was pregnant and our first child was born in September and that turned out to be a rush trip and mix up on things and our daughter was actually born at Port Augusta, at sorry, we're looking for a Minister, born at Whyalla, so, it was an interesting arrival in Port Augusta. I say, that as I guess, just a little offshoot thing that we're talking about the move in that, I went to... Chris finished up in Port Augusta for nearly two week, I think it was and, when I rang head office, Don Kelly decided, I had my wife down there and I said, 'It's okay if I take a day or two off and get her down there' and he says, 'Oh, surely you can find something to do down there for a week or two can't you?', so effectively, I went down there and didn't have to take leave or anything, it was the way the organisation looked after me at that time, I guess, so yes, I've always been appreciative of that.

[2.48] So, a bit of de-facto maternity leave or something in a sense, or in your case, paternity leave
That's how things were down in those days, yes.

[3.00] Did you find something to do?

Yes, we did. I didn't stay down there all that long, came back and forth a bit but, there were a series of small farmers on the edge of Whyalla which had been obviously put there as part of the development of the steelworks and the building, add the accommodation and things there for the locals and had a sort of farmlets that, that's a fairly good, run a few pigs, or run a few chooks. They didn't actually live on them, they were subdivided on the edge of the town for that particular purpose and I guess, forearm to what we'd call today as hobby farmers and they had some fairly suss, ways of raising their pigs and feeding bakery waste and butchery waste and things to their

pigs, so one of the rules we had to enforce was swill feeding and so, yes, I gave them a pretty hard time for a couple of week there on swill feeding rules and regulations and checking that out, so, whilst the smallish, little parts of the job as a Stock Inspector that you had to do, but as with most things, people were pretty co-operative once they knew what rules they were supposed to be following.

So we're back to, Pt Augusta proper. At the time, the office for the Department was right in the centre of the main street, it had consisted of two rooms, one which I occupied and one which the fruit fly people occupied, who used to travel out on the Indian Pacific train to make sure there was no fruit and veg coming into the State and I rarely saw those blokes, they tended to live their own life and obviously they were rostered on when the train was coming and going and things like that, so, yes, I worked out of the office there by myself, didn't have any clerical support, as was the case at Ceduna and it's interesting when you look back at it now, but mobile phones and email and things, how we actually used to communicate at all, because much of the job at Pt Augusta involved ... the position once again as a Stock Inspector come out of a Health Advisor and so it was moving around the pastoral area and so you would actually be out on the road, you might be living in a swag and visiting properties for anything up to ten or twelve days at a time, so, anything, messages used to have to accumulate back at the office or people would catch up with you when you came back. The district at that time for the Animal Health Adviser was in fact three-quarters of South Australia was the area of the district and the boundaries were the Western Australian border, the Territory border, the Queensland border of the New South Wales border and then, sort of, east and west through Pt Augusta and so travel was the order of the day. We were supplied with a 4-wheel drive, Toyota Land Cruiser, and we had radio, yes, both two-way radio, the Flying Doctor radio system and that was really the only way of communication once you were on the road and you could listen in to the stations on the chat session, or you could actually send, telex, no, not telexes, faxes I guess, over the radio system. ... I'm waffling around a fair bit here, getting a bit of the background.

[7.23] We covered a little bit of it, last week as we talked about a couple of experiences of the, with the four-wheel drive and swagging and so, so we touched a little bit of it, but just, you know, picking up on where we were. Had you were going out solo to the district?

Yes, yes.

[7.41] Although you use the word, we

Yes, yes, I was based there by myself and in the first couple of years, first twelve or eighteen months, pretty much all my troops were by myself

[7.51] And that was fairly standard, for Departmental job?

At the time, yes, my predecessor, Bob Powell had been there travelling, certainly by himself all the time and, and I guess, if anything went wrong, really, the only person who would've known I was away was probably my wife and she wouldn't be expecting contact to be made more than

once every few days, if you happen to come to a town or somewhere that you had reason to try and ring home.

[8.32] So, you wouldn't have a radio back to home base, does as in your home?

No, we certainly didn't have a home based radio there and in fact, I did rarely contact her from when I was on the road at all, interesting when we look back on it now.

[8.58] What happened to your, office in Adelaide, your head office, did you have to submit a work plan or an itinerary or

I don't think I ever submitted itineraries, I was pretty much left to my own devices, I mean, I wasn't rushing off every week or anything like that, of course, but quite often you'd be away overnight if you were going out to inspect sheep within a couple of hundred miles of Pt Augusta, but periodically, it certainly used to make it, if you made a trip up into the cattle country, then you'd be away, as I said, anything up to ten or twelve days, but, no, I guess the majority of the trips were only two or three nights out, usually associated with sheep lice inspection in the pastoral area and that was always [SPEAKER ASKED FOR TAPE TO BE STOPPED]

Yes, so the job predominantly involved a lot of sheep lice work, where the sheep lice were generally referred at the market in Adelaide or somewhere else and interestingly enough that they were very diligent in dipping all these sheep but often what they got caught out with having sheep lice on was, if they sent in a few sheep stragglers, that they hadn't caught at the normal shearing and they bought them in and just thought, 'oh, we'll just shear them, then shoot them straight off to market with some cull rams, or something like that' and they'd get caught out that way, but, so, it's certainly not things they said, previously it wasn't any sort of deliberate, really any deliberate sort of attempt to be corrupt or anything like that, so generally, it was a matter of trying to convince people to do the right thing by extension methods, talking to them generally, and then if necessarily you could fall back on the Act to prosecute if you needed to, but I think there was one prosecution in the time I was at Pt Augusta, that I was involved with, so I guess that shows in three or four years over that period, that was the only time that I actually had a legal issue that I had to deal with.

[11.17] It made you unpopular with the

No, generally the person you were pinging would be a bit upset to start with, but generally, I mean you would quite often take evidence for prosecution because that was sort of the standard rules that you had to do because they know whether it was going to be regarded as an offence until later on, but generally people accepted that the rule was there and it was there for a good reason and pretty much all etc., did quite well.

[11.55] So I was thinking, of, the pastoralists be familiar with Brucellosis, Tuberculosis, Pleural Pneumonia, eradication campaign, location campaigns and so on?

Yes, that's right. We pretty much all our policies that I was involved with at the time, they were, the vast majority were very supportive of what was going on and so, you had, really had good

support of the community as to what you were trying to achieve.

[12.25] Were you being an element of self-policing, other pastoralists would pull people into line?

Well, generally, yes and that's, that's certainly on the inside country, on farming country, the most common way to find out about sheep lice was a neighbour reporting them probably or coming out through a sale yard and then one of the, the need was to probably you pay for the person you found it on may not be the originator of the problem, so you'd then have to go and visit the neighbours and things like that so, and check them out, so that was generally how you, and of course the bush telegraph being what it is, everybody knew very quickly whether there was a problem or somebody from Government's smelling around and you'd get people reporting and things like that.

[13.26] Do you recall any instances of stock being moved through the area, like, coming through from the eastern states or from Western Australia?

Yes – stop me if I did talk about this one last time – but it, there was not a lot of people, well, there were occasions of big mobs of sheep because under the stations, big station owners, corporate ones have land in the west as well and if they were moving out of my district I would generally inspect them on the stations before they left. But on the odd occasion, and I can particularly remember one family who was obviously shifting their farm, or had bought a farm moving out of, I don't know if it was South Australia or New South Wales to the West, and they dropped in at my office to get me to inspect their, what they had on board the truck, which was, I think, probably some stud rams, and the chooks and they were included a couple of horses and some cows and they were covered with either Bathurst or Noogoora burr, I can't remember, but certainly had evidence of Bathurst or Noogoora burr on the animals and if you took those into Western Australia, they would be inspected at one of the border points and you wouldn't know how to clean them up, you had to send them back, so, I clearly pointed this out to these people and they took their animals, the truck out to the railway yards at Stirling North and found a yard there that they could unload the horses and cattle in and proceeded to try and brush these seeds off them and to do that, they in fact, the easiest way was to throw it along the ground and hold, brush them there and pick them up and do them on the other side and of course they cleaned up one side and then tip them over and they'd turn up on the other side, just as much as, so it was ... My memory, rough memory, they did at least get them clean, I did pass them to go into, to go across to the West but I never heard whether they actually got there or not.

[15.46] So they didn't come back to haunt you?

They didn't come back to haunt me, no, so that was, that was just an odd incident, but generally people made preparation well in advance and if they were travelling through my district, which obviously they had to if they were going, west to east or east to west, I probably wouldn't even know that they'd travel through in most cases.

The other big area of dual work in the, out of Pt Augusta office at the time I was shifted there,

was the beginning of the TB and brucellosis eradication program and up until that time, it'd been all run from Adelaide, it was still being run from Adelaide, but I was given the task of sort of being liaison person and talking to the station people about where they, that this thing was coming and that they would have to test all their cattle and start to soften them up with what was going to be a massive change in the way they operated and did things. There was already some testing going on, the, I think, the Department decided they'd work with Kidman's and try and eradicate it on one of their particular properties. Did we talk about this?

[17.13] No.

And that we were testing on Stuart's Creek Station, which is just south-west of Lake Eyre and the team used to come up from Adelaide and test maybe, a 1000 cattle, 800 or 1000 cattle and then if there were any reactors, rather than send them down for slaughter in Adelaide, because they weren't worth all that much, usually they were all cows or whatever, they would be just slaughtered there and then on the side of road and post-mortemed for any sign of lesions, if they were TB reactors and then in theory, just left there to rot at the side of the yards, or dragged away by the station, but we got, wind that in fact as soon as we drove off back to Adelaide or as soon as the TB testers who'd come up from Adelaide with a vet and stock inspector from Adelaide that got wind that they were going, they got wind that they had in fact, the animals were being dressed as soon as we disappeared and being sold, sent over to Coober Pedy and sold in the town of Coober Pedy. So, one of my tasks was to set up to Coober Pedy to convince the local butcher there and the local supermarket that these cattle that were coming in from the station were in fact, possibly diseased and they shouldn't be sold to the general public, or shouldn't be used, be used at all or ... In those days, Coober Pedy was a pretty rough and ready place, as you can imagine, Coober Pedy, late '70's and I'd imagine, by the time I got to the end of the main street everybody in the town probably knew that there was a government car floating around and by the time I got to talk to anybody, I don't think there was anybody in Coober Pedy who actually spoke English who could talk to me.

[19.38] They hadn't seen any cattle obviously?

Hadn't seen any cattle, were not using it, didn't understand what I was talking about, but yes, we gave them a message and in those days, of course, they'd probably continue doing it to a certain degree, but they were well aware of, that it was an illegal practice and that was how Coober Pedy worked in those days, I think.

[20.04] It hasn't changed a great deal

No, no, no.

[20.10] Still, educating the people there, I mean, the infected cattle, it was a diseased cattle and were they unhealthy, in terms of human consumption?

Well, I guess any that were clearly infected they certainly wouldn't have sent over there, I don't think. The TB test wasn't a hundred percent accurate, so at that time and so you would get some

that reacted that you, on post-mortem you couldn't find the disease at all, so they would probably have sent those over and if the meat's cooked properly, then you're pretty safe, in a way that you wouldn't pick up TB from it, most unusual for humans to pick it up from that, or the bovine form of it from cattle.

[20.58] And this is part of a national eradication campaign?

This was part of the national eradication program, yes. It had been operating in, well started off in the dairy herd; I pretty much eradicated it there and then moved on to the beef herds across the country and a lot of work had already been done in southern areas, but it was, started to move into the northern cattle areas and, if, it had a dramatic impact on management when you look back on it, because before that time there was virtually no sense of cattle yards other than just sort, of, a loading ramp for putting the cattle on trucks, because, a few years, well not long before that, they were, just walking the cattle out, rather than trucking them out so, with the TB program, the BTB program came yard facilities, in fact the Department had some temporary yard that they supplied in some stations but many stations built yards. It involved fencing off paddocks, trying to separate them, so it involved all the stations in massive investment and massive time involved in the mustering cattle and ... It was amazing really that when the extensive nature of that country that we were able to achieve eradication, because I think a tremendous effort on behalf of, both the station people that got behind it and stuck with it through, some pretty dry times and some pretty tough times and also the Departmental people who carried out the program.

[22.46] How often would people coming up, you mentioned before the team from Adelaide and ...

Early on, I guess, I think we had two or three teams in Adelaide, so they were probably coming up every six or eight weeks, meaning, a month or six weeks to probably move, there would've been a team somewhere in the north, working and then at other times they would've been working down south because when they went up north they were on the road for probably, well, ten or twelve days, that was sort of, they'd come home and do a few town jobs and then head off again and the team consisted generally of a stock inspector and a vet and at that time, they were all based in Adelaide.

After I'd been in Pt Augusta, twelve, eighteen or probably eighteen months, they decided to shift the team from Adelaide to Pt Augusta and it gradually grew, I would think, until there was twenty plus people based in Pt Augusta during that time, stock inspectors and vets and obviously we shifted premises to what was another butcher's shop in, on the other side of the town and it housed quite a, quite a big group there. The Chief Veterinary Officer appointed, initially Geoff Newman, as the vet in charge of the program, and to that time when I became responsible to Geoff rather than a total freelance officer, which was a bit of a dramatic change for me, but it took a bit of getting used to.

[24.34] You had someone to report to, in an immediate sense?

Immediate sense, yes.

[24.40] Did it change the nature of your work?

Not a great deal, I suppose, because I hadn't been directly involved in any of the TB eradication trips. I did one when I first moved there, so I could sort of, see what it was all about and learn about the, how they, how they did the program and I was sort of back-up if somebody got hurt or sick or something on the, further north. I had gone up a couple of times to relieve somebody for some reason, but generally I guess, I continued on with my general facilitation work and then of course, further to the sheep lice and general animal health.

[25.30] Just in that, reporting to Geoff Newman situation and, what was he, how responsible were you to him, in terms of, as a senior officer, but, do you...

I guess, in hindsight, when I look back on it I pretty much, did what I wanted, I, I certainly didn't get on well with Geoff and it was probably one of the prime reasons that we in fact looked for a move, soon after that time. Geoff was a fairly strong-willed person and without his nature and the person of his drive, the program would never have been a success. If you're an easier going sort of person as for myself there, it just wouldn't have worked and Geoff actually went from Pt Augusta and up, and headed up to the Northern Territory team, which was even more a challenge and achieved the same result there and to his credit, he, I think would be, I would have to say, one of the key players in making sure that the program succeeded in an administrative sense of sort.

[26.51] Well, are you now working through Geoff Newman to report to Adelaide, or did you still

Effectively, that's right, yes. I guess, we were talking last week, we made mention of regionalisation and I guess that was, what they did go was create the northern region at that time, with the northern region, because there was only 'animals' people there, it was really headed up by Geoff, we're not sure whether he, either would've been regional manager or whether it was actually still animal health manager, but effectively he controlled that northern region for the Department.

[27.30] So regionalisation was coming in from the mid-seventies on?

Yes, yes

[27.38] What about things like the soil conservation side of things, animal plant, pests, sort of issues, were they, according to your ...

No, certainly didn't have any involvement with pests, plants and things. The nearest area that I got involved with, at other agency, was the Pastoral Board. The Pastoral Board were, not in our Department, they were in the Lands Department, I think at that time and they, they would, because all the, most of the properties were away, well apart from that area are pastoral leases, they have set maximum stocking rates that they are allowed to carry and consequently, the Pastoral Board had the task of making sure that, that was carried out and they maintained their fences. The Pastoral Board also oversighted the dog-fence, so they had people periodically

travelling up through the area and we would sort of ... well, I didn't travel with them much at all, we would share venues or meetings where there was a meeting, we would, they would speak and I'd speak about the issues that I was involved with. That was about the only other real agency or part of the Department, I think, that I was really connected with in Pt Augusta.

[29.11] What about the Agricultural Bureaus? Did you have ...

Oh, no, there was certainly, no Bureaux in the pastoral area as such. There was a couple probably around Wilmington and things like that that would've been in my patch, but generally all the communication and extension was worked either through the, but generally through the Farmers' Federation and you would keep in contact about when they were having meetings probably at Marree or Oodnadatta or somewhere like that and you'd get on the, get on their program and generally those topics, such as TB, brucellosis, of course, that I'd want to speak on were hot, political topics anyway, so I'd be wanting to be there to defend the Department's position. So that's generally, how you got groups together, we had at that stage, didn't have any group type work similar to what we did for the Bureaux and things in the south.

[30.18] Well, apart from the lengthy trips away, well the longer trips away, that sounds like it's fairly routine sort of work?

Yes. I guess, in animal health sense, you were there as an animal health advisor, so there'd be a general disease problem, ill thrift sheep or whatever, similar in Ceduna, then you would, I would investigate those. You were always on the look-out for exotic diseases, such as foot and mouth and I can remember one of the, a little episode there, where we were on the Christmas leave, but I had a ring from Woomera, from the Defense people there, saying, 'Oh, we've got some sick sheep on the edge of the town' ... sick, having trouble walking or something to that effect, a bit lame and so they, I range town to see what he'd want me to do and they, 'Oh, we'd better go out and have a look' so, Christmas week and so, off I trundled up off there, because we didn't have any idea, because we knew at that time that they flew direct planes in from America and things and the chances are that some Yank had bought in a ham for Christmas or something or other. So we went up there and, they would, you had to be very, they were very defensive of their patch, the Commonwealth Police there, you had to go through checkpoints and all sorts of things just to get into the town, let alone out on to the test side and so, as part of our standard equipment, we obviously had two-way radios, we had rifles, I carried a rifle and these were absolute no-no's, and of course with the Defense people, anyway they, I think I had to surrender my rifle there and they said, 'Oh look, if you have to kill a sheep, we'll come out and shoot it for you, you don't do it' and I said, 'Well, that's not how you kill a sheep anyway, but', so went out, inspected these sheep and they were, somebody's back yard and they'd been, the septic had been overflowing or something or other and they'd got a bit crippled up through standing around in the water or trying to eat a little bit of green food that was coming up from there and it was obviously no great issue, but I guess, that's just a typical example of the sort of oddball thing that pops up when you're an animal health advisor and, you can't take the chance, you got to go and follow it up to make that

it, that it's not foot and mouth or anything else.

[33.15] And as you indicated, it wasn't just an hour and a quarter, it was a bit of a journey.
In those days of course, it was still dirt road, most of the way to Woomera and it would've been a good day's trip up there and back again.

[33.30] Where did you learn to drive a four-wheel drive?
On the job at Pt Augusta, I guess, I don't think I had any specific training at all ... no you just got into the car and learned how to drive as you went along and luckily we had no serious problems.

[TAPE FINISHED 33.42]

AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY BERNARD O'NEIL WITH BILL GILES, CONDUCTED BY BERNARD O'NEILL ON 18 MAY 2004 AT PIRSA BUILDING AT GLENSIDE, FOR THE PROJECT ON THE HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
(Tape 3, side B)

[0.03] ??? particularly in the pastoral area of course, and yes, if you're out on your own or local people were generally invited out on their own, you used to have to go in pairs. They used to have regular radio scheds, that you were supposed to radio in each morning, or night if you were out on the road. Obviously the medical kits and things were vastly improved and dramatic changes were made as a result of that and, but we actually never, we certainly never lost anyone, hadn't seen anybody die up in that country, but certainly, I think generally the people that have gone there have respected and if you go there with the right attitude and got the right facility, generally, you were pretty safe.

[0.55] Certainly can be unforgiving territory, you just think, if you don't know what you were doing, that's right ...

How, long did you stay at Pt Augusta?

We were there about, two and a half years, I think it was in total, before we moved on from there, just one other funny episode that we were talking earlier about what other agencies we mixed with, the, it must've been the late, well, when I worked at Pt Augusta was the time that Lake Eyre, filled and the whole of the north was absolutely – well, just before I got there – was absolutely booming, Lake Eyre was still full when we were there, but after that, during the time I was there, it started to run down and go from unbelievably good conditions to eventually drought in the late seventies, but, one of the things that came with the good seasons was locusts and I was contacted from the Entomology people in Adelaide to say, that, they'd been instructed by the Chief to go up and find out where all these locusts were up in the north and that they'd be picking me up and taking me up on a plan, given that I knew the area a bit and could talk, knew the people and there was an entomologist came up on the trip and it was back at the time when Don Dustan was Premier and there was all those rumoured that they worried about the locusts coming into Adelaide and affecting his herbs, or something or other, it was usual story for the

round-up there, anyhow, it was a, I said, 'Look, all the advice I've got is that the locusts have been here and that they're well and truly gone, but it was decided that we would be doing this trip and they sent us up on a twin-engine plane which apparently, if you go looking for locusts, you fly very low to the ground and try to stir them up so they'll take off and we couldn't do that in this twin-engine plane and we, after a couple of episodes, eventually I think, north of Leigh Creek on one of stations we landed and I got on their Flying Doctor Radio Station, radio and asked around if anybody had seen any locusts and nobody had seen any but that they, except that somebody said they had some at a grading plan out near Santos near Moomba, which had some chocolate coated ones there, who could come and eat and thinks like that, the usual bush humour, but we went on to Innamincka, stayed overnight at Innamincka, we flew across to Birdsville, had a chat with the bush nurses there, then back to Innamincka and then the next day we actually flew out up the Cooper Creek, which was coming down in a bit of a flood and did a big loop around that, looking at the river and then flew back again, Lord knows how much that trip cost, but we didn't see a locust from the time we left Pt Augusta to the time we got back, so some of those little, political episodes that happen that, would be better off not happened, but

[4.52] '76, '77 there was a big locust plague coming through ...

Yes, it would've been, yes, and they would've come through, through our area at that, in probably in '76 and this would've been '77, probably that we were up there and they were well south of, south of the pastoral entry at that stage, by that stage.

[5.10] They were still about but they'd moved down

Yes, that's right, they were still up there, which is where they would've come down

[5.18] So you were looking for the second 'front' so to speak or?

No, no, no, I sure what we were looking for, it was, it was a most wonderful trip anyway,

[5.28] Well, getting to fly over the lands your normally driving over

Yes. Fascinating actually, just to look at that country the air. Oh we could go on and on about stories up there, probably time we moved onto Kadina I think.

[5.53] Well, about '78 or so we moved to Kadina?

We moved down there, yes, I changed jobs, to a certain degree, still in the livestock area but gave up the stock inspection side of it and joined the, what was then the 'livestock branch' as a Sheep Advisor, or Sheep and Cattle Advisor based at Kadina and it was an interesting time in my career because I think we spent four years in Kadina and it was four and a half years in Kadina and I think two and a half of those, at least two of those, I was actually not based in the town at all. When I first arrived there and before I started making myself known in the district it was suggested that, at the time there was a severe drought on, and a reasonably severe drought and there was a lot of work in the rural assistance branch in assessing farms for assistance, for drought assistance and I actually worked out of Adelaide for six, six or twelve months, six months I think,

before I started the position there and the other two things that kept me away from the town, in 1980 I went back to Roseworthy and lived on the College for a year, commuted back to Kadina on the weekends to complete another year's to being a Graduate Diploma and then when we accepted got the position in Adelaide, it hadn't been confirmed and so, we were, I was actually commuting down to Adelaide after quite a few months before we actually moved to Adelaide ... so the time in Kadina was in fact quite disjointed.

[7.58] You hinted earlier about one of the possible reasons for leaving Pt Augusta and looking for another opportunity, but what about this change in direction to you know, working as an Advisor?

Yes, I guess, it was the ultimate goal where I probably wanted to be, was to be sheep advisor or cattle advisor, so it was an opportunity that we presented, with young children, I guess it brought us back that bit closer to Adelaide where our family and parents and most of the family were based, and it was an opportunity for a change, so.

[8.42] What's the difference then, Bill, between a Stock Inspector and a Stock Advisor?

To many people, probably nothing.

[9.00] Oh well, if you'd like to tell me.

The subtle difference is that, well as a, livestock advisor you don't have any involvement with regulations so, you get your way from the stock inspections really in that sense. That wasn't a big issue for me, some people just don't like the stock inspections side of things, that didn't faze me too much, there was an Animal Health Advisor at Kadina, so they carried out those duties and, but it took you away from I guess, the Veterinary side of the Animal Health side of things, so you more, the task is much more orientated towards production issues, including productivity on the farm and, so that might be blow-fly control, wool, a lot of work in the, wool-classing and areas like that, genetics, animal breeding, helping farmers with sheep selection. The area that was quite popular about that time was new efficient shearing sheds and we were helping farmers, and yards and so you were spending time promoting efficient sheep yards, shearing sheds and helping farmers design their own particular units on their properties, so it was a subtle difference but ...

[10.46] That sounds more akin to the Extension Officer's role in the education ...

Yes, yes, that, that's sort of the ... you are, you were an Extension Officer as such and the definition of your job as opposed to ...

[11.00] So education, information ...

All that stuff, yes. So our programs that we did, developed around that – what's a typical program – well at the time, there was quite a shortage of shearers and quite a number of farm lads wanted to learn to be shearers and we worked with the, what was the Australian Wool Corporation at the time and the Department of TAFE, who ran shearer training and we would put on, probably a full week of shearer training and I would, at the same time, run a wool classing course, so that the young lads were either, they'd shear for one run then they'd be in the wool run for running and shear for run and go on like that and in that way they'd learn a bit, learnt the basics of shearing

and they'd learnt the basics of wool classing and I was teaching the wool classing side of it. We ran, I suppose, I ran actually around twenty odd of those courses over the time I was there, around from one end of the Peninsula to the other and they, they would come on from there, shearing, some would just go home and do their own bit of shearing at home, but certainly there was some, that went on to professional shearing and certainly the majority of them would've got their Wool-Classing Certificate at the Owner-Farm Certificate and been able to class their own particular clips at the end of that course, so it was a typical one.

[13.08] Just, in the broader agricultural field, I mean that's suggesting very big changes, people having certificates, you might have learnt to shear years before, I suppose by shearing and now you have to be taught and so on.

I guess I haven't thought of it in that sense, but certainly it was the early beginnings of some formal certificates in training that people got to do things and the opportunity being put in front of them to carry out that.

[13.41] Did you learn to shear a sheep yourself?

Yes, at Roseworthy we'd, shorn the, shorn the flock at Roseworthy, so I could get the wool off a sheep but I'm not so good a shearer.

[13.58] But you at least knew the language and the ...

Knew the language and knew what you were supposed to be doing yes. It was much easier to stick people in wool-classing and just throw the fleece's rather than throw the sheep around. Another program at that time, was the introduction of objective measurement of wool, up until that time, wool had just purely been sold on samples being, brought from bigger samples the whole of the wool clip was presented in the wool stores and so the buyers could go and look at them and pull the wool over the bales and decide what price they would put on it. Objective measurement was introduced and South Australia took it up, quicker and greater than any other state and one of the reasons was that the agents said, 'Unless you tell us otherwise, you'll class, your clip will be sampled and measured' and we, departmentally ran a very strong extension program in with farmers running field days and things to teach them what the measurements were, what they meant, what they could use them for on their particular flocks when they came back, but it predominantly a marketing tool and so, they for the first time, you clearly the microns, what the fibre diameter and things were and a yield of their flock would be, of the, wool clip which was and, as I said it was, it was accepted and taken on remarkably quickly by the South Australian Wool Industry and, it's always amazed me that are such a conservative group when it comes to other things that that took off so quickly and so well that really, probably the greatest innovation that they have taken on, in many ways have been very slow at taking up the technology and science in many other ways.

[16.21] Are you able to explain how that came to be.

If we could, we would've made a difference.

[16.30] ...was it better for them financially?

Clearly, a financial benefit that, to have your flock measured and have your bull measured and no more clearly what you getting for, I guess, as I said, the fact that the Elders said, 'We think it's a good thing and we'll do it unless you tell us otherwise', so you had to actually make the decision not to do it, so I think they were probably the prime sort of reasons behind it.

Yorke Peninsula is an interesting district in that it is genuinely mixed farms, I guess coming to the end of the mixed farming time, in that most people probably had given up keeping chooks and pigs, commercially, by that I mean, just the odd half a dozen pigs or 20 or 30 chooks and but they still did have generally a mix of cropping and sheep, or sheep or cattle, I suppose and during my time there it was a time when rotations were closing up, by that I mean that they were still cropping probably two, or one year in four, two years in four, they were starting to crop three years in four and so, livestock became less important and the farming, mixed farming system as we knew it, changed quite dramatically from that time on, so that today there is, or until recently there has not been, well it's been quite a reduction in the number of sheep and cattle in the cropping area, so, and that has led to, well ... I think at the peak of the Kadina office there was actually an Animal Health Advisor on the livestock side, there was an Animal Health Advisor, a Livestock Advisor, a Pig Advisor and a Poultry Advisor. These days in Kadina we don't have any livestock people at all, the nearest livestock person would be a cattle based person at Kadina, at Clare.

[19.18] Was there still an office at Kadina?

There was still an office in Kadina, I'm not sure what the staff, there certainly would be an Agronomist there, and probably a pest plants person in the office at my time.

[19.30] And at your time, there were four in the livestock area?

For the livestock.

[19.31] Plus others?

Plus others, certainly an agronomist and another person involved with cropping, with sprays and things like that in the crops, I can't remember what they were called, so yes, so there certainly was quite a team of people.

[19.50] And did you work as a unit, as a team or were you still liaising individually with Adelaide? You had a what ...?

District Officers were interesting little areas, pretty much for all my time in the country, we were district based, sorry, not district based, disciplined based, so, you reported back and your liaison was very much with head office and with the specialists in sheep or cattle, was the principle officer, sheep or the principle officer cattle, based in town and I guess, because of the nature of way that we had come up, or the way we grew up that continued on even though, probably, I can't remember regionalisation taking, having a big impact as such in the office, or in the way I

worked, but certainly during that time the senior person there was Trevor Dillon and he – I'm pretty sure – was not only the sort of, most, elderly or longest serving officer there and therefore became sort of, the person who looked after the administrative person and the cleaning of the office, but also, with regionalisation became a Senior District Officer in the office.

I don't remember it impacting in how I did my job at all. I guess, because in the district office, the vast majority of the people worked as a team anyway, and so regionalisation didn't make a big difference, you know we would share the joint duties, such as going to bureau meetings where they might be planning their programs, which, you know, you might go and speak specifically on a topic, but generally and that would be an invitation to a Bureau, but it was planning their conference, or whatever we would share those duties around the people in the office. With regionalisation, I guess, that sort of thing became formalised a bit more.

[22.00] What about visiting properties, would you go together, joint visits?

Probably, if it was on a specific task, but you wouldn't because I'd be going to see about sick sheep and he'd be going to see about sick crops, or something like that, the agronomist or whoever it might be, but one of the real strengths of the farming community on the Peninsula was the strength of the Agricultural Bureau movement, and I think, I mentioned in Ceduna, that there was some involvement there. I would imagine that across, in our district at Kadina, we probably had 15 or 20 Bureau branches, so, you were very regularly on the program to speak about matters relating to your particularly specialty. One of the things that the Bureau's did have, and picking up the point where you did things together, was each spring they would have what they call, a 'sticky-beak' day and sometimes more than one bureau would get together, but the majority of them would have these sticky-beak days where they would put together a program of somebody who's doing something different, a new shearer in my case and they would drop in there and everybody would look at that, or it might be, generally there were trials, fertiliser trials, or a new variety trials, so you'd all bulk up meet somewhere, bulk up in cars and then go around and look at the various things on, that the farmers would have to show us and we would talk with the farmers and generally they'd, tell us about what's going on there or if we're involved in that, but obviously that would be done, I would generally travel with the agronomist to those, or we'd travel together to those sort of meetings.

[23.54] It sounds like they were, smaller farms and there were more farmers.

Certainly, yes. Pt Augusta, I suppose I had, 4 or 500 farms in total in the area, and I guess in, Yorke Peninsula, even I've had, I've, wild guess, say 3000, I'm not too sure.

[24.05] How far did the district extend?

It was an easily defined district, because it was the whole of the leg of Yorke Peninsula, it went across a bit east of Pt Wakefield, probably not as far as Balaklava, then up, Snowtown was in the district, up to about Pt Pirie, one of the towns up through there, in an arc pretty much so it was

...

[24.34] So basically it joined Pt Augusta?

Right through the Peninsula, then it was Jamestown came across in there somewhere and serviced all by Jamestown and very much as we said, a mixed farm area, wheat sheep, barley, some peas, a few cattle, the most predominant types of farms.

The Bureau movement, as I said, was extremely strong. They ran the Yorke Peninsula field days, a group of Bureaus had got together to get those up and running, still do manage it, I understand today, I think and that was a massive undertaking every two years.

[25.17] Did you go along to those Field Days?

We were a, one we'd be involved in helping organise them and to, certainly the Department has always had a tent display area there and if it's the, Yorke Peninsula Field Days, then it was usually driven by the Kadina office on the alternate year when it was the Eyre Peninsula field days at Cleve, that would be driven by the Cleve office.

[25.47] The Paskeville field days, is the one, that's being promoted as the 'famous' one, ???

Well because it's close to Adelaide and everybody can go there, but certainly, agriculturally I guess, well to the Eyre Peninsula, the Cleve ones are equally important to the South East these days, the Lucindale field days are similarly important and in my opinion, probably lead to the demise of the country shows in the sense of, what they could contribute to agriculture because, before the field days really got going, each agricultural show would have trucks and cars and farm machinery all displayed and all sorts of different things related to agriculture, whereas now they're pretty much horses and side-shows and things I think and if you want to buy a header or a tractor or whatever, you would look at it at the field days, as opposed to going to see them in the showgrounds. So, yes,

[26.52] Did you along to those country shows in a departmental capacity?

We would get involved, to a small degree, certainly the agronomist did, because I think they would've generally judged the cereal samples, the cereal contests where farmers brought in hay or grain to be judged. We, I didn't get involved in the sheep side of it, they were generally judged by stud people, about the only involvement we would've had and I didn't have then, because I was predominantly sheep, was in the Royal Adelaide Show, which I think we talked about previously, so, about the only thing I can think of in that area was that we used to, be, ??? I can remember I used to commentate, whilst somebody manually shored a sheep with the blades and that was every couple of years, but other than that, I didn't have much direct involvement with the shows, generally.

[27.56] As you mentioned earlier Bill, you coming and going a bit in this time and you got your Roseworthy and a stint in Adelaide?

Yes. It was a disjointed time and whilst I enjoyed all the postings in the country, you become quite a notary if you're a good officer in the country and as you said previously, if you were really

committed to the community and to the farm and, of all my districts, I guess, it was Kadina where, I didn't settle in anywhere near as well in that sense in that, when you first come to a district, you probably got six months to really make your mark and get out and meet people, you've got a bit of a honeymoon period and during that time I was sort of, out of the office working in Adelaide so much that I missed out on that, I'm not trying to say it wasn't enjoyable in any way, but it was just a different liaison with the farm community that I developed there, because I wasn't there as much as had call, as much as I was either at Ceduna or Pt Augusta.

It's interesting how different things can happen a different way. Certainly wasn't a comment about the farming community because they were as supportive and involved with the Department, probably more there than, or equally with other districts that I had been involved with.

[29.50] Well, what happened in the situation of you going to Roseworthy for that year, did, were you replaced in Kadina or

No, I think I used to try and cover it up a bit on the weekends, if there were serious enquiries or it would've been, handled by the bloke at Jamestown. In those days, probably one of the things that the Department hasn't been good about is if somebody leaves the district or is out of their district, the back-up has been quite poor, really, and I guess that's one of the changes that have come with Rural Solutions with the current contracting and charging, that we've become more aware that when you start on a program that you see it through and make sure it's finished. Whereas in those days, if somebody left the district, it was quite often that the program was just forgotten about for a while and I think it was one of our weaknesses, as a Department at that time, even though the bloke who was there would've been dedicated to working his butt off, you could walk out and the work would be followed up mainly for six or twelve months.

[31.09] So, why would you go off to Roseworthy and pick up a diploma?

Yes, in those days. I mean the Department was fully supportive, they sent me down there on full salary, I got a scholarship from the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation, which covered, I'm not sure if there were any fees at Roseworthy, but if there were, it covered all those, the books so that, in fact, the year's study was totally free and on full salary, it was a wonderful experience and being able to give, 100 percent dedication to it meant, it was a really good year to go back as a post-graduate student and

[31.49] What motivated to go back?

I guess, the focus at the time I completed my Roseworthy diploma in the sixties, that was the end of the qualification and then came in the time of post-graduate opportunity and the one-year which tended to focus, particularly on extension. A good number of our people had gone to Hawkesbury, or predominantly Hawkesbury to do, which the first course I think and it became part of, I guess, if you were a career Extension Office to try and get the opportunity to have that year to pick modern extension techniques and things like that, so that was the philosophy behind there, it gave me an opportunity to step outside the job and consider how you really did it and to

do, project work and relate it to your job, but really focus on the extension

[TAPE FINISHED 33.15]

AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY BERNARD O'NEIL WITH BILL GILES ON 18 MAY 2004

(Tape 4, Side A)

[0.17] Well, Bill, you were just saying that the Department was supportive of you and other officers going to Roseworthy to pick up extra qualifications, so, no reason for that but there must be some career implications, personally and for the Department, some benefits for the Department.

The other reason for doing it was, qualifications for Roseworthy Diploma in the salary structure and in promotion wise was not regarded as a diploma rather than a degree, so it did limit your opportunities to progress professionally within the Public Service structure of degree-based qualifications, so if you worked through your aim, then it was certainly worth your while to do that extra year, which gave you the equivalence of a, was regarded as equivalent to a degree, and I guess, that certainly would've been behind it in. My sense, I guess, I, it wasn't a great driver for me wanting to climb up the ladder, I guess, I haven't necessarily ever wanted to be a great, go great heights in the Department, but I was very happy with job where I was and coasting along there, so, but it certainly did give you a different perspective on your job and also did provide that opportunity, if any promotion or a change came up, that you were better qualified to do the job. So I don't think it terribly didn't impact on reasons for leaving, moving on from Kadina or anything like that, it really just added to my ability to do my job better there in my, it was my goal, in doing it - for sure.

[2.39] I suppose there are other opportunities, about this time and more so later, if you wanted to go up the ladder, management courses and all sorts of things becoming more and more available.

I guess it's an area we haven't touched on much, was what sort of training we did get internally, within the organisation and certainly there were opportunities within the extension branch for training in photography and public speaking and all the things that generally went with the extension officer that you made the most of, any opportunity you could. As I said they were run internally by the Department generally and your senior officer would advise you they were coming up and encourage you to take it on, or I guess you may have heard about it on the grapevine and put your hand up.

Generally, we were, we were virtually told it was time to go and get into it a bit. The Department was very supporting of its team and certainly the team that I worked within and, to get you professionally developed and took a very strong role in that area. Certainly, technically, there were annual conferences when we came to Adelaide, both in Animal Health and in the livestock area, where there were technical exchanges, there were opportunities, there were things called, 'Sheep and Wool Refresher Courses' which were funded nationally, by the Wool Corporation at the time and they would have a theme, it might be the blowfly control or well, and so, two or

three staff from each State, welcome two or three from South Australia, one of the smaller States, but maybe more from other States. We'd meet centrally, we'd be organised by one State Department somewhere and you'd go off there for a weeks training in that particular area and then come back and pass on that training to the rest of the team and things like that, so there was opportunities, various opportunities like that, for keeping you up to speed and for, if new programs were developed, like the sheep and the wool classing or things like that, well not so much the wool classing but the adoption of sale by description and things, then the training would be put through training programs to give us their expertise to be able to deliver the program to the farming community.

[5.57] You were aware of those opportunities, when did you pick up on the, you know, when did you get sent or told to do a course?

They would be floating around, I guess, and if a program like that came up then, they could well pull the whole livestock team from across the State together and probably in Adelaide or somewhere suitable, wool stores or somewhere and put it through a training program and, set the program up to run like that.

[6.32] Did that happen, in the Ceduna/Port Augusta time or more Kadina?

I guess, more the later time. Ceduna and Port Augusta, there was an annual Animal Health Conference and that would, might be held at Turretfield Research Centre and there'd be some practical sessions there and some theory sessions and administrative stuff for the whole range of stuff and I think they used to range over three or four days, so they were quite a, quite a strong training program for those as well.

So I'd have to say throughout my career, that we really have been well looked after in the training sense and the Department, I guess, given that it's trying to train farmers and talk about change agents then certainly that should the role, but, which is certainly in my view, attempted to be well catered for and I think, pretty well catered for via the Department over the years.

[7.42] But that underscores the work of the Department if you got to be, advising a farmer, you got to be one step ahead, or two steps ahead.

That's right, and, of course, if it was something he didn't know much about then you made sure you, you knew about it as quickly as you could and, often, as I said, there'd be somebody who had been trained in a national program or something or other, then, they would pass that training onto, onto the rest of the team.

[8.14] Alright, so, Kadina. Two and half years, interspersed with other things, that, pick on the chronology again.

Yes, trying to think of other, ... it was general sheep advisory work and so it was a whole mixed bag, as I said. Towards the end of that time, I was getting more and more involved with livestock marketing and there was quite a move by the switched-on farmers, the livestock farmers and certainly by the Department to try and adopt a thing called 'livestock sale by description' which was, instead of just putting a sheep in an auction, in a sale yard, there, that the animals were

described in 'meat terms', so then the buyer got a much better idea they were weighed for sale and things like that and I got more and more involved in that and a position came vacant in Adelaide to sort of, coordinate that on a State basis and that precipitated our next move, which was moving back to Adelaide.

[9.50] And when was that Bill?
Probably, '82, '83.

[10.02] We can fine tune that later, but it's. You had a year at Roseworthy in '80, so you went back to Kadina for another year?
Probably another year,

All these things are a mixture of professional development and personal of course and we wanted to educate our girls in the city and so, the opportunity came up, they were still in primary school, quite young in primary school that grabbed the opportunity when it was there. Probably earlier than we would've anticipated moving back to the city, but in hindsight, it was probably quite a good move, because of that I think there's been too many jobs in that particular livestock area, that would've given us the opportunity to shift. So coming to Adelaide, as joined the meat group and there was Principal Officer Hayden Hanna, in charge of that group, and I think, a couple of support technical people in the team and I came in and it was a, small promotion up to the next level of PSO3 as the Senior Officer Meat and the key role there were trying to, as I said work on this 'sale by description' program and move to electronic selling of livestock and it was, an interesting change for me, because you were starting, for the first time to work with the senior level of the farming community, the agro politicians and things like that, more so than the individual farmers, so it was sort of a different change in direction, up in the clientele that I dealt with. In summarising that time, we moved to, the aim was to get to a thing, or, not sure if it was the aim initially, but ultimately in relation, nationally we were fore runners in the development of CALM, which stands for Computer Aided Livestock Marketing and, in hindsight when you look back, you can clearly see that we were ahead of our time. Farmers didn't have computers, I think we can, the agency were involved, they were real progressive ones, we were, didn't have much in the way of computing in their offices but you could ring in and log on from there. Invariably they, would do computers would drop out and so we were away ahead of our time and eventually the system, I'm not sure whether you'd say it was a failure, it certainly wasn't a success, it had all sorts of other pressures on it, of tradition and things like that, but, I'm sure if you were to come in with a computer aided system that was marketing now without the background that it had gone through, it would be adopted and become far more successful than that was at that particular time.

[14.05] And the computers, for example, were probably primitive,
Well the Commodore 64 was a normal thing was that ...

[14.22] Apple Mac and as you say, 64

It was well ahead of its time, but that was sort of the end of the program, much of the program was just, teaching, developing the system of scoring the animals, their fatness on them, talking about. 'When you weigh them, do you weigh them before they've loaded, before they've emptied out, when their full of water or empty and' sort of changing the whole psychology of the sale yard system, was a major attempt and major effort. You had terrific tradition, both on the farm and in the stock agency system, so it was an exciting time of trying to try something totally different and as I said, probably ahead of their time, but, in the, interesting time, when I sit here now and look at how, what we did and what we went through and what I see, people involved in it doing now and the number of stock that has been sold objectively and through the different systems, you think, we think, we could think that we failed, but on my view is that the whole community and system had to go through that stage that we went through to try and, make the changes or alert people to the changes, create awareness and of course, people coming along now, with a new enthusiasm and things, are certainly to continuing to make it happen and the journey just continuing there.

[16.26] But you may set up a silly question, Bill, what's the underlying ethos in introducing this new?

Two things, one to get paid for what you produce rather than just somebody visually seeing an animal in the sale yard and saying, 'Yes, I reckon that's fat or skinny or it weighs a certain amount, if you use scales, then you know you get paid per kilogram for what you're producing and if the fat-scoring is done objectively, then you know that they were really good animals, that you sent in or they were average animals, you can take that back into your breeding program or your feeding program and the other key one is that, you need to look after sheep and cattle, particularly, or cattle and sheep, there are, they can get bruised, knocked around in sale yards, their off feed when they shouldn't be off feed and things like that, the most ideal way is to take an animal quietly out of the farm, walk it across the road into an abattoirs and kill it immediately. The sale yard system is almost the absolute reverse of that, stir them up, shift them on trucks, take them to a sale yard, to have people chase them with dogs and yell at them, and carry on and then, put them on another truck and take them off to an abattoirs, so the real goal of the system is to tray and improve the quality of meat and the objective system of selling them.

[18.19] Well, how long did it run for? Is it ...

Oh, well, I guess, it was going, the movement towards it would've started in the late '70's, I suppose, in that the first moves of having some workshops about, 'Hey, how should we go about it, what should go on'. They were run by motivated farmers as much as the Department in those days and then it, it gradually built into the major program that we are running on the meat side, the sheep and cattle and even through to today, there's still quite strong programs in encouraging people to sort objectively, so, it hasn't been an overnight success, that's for sure.

[19.18] But, like, incremental, that's the staged finish try and prove it and move on to it

Sure, and one of the steps that did change along the way is that nearly all cattle that are sold now are sold on, in sale yards, by auction are sold on a weight basis and prior to the program, they were just on a per head basis. So that was ...

[19.38] Well, who benefits in that system?

Strangely enough, I think everybody benefits. The farmer certainly benefits, because he knows more about his stock and he gets better feedback on their animals, the opportunity to know how they perform and the consumer gets better quality meat, because it's less stressed, less bruised. In the systems that we had then, the stock agents could see themselves being put out of work and they probably the strongest opponents of the, this program, but in fact, in many ways it hasn't changed that situation, you still need people to put the buyers in contact with the sellers, it needs people to grade the stock and things like that, so you got this program ... It's not inherently more efficient in a labour sense, if you still, we were trying to build in an electronic auction system and that probably is a bit more intensive than the direct selling of an animal, on a, on a hook, on a hook basis where you sell it direct from the farm to an abattoir without going through a sale yard, you just agree on a price and you get feedback, get paid on the weight and the grade of the particular animal, so, certainly there is some efficiencies in that system, over and above traditional sale yard system.

[21.16] And there's still a case, I suppose, of the market setting the price? You got the buyers to sell it.

Yes, ... any market system gets to act to supply and demand and if there's a shortage of animals, then prices will go up or if there's a shortage of, or excess of people wanting the product at the other end the prices will go up and vice-versa, so, yes, we've still got to have some system that sets a reasonably fluid price, or a price system to set a price in place.

[21.48] Just if we go a little bit to the present day, does the system have an acronym a nick name of some sort?

No, I guess it's just the change, the gradual change in the way stock are moved today. There is not a lot sold electronically, the vast majority is sold, still either through the sale yard and the cattle certainly on a more of that basis, we're still trying to get sheep sold on a live weight basis, but the big move would be that the number of prime stock that are actually sold direct to an abattoirs from farm, either through an agent or just direct relationship between the abattoir and the farmer.

[22.37] And those sort of system, both going back to the early '80s, and through to the present, is that common throughout Australia now, is it?

Yes, we would be similar to pretty much all other States, I think, in the number or proportion of direct sales and systems used. At the moment, while we're the lead in the late '70s, early '80s, the other real driving area was Armidale University in New South Wales and we worked closely with them on the different systems, that they were coming up with a, not dissimilar system and there was quite a bit of liaison across the States at that time, the system we were developing.

[23.23] Bit of a national approach?

Yes. Well ultimately it needed to be national because so many stock moved, even in those days, across Australia and today with modern transport they just move everywhere.

[23.32] So that was one of your early activities in the new role?

I just had, it rang through the whole time that we were in that meat group in that I was closely involved in that group. We were based in Grenfell Centre, the Black Stump, at that time and I guess effectively attached to head office obviously there as opposed to, perhaps to a district office and that was sort of, the major change of how I operated it there.

[24.15] You were a senior officer and you were reporting?

I was reporting to the principal officer and there was a chief livestock officer as well. I think it initially, yes there was a chief livestock officer and then eventually the livestock group, there was a director of animals of some description, but it included animal health, so he should've come under ... I think the hierarchy went from Principal Officer to Director, rather than through a chief livestock officer and that changed too, in that time.

[24.53] I can fill in most details later.

Brian Peterson.

[25.00] Up there in the '80s when the Executive Directors ...

Yes.

... or the Assistant Director, I should say at that time, were coming in

It was part of the regionalisation where the country staff, prior to regionalisation of course were directly responsible to the principal officers in town in head office and with that change, you had, you had the programs that we drove, but the day to day management, which is in the regional staff and things like that, so as far as, appointing people and whether they were on leave or not, that responsibility moved from the principle livestock officer to the regional officer of the district officer, which it had been previously.

[23.41] While you were in the 'black stump', did you go out to the regions or out of the office a great deal?

Yes. We were on the move a reasonable amount and in the district offices, the livestock officers tended to focus on the sheep and wool issues as opposed to the meat issues, I don't think we had any advisors in the country who would, would've been sheep advisor, meat as such, so we tended to be involved in quite a bit of going to Bureau meetings and things like that from head office that was still part of the job, so it certainly still doing a reasonable amount of extension work in trying to promote the programs and liaise with farmers on that. Field days, both big ones, like the Paskeville Field Days where you're running days there where we have different types of sheep in to show the different fatness and things like that, so it was a ... we were certainly still travelling around the State.

[26.52] How big a group was it, the meat group?

I think, we ...

[26.54] Was it a handful of people or?

Yes. There was a couple of side programs ran it, ran with it. There was something, a similar program going in the pig area about trying to get objective measurement into pigs, which was measuring the fatness on pigs so that you could both, for marketing and for selecting them and there was a person employed there, a Technical Officer employed there in the team who did that, who went around measuring pigs on farms. There was two technical officers or project officers, I guess involved with the different projects and, related to meat, myself and then the principal officer, so there would've been about five just in the group at the peak, I think, and at that time, we still had, we had a Principal Officer, Meat, Principal Officer, Sheep and I presume, a Principal Officer, Dairy and the pigs came under meat, so that was ... it was all meat, sheep, beef, cattle, lamb, pigs, came under the principal office meat. Stop there.

[28.17] ... say, is that the group there that asked the question before in another context, is that a small team, you were working as a Unit?

Yes, certainly the meat team, we were operating as a team approach, clearly under the direction of the, Hayden, the Principal Officer. At that time there were some quite big monies around for this, development of this subjective measurement and so, the two project officers that I talked about were generally retained on industry funds, provided by what would have been called the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation at that time and so, we were certainly involved in trying to get project funds and money and we worked closely with the Stock Owners Association or the Farmers Federation, when they became known as that. There was a committee called the State Lamb Committee, which has been going for many, many years and that was the, sort of the Industry Liaison Committee that we worked closely with to try and, on these meat issues, particularly with lamb issues

[29.19] With a name like the State Lamb Committee, it is very specific...

Yes, that was trial ranged from trying to get, these early days it was probably founded as part of trying to encourage farmers to make sure they didn't extend their stock down full of feed, so they didn't get filthy dirty in the sale yards and finish up getting condemned in the abattoirs because of the, because of the product, or because of faces and things on the carcass.

[29.46] Were there similar committees for beef, and pigs and ...

Not that I, I guess they tended to just walk through the normal Farmers Federation Committees, we had very close relations with them. Having said that, there was, out of the State Land Committee, grew a thing called the Livestock Marketing Study Group and that was really the group that drove across the board for everything, including pigs, cattle and sheep, so it was sort of a multi-species group that, were responsible, I guess we facilitated that group and worked closely with them, it was a close contact with the farming community or the driving part of the

community.

[30.32] Was the Department represented on that group and on the state lamb one as well?

We've certainly, provided the executive officer, Judy, from the Livestock Marketing Study Group and would've, the principal officer would've been on the, on the group. I don't he, she headed it as such, I reckon we had a farmer chair it and certainly with State Land Committee, we had a membership of it. I think the secretarial task there was generally carried out by the Farmers Federation.

[31.16] I'll check through on that. Just to round it out, this work for the meat group, it's, you came to Adelaide '82, '83, roughly how long did that group roll?

Yes.

[31.26] I'm, just wondering if there's a position between that and your more recent career?

Yes.

[31.32] Was it all, is it all rather more for smash?

Yes and no, there was a hiatus in the middle of it, we went through the ODR, Organisation Development Review and make sure John would be able to tell you to the day when that happened, John Radcliffe and one of the upshots of that was a radical, pruning of the livestock area in the Department and, there were a number of redundancies and, I was identified as one of the people – because our group was so big – that was going to be offered a package. Well I'm not sure of the package, but certainly the job was going to disappear and I made a dramatic application at that time to change direction and applied for a job in the Adelaide Hills with a new program, the Mt Lofty Ranges Catchment program.

[32.28] TAPE FINISHED

AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY BERNARD O'NEIL WITH BILL GILES ON 18 MAY 2004

(Tape 4, Side B)

[0.34] Program, and that's sort of where we finished, so perhaps if we could pick up there and get going.

I, as we said the job became, I became surplus to requirements, whatever the terminology was at the time and I applied for a job, a newly created position, which was Team Leader for the Mt Lofty Catchment Program and, now it's the Mt Lofty Ranges Catchment Program, thought it was another letter in the acronym, there and that program was aimed at trying to bring together in the ranges a, the disparate groups, who were all working towards the same sort of environmental goals, or improvement, particularly in the catchment area and things like that, in the Hills, and so there were people from E&WS, Engineering and Water Supply, they were, at that time, the Environment Department of the time, a number of local councils, local government areas and Primary Industry, or PISA as it was probably known then, all had input and involvement in the Mt Lofty Ranges, particularly focused around the water catchment areas and it was felt there was

a need to bring all the agencies together so that we had, well, one of the key things was to reduce duplication and also to bring together a team approach.

[2.00] When was this Bill, what period?

This would've been in 1995, I think.

[2.10] Okay, the mid '90s?

Mid '90s, yes. The program was Commonwealth funded to, I think for a five year period, to lead the program and obviously you had the individuals from their own agencies individually funded within that program and some extra dollars on top of that to bring in, to bring on other people to do specific tasks as we developed them in the program. I took on the job thinking I knew a little a bit about environment and a bit about people and very soon into the job realised that, or didn't realise, thought I could make the miraculous changes and bring a very disparate team of people together under one umbrella, who didn't necessarily want to be under that umbrella, who, having said that, agreed with the approach, I think, that there needed to coordination, but didn't really want to be supervised by somebody separate outside their own organisation.

[3.36] Is this a new project team that was formed?

It was a totally new project team, yes, yes, this was an obviously normal leader of the group, and ...

[3.46] And it was housed outside?

And it is, one of the first tasks was to find a house for us. We were, I was initially positioned at Lenswood Research Centre and with the brief to find a headquarters, which could be suitable for either it to be a core group or people or for all the people who lived up there to come under, in the one roof, ideally. That's not easy to do when you've got, twenty or thirty people that you're trying to find a house in a new, well not in a new building, but in a new site, another site.

[4.27] Administratively, did you belong to PISA?

I still, was paid within PIRSA, or Primary Industries, yes and everybody was still attached to their own agency in that sense, so it was quite a matrix of trying to bring different groups together and different management structures, and all those sorts of different approaches within organisations and within their goals, within their organisations as well, so it was and, as I said, I thought I could make it all work and tie it together. I found it was an incredible learning experience for me, and while it was probably the, in some ways the most exciting and some way the darkest period of my career in that I very quickly learnt that I did not enjoy managing people, which was a key part of this job and I had thrust myself into an extremely complex situation of not being able to manage them in the true sense of a full responsibility for them, but sort of a half responsibility for the team approach for management and to cut a long story short on the personal side is eventually, I realised I couldn't do it and that I got myself locked into a spindle of stress and would've eventually lead to some sort of a breakdown, I would imagine. Luckily, during that time, they had reassessed the positions needed in Adelaide as part of this whole restructuring and

the livestock group was restructured and the positions were all advertised and I reapplied for a position, which was not dissimilar to the previous position that I had held in the city and, so I was in the catchment centre for six months, running that program and I said, learnt clearly that I didn't ever want to manage people again, that I wanted to work on technical and policy areas instead.

[7.10] Is this a case of the number of people you were managing or the type of people?

There were some interesting characters there, I think it was the complexity of the intended management approach, that they were all highly competent technical specialists in their own right and were an excellent team, I'm not criticising anybody in that sense but they came from, quite clearly defined positions of what they thought the catchment centre should be all about and it didn't necessarily agree with what I thought it should be about or what I was lead to believe it should be about anyway, so it was a, it was something that probably was beyond me at the time and I hadn't been a line manager before that time, so it was probably promoted myself, or promoted beyond the competence almost at that level, but it, as I said, it was incredible learning experience in that taught me about, one of my strengths or weaknesses and it made sure that it, I've taken that with me and into my future career.

[8.27] Did you get any support or assistance to cope with this?

Yes, I was strongly supported at the time Hayden Hanna, was sort of, at the overseeing area of that program and there was also a management team made up of a key Councilor, you know, that's a little bit confusing there, there was an internal Department Management group, which consisted of somebody from E&WS, the environment area and Primary Industries, so that yes, I was reporting to a management group within the organisation, bureaucratic management group, but then one of the other, one of the first tasks was to set up a community based group to overview, sort of be a community involvement in how the program developed and how the whole thing was managed by local councilors, the Soil Boards and other influential people within the Hills. It was an exciting program and has continued on ever since and with the series of managers and reiterations of its role and goals, but it was a, I guess one of the early steps at trying to break down silos and bringing agencies together on a broader approach than we had been individually in the past, so it was about the catchment, the whole of the water responsibilities and well, the need of, for a community, rural based approach to making sure the Adelaide water supply was protected in an environmental sense, I suppose, therefore you're making sure the cattle were grazed in the area correctly that the run-off was correct and all those sorts of things brought together in one agency, or in one grouping, but across the agency.

[10.52] It's sort like re-defining the empire in way

It was, yes ???

[10.57] You look at region in totality

Yes, it was a defined area from the Barossa, right down through the Fleurieu, so it was a, quite a

large area, although it was centralised, or it was centralised, but based, tentatively based in the central Adelaide Hills around, well the first office was at the Lenswood Research Centre, because that's where my spare, there was a spare office and then we looked at trying to identify building a, putting a large transportable building up there, that became quite difficult and eventually a building was found close to the shopping centre in the middle of Mt Barker, to house the majority of the key players in the program and became a sort of a 'focal-point' for the community and a one-stop shop jargon approach to people with agricultural and environmental issues in the Hills that could go to that one point for information. So the concept was good, but it wasn't for me and so I moved on from it and probably, in a, about as much as we need to say about it, I think, tried to pick up there with a bit of a, personal stuff and also the approach that the coming of the days of environmental issues started to influence on the Department much more than they have.

[12.40] And a couple of things, I mean is that, the importance of modern management, in modern management, always relative to the time it's introduced, but here we are in the mid-'90's in a sense being tossed in without much managerial experience. As we described before, you'd been operating solo in lots of places.

Yes, I guess, my appointment, I guess, being a completely new position the people who defined the job and wanted to involve, or nobody would've known, it was a bit of a 'suck it and see' to see if the, how, what the role was going to be and how it was going to work and I think because I had come, really from right outside the key areas and the key players, also made it a bit more challenging that the people probably didn't accept me so much, but, after I left, they all said that they thought I was doing a wonderful job, but, it was what it did to me personally that made it necessary for me to get out and ...

[14.01] One other question Bill. Did other people from Primary Industries come across that group?

Yes, yes, in that, at that time, we had a Soils Branch and so there was Soils Officers involved with it. We had a, I think, a Small Farms Adviser, or was he still, I think it was the Beef Adviser in the area within Primary Industries and he came in, he came into the group as well, yes. Certainly there were two, the key area, I guess, was the Soils Branch people who'd been working within Primary Industries.

[14.53] So, it stands out as, as a bit of peak in the career chart?

Yes.

[14.56] Six months only

That's right, yes.

[15.01] Was you able to return to the livestock area?

Yes. It was interesting that I was able then to win back the redefined position and in actuality of the task involved, was not greatly different, probably some added responsibilities in that change up, change over the structure had been, sort of, flattened I suppose, the principle position had disappeared and the, my other wool position, I can't remember what it was called at the time,

were covering a wider area and reporting to a, not to a Chief Livestock Officer but to a Chief of Animal Division, which was a person responsible for both animal health and livestock group.

[16.12] Given the circumstances of your departure from the livestock area, how keen were you to go back?

I was very keen to go back, because I was confident I could handle it and, I didn't have any misgivings about going back to work in the team or anything like that. It was just a blip on the career, really.

[16.44] But it, in that time, away six months or so, you seem to suggest there, that there'd been even another restructure or reorganising of the area.

Well, no,

[17.00] Is that correct?

It was, in going back in six months time I guess, from the time that I left to the time that I came back, was the whole restructuring occurred during that period. It didn't happen overnight. It gradually worked through. It wasn't another restructure, it was putting that one into the Directors.

[17.24] And was it a vacancy there or ...?

Yes, that was a, certainly we applied for the jobs and I think, there were a certain number of jobs. There was the meat job and sheep job and probably a dairy job, I guess and I applied for the sheep or the meat job and I think I had the choice, eventually whether I took the sheep or the meat one and decided to stick with the meat one rather than the sheep one.

[18.10] So this brings you back into the Primary Industries fold, '95, '96, was it.

Yes. Since that time have continued with broadly defined same role to the present time. I guess the role, prior to that time, was still relatively technical in that we were driving the meat programs that we were talking about on the previous tape and there was a Principal Officer who did the bulk of the policy writing and decision making and things like that in consultation with us. Where in this role there was a bit more delegation of the policy role to myself, although there was still a principal officer above me who covered off on dairy and meat, which was Ron Ellis who came into the position, which is an interesting quirk of the organisation that the person that I worked with and did most work for when I first started in Struan in the middle of '70s was Ron Ellis who was a Research Officer at Struan and he transferred to Adelaide and into this position and he'd been Research Officer all that time, into this position heading up the dairy position and I was once again directly responsible to him, so it was a , and we got on well, that was the great time as well.

So, the type of jobs that we've done since then, have also changed, we went through a period where the marketing went a bit quieter and I guess, the environmental issues started to take a higher profile, for instance, cattle feed lots became very big and important in the Eastern States

and we were interested to see that that would happen in the, in our State and we decided that if were to happen, that we needed to have things like environmental guidelines and so, the issues became to a certain degree, focused more on that area, similarly, well I wasn't directly involved, the, a similar move happened in the pig industry and I think the background to that is two-fold, in that, one the community became more environmentally aware and more city-orientated and less agricultural oriented and won't, accept things being not 'clean and green', for want of a better term and, similarly or at the same time, the move, the rapid move to intensification of agriculture started to really occur and so we moved from the mixed farm that we talked about earlier where you had a few cattle, a few sheep, maybe a few pigs and chooks, to a situation where you may have just specialist pig farmers and specialist poultry farms, or on farms that did have, say, cereals and a pig facility, a big operation, enterprise, they were very much more concentrated in therefore the potential for environmental damage, whether it be odour drifting to neighbours or to polluting water courses or whatever, became a much greater risk, so I think, it might have been, in the last 10 years, one of the 10 to 15 years, one of the largest changes that I've been involved with and that, it's been, I think very important in agriculture and continues to today and will continue on and the impact today is that they are getting even bigger, it's impacted on the dairy industry as well, when you're getting our dairy herds up to 1500 cows, the impact on therefore less people in the country, the less need, for less labour, if you're moving, putting ten dairy farms in to 100, 150 cow herds or 75 cow herds into a 1500 cow herds, obviously there's less labour required.

Another side of the coin is that if you can attract those large operations into a regional area, you can almost employ, increase the employment because you're bringing something new in and giving the opportunity for other labour and things like that. So that's been an interesting time to work through and I guess, indicates the change in the role from a country-based person to the issues that involve somebody in the city, where you're trying to negotiate issues across, or at a Farmers Federation type level as opposed to dealing with individual farmers.

[24.23] That loss of the, knowledge or awareness of the rural, agricultural sector, seems quite stark in the comments, you know, you got the boy-hood experiences of knowing farms and being on farms, now in the city environment you can meet children whose families don't even have a day at the beach.
Yes.

[24.45] If you into a farm it'd be, way out of their thinking.

That's certainly right, Bernie and I think it's, I guess that's happened over a longer period, but the, in any group of city people, 30 years ago, would certainly, if you got half a dozen people together, you would two or three who had an uncle or an auntie on the farm or, you know, a close, relatively close relative on, involved with farming in some way, but today, in a group of people under 40 that would be almost unusual to have them, relatively close relative.

And I, and I think, that is an important change that's happened in Australian agriculture, and or in Australian society that is, therefore changes the whole political scene and the attitude of the

community, to the farming community, whereas in the wool boom days, fifty years ago they were sort of, to be a farmer was the top of the pile, but today it's just another business out there in the country and the majority of people probably wouldn't aspire to that at all, it's not seen as, the peak of the positions to aspire to.

[26.13] Well you touched on the changing environment, in the size of farms, just location of certain areas and you know, larger herds and so on, bigger farms and pursue a sort of lifestyle that not a lot of people would warm to now.

True, and associated with that is the need to, and I guess if you went back to the 1880s people may have even been attaining this from then on until now, is that, there's been a gradual move away from farming being a way of life to being a business and I think that's certainly increased quite exponentially to the end of the last 10 to 15 years with the area that I'm directly involved with, the intensification of animal-keeping, of intensive animals, anyway, not quite so much in the, in the sheep and cattle area, certainly in the cropping area with the high-level of investment in capital machinery and in land, means that, it has to be run as a business, because you need large borrowings and large funding to be able to operate the business at this stage. We haven't in Australia to the extent that it has probably happened in America moved away from the family farm., in as far as to the extent as I think probably has happened, in when in my career I moved away from the family farm situation. There were some industries that are moving more rapidly to the corporate farming approach, in particular and I guess, the chicken meat industry to a certain degree, is in that category, but, even still there's a lot of owner/operator operations there, whilst they're probably business structures that are company's and things like that, they are still privately family companies and family businesses that run the vast majority of agriculture in South Australia, I would imagine.

[28.19] Well we talked earlier about somebody in the marketing side of things, but this more recent period, '96 onwards, did you have to undergo any specialist business training, for example, to understand this sort of knowledge you'd have to impart to farmers or what opportunity?

Yes.

[28.36] Or did PIRSA put anything on for that?

I think it was, there was certainly nothing formal, academic or anything in that sense, about as near as we got to training was, I, another officer and myself, Trevor Clark – who had a particular interest in cattle did a study tour of the eastern states in a ten day period or something like that, particularly looking at feed lots and how they were developing, so it was more, really more a matter of growing into it, rather than formal training, I mean along the way there has been internal training, I guess, there was a period of training in middle management courses and a couple of ... there were relatively intensive times, maybe going two or three sessions a week at a time over a three or six month period – I can't remember that, actually how they were run closely – but there were certainly attempts within the Department to bring us up to different management techniques and expose us to different areas of that and that approach as opposed to the technical

training and things like that which reflected the changing role that I was, that I was doing.

[30.16] What about the reaction from the people on the land, I hesitate to say farmers on the land, how could, now you got your family groups and husbands and wives, when you're running a farm
Yes.

[30.27] How did they take to this new ...

One of the, the major changes that's happened, of course, was that we were the farmers friend and we had a team of people based around the country who you could ring up and ask a question about, you know, 'What's the dose rate for this, spraying this particular weed onto the crop or, you know, how do we go about building a shearing shed' and we would rush out and help them design it or whatever. Those days, and it was all free-to-air, we just did it as part of our job, as part of the, an addition to the group that we may have done it, however, the charging for services started to bite in, in an attempt to try and extend the reducing Government investment in the Department and also the need to, or the reduction of people in the country meant that we just couldn't, or the Department couldn't offer that, free advisory service as it had in the past, amazingly, the country people, took minimal advice or notice of this advice coming from head office of course as they could and continued to work on in a similar vein, but over the time, the free-to-air type service that we provided, has all – I'll have to say – has all but disappeared and I don't think that it has totally been replaced at this stage, but I think we are well on our way to ...

[32.46] TAPE FINISHED

AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY BERNARD O'NEIL WITH BILL GILES ON 25 MAY 2004

(Tape 5, Side A)

[0.15] Well Bill, we just talking there about, well the impost of fee based services and the importance, the change in the last couple of years, the last few years, I just wanted to ask was that, was that sort of change something that's been imposed on the, on the Department?

Well, it's imposed in the sense that, the available budgets for agriculture have reduced, whilst the Department has changed a bit in that, in some areas we've particularly moved to work in, in the post-farm paddock area, so, the type of work that you're doing in that situation is not directly providing the farmer, advice and things like that. The way it was also being approached has been to become very much project, oriented, so, either through a funding sense or even within the State dollars and so, a project might be to, an issue might be identified, either at a political level or a departmental level of something that needs to be attended to or changed and so, the funding is sought for that or it's provided by, to the Department, to carry out that specific issue, or to try and solve that specific issue and so, field staff in the country in particular would clearly need to find, on working on particular areas, I'm trying to think of, one would be, it might be, go back to the adoption of, changes in marketing approach and sale by description or something like that and so, if you work, if you were funded to do that, then that's what you did, rather than be just sitting around as a, as a general person, waiting for the phone to ring... .. and that has been, and

still, if that was funded to carry out that, to solve that problem, then you will certainly get into a situation where that is, can be still provided as a free service to try to, to address that, that particular issue. [SAID TO STOP TAPE]

So, if you assume that farmers still needed technical knowledge, technical information for their various areas and the Department is no longer necessarily providing, particularly that routine sort of information, then that void needs to be filled and it has been filled in, in several ways, one by the associated companies, whether they be stock agents, but more particularly, things, companies like fertilizer, or seed companies, have put on technical staff, where they never had them before, they just had salesman and they have filled that void to a certain degree in providing a lot of information and of course, there is some ties with that, possibly, with purchasing of fertilizer or making sure that, from the farmers perspective that he's getting, or able to distill whether it's objective advice or not. Combined with that, with the expansion in the size of the operations, and the risk of, making mistake and the costs that are associated with it, mis-spraying a paddock, leave, spent a fortune getting it sown, or whether it's 1,500 dairy cows and giving them the wrong drench or 50 000 in a shed feeding in the wrong feed, or something like that, the impacts become quite immense and so to the decisions, and they must be correct, and so there's been a slow move also, for independent consultants to develop, not so much the generalist, I think we went through a period of that, but certainly more and more private nutritionists and those type of people, or crop monitoring specialists that keep an eye on crops and provide specialist advice to farmers in areas, so the void is being filled, where the Department is backing out, by specialists consultants and of course, they have to be paid for by the farmer to, to get the specialists advice and the advice is providing in a, provided in a different way, rather than through your taxes, through a paid for consultancy and there's arguments for and against that, whether it's good, bad or indifferent, which we probably don't need to go and carry out.

[6.23] Why because we need to know, if the, if the Department, tried to resist that trend, were their pockets in the Department's that have

Yes, there it was certainly resisted, I guess, in the country areas where people tended and tried to continue doing what they'd been doing for the last 10 or 20 years, but slowly, I think people have come around to realise that probably, well can, that the job can be just as satisfying working on specific projects and clearly defined projects as it can be, just trying to be the farmers' friend all the time, so ... I'm probably being a bit harsh there, in that, as we mentioned earlier, when we were talking about Kadina where I was, and things, that we did have specific programs, but, the, the depth of those and the fact that that was the key part of your work, has become, I guess, more, taken a higher priority.

Resistance from within, I guess, the dollar, always talks and it was more in the administrative sense, or in the policy sense attempts to, make the meager dollar go as far as we can and to get the best impact for the State's agriculturally we could, so probably wasn't resisted so much as a

necessity to survive, as an organisation.

[8.28] And that, that sort of movement, is that, resulted in the Department being more centralised, than earlier times? Or have you still got a strong regional presence?

It, it certainly the regional presence has faded, just because the service is not there, and also because, excuse me, the type of projects, I guess, have become, as I mentioned slightly more, post-farm gate focused in some areas, so that the type of people, and this is one of the on-going issues, that if the type of people that you need to work with the meat processing sector, may be quite different to the type of people that you want to work with a, on a farm type issue and if they're only going to be two or three year projects, that you're working on, it becomes quite difficult to pick up the new, or to retrain people who were trained, used to working in a different area or to pick up new people and move them through. And I guess, that takes us on to another area of the, permanent, public servant versus the short-term funded employee and the consequent management issues, it's difficulties that that poses, the, you get different funding for things

[10.20] We'll come onto that, but to just round out our chat there, these things you're describing, are they part of a trend Australia-wide? Is South Australia leading or lagging and ...

I think the cut-backs in resources have been hardest in the smaller States, probably, I can really only speak for, clearly for the New South Wales Department, where I've attended their periodic conferences on a fairly regular basis and, I mean they've obviously always had a much bigger organisation than we have, but, they appeared, even up until the last conference to be, only just being impacted by these changes of approach and the need to be, not so much, project-focused, I think they probably, all been, always been pretty much project focused, but, the move to reduce their resources hasn't really clicked, certainly, I think. Victoria I think, would be closer to our model and with the sort of modified purchase of provider-type approach, the thing is to try and get more efficient and accountability, and things like that, but I think Queensland and New South Wales certainly, in the livestock side haven't felt the pressures that we have, certainly in South Australia.

[12.03] Maybe, you wanted to talk a little bit now, about the staffing aspect of it.

[TAPE STOPPED]

[12.20] Well then, just back on the staff, Bill.

Yes. Going back onto the permanent versus part-time, well not part-time, I suppose, temporary staff. The consequence of, having short-term funding provided and whether it be, within State based projects or the, the, presence of, Land Care and things like that, Natural Heritage Trust, rarely brought that to a head. I can remember when I first joined, that, I came on as a permanent public servant that a, that a couple of years after I'd been in the Department, a fellow got a notice to say that his contract had been renewed for the year, he'd been with the Department for about four years and all that time thought he was a permanent Public Servant, there was just no differentiation between whether you were on State funds and therefore permanent or, in that time,

I think it was Commonwealth Extension Services Grant, the Commonwealth Government funded, which were, not permanent, they were, they were annually voted in by the Federal Government and State's had to win them, and, but people were put on and, for all intents and purposes, you were a permanent public servant, the same as anybody else. The change today, is that, if you are a, come on on a, what we call 'trust funded project', a project that hasn't got permanent funds to it, then you're employed 90 per cent of the times for the, for the period of that project and the management implications of that, or the funding implications for that, from the sort of position where see it in gaining funds to do a particular task and do it within, two or three years, means that if you got time bounded, when the funds have to be used by, you got to get in and get the person appointed as quickly as you can, person comes on, maybe for two or three years, for the duration of the project, they might have to be trained, because you can't just pick them off the shelf exactly what you want to do or a good understanding of the project to what you want them to do in that period of time and then, obviously towards the end of that program, if they haven't got any vision of, you haven't got their vision of continuing your funds for them, they very quickly start applying for job, so it takes the eye of the, feel of the project you are working with, and then worst-case scenario is that they win a job, just six months before the project's wound up and move on and you're left to try and finish a project with some sort of, either, internally, because you're the only people who understand the project or possibly put somebody on for six months to try and wrap it up, or abandon the project, which of course, these days, people want outcomes and they've signed contracts about specific projects and deliveries and outcomes, so it becomes vital that you're able to deliver on them, and that's become quite a, difficult challenge, or, for managing of projects, which wasn't an issue in the past, in the way the Department was, was operated and there's been attempts along the way, in this changeover to say, 'Hey, well, can't we have approval for permanent public servants', which are then diverted into these particular programs, but, that's never been able to be achieved successfully, to my knowledge, certainly with, there are some permanent public servants, well, you know, offices of the Department who move into those project areas and then, sometimes have a right of return to their old job, but generally these days the job disappears when they've left it and so, they may still be a permanent public servant at the end of the job, but are likely to have to find some other, particular area of work, so what makes a, a quite a significant change in the way the organisations are operated, and you know, related in some ways, to this specialisation, I guess in agriculture and change that's happened right across the board.

[17.47] I suppose there must be, problems then, if motivation and morale, for both the permanent and these trust funded positions?

Yes.

[18.01] In the old days, someone on a Commonwealth grant, had some expectation that there would be another contract, there might be a job at the end of it, but now

Yes. Don't know, if I catch myself, that's been a permanent public servant for 40 plus years, it's

a horrifying thought to be starting off, but to the credit of the younger officers, they, I believe, handle this situation extremely well, and I guess it's part of society where people are much more mobile, move from job to job and so, it doesn't seem to be such an issue to the people involved as what I would've imagined. I think, from a public servant's perspective, the modern person coming on, as a quite legitimate consequence, doesn't have the loyalty to the organisation and then we can't expect them to have the loyalty to the organisation, they don't see it as a permanent career that they're moving through the, through a clearly defined structure, often they haven't got a clearly defined structure and they haven't got any permanence anyway. Complicated are the fact that, the benefits that we had of being a permanent public servant, we had a permanent job and the superannuation, was, shall we say, equal to the best in the private sector, meant that there were some clear benefits in being a public servant. My view is that, is that the losing of those 'perks', for the want of a better word, has not been compensated for in salary in any way, and so, the opportunity to get highly skilled and motivated people into the, public service, certainly, I'm talking in Agriculture in my experience, it is far more difficult and we would advertise positions today, despite the fact that we know it's a lot of people who have been, we're not getting the quality or the number of applicants that one would hope that you would get for the position, and I think that, in the longer term is, not to the, not for the benefit of the Department, but deal-to-deal, because of the way it's structures been broad-based across enterprise bargaining and the degree, is it worth a degree, wherever you are, but I don't think that we've picked up this, loss that's occurred as a result of the, ... compensated for the fact that we don't have permanents or the, improved super scheme.

[21.07] I suppose you're, you're able to recruit people from a technical perspective, you need technical expertise, so you can take on staff, whereas in many areas of the public service now, it's, they're keeping a lid on the numbers.

Oh, well we can, we can only take people on, if there's a project, if there's funding there for that particular project, so they, and, there is certainly some training schemes there, but they tend to be, to bring in unqualified clerical people and give them a chance of a job, rather than technically trained people.

[21.44] You're referring, I presume, just the trust-funded programs?

Yes.

[21.49] And shares?

Yes.

[21.51] How many programs would there be? I mean, a few, or

In that case, if we've got, in the printing area, we've got two Pig Officers, which, one of which is a permanent officer, been around nearly as long as I have, and one that's a temporary officer and we need, I think, something like nearly \$200 000 to keep those two employed and the funding that I, that we've able to attract to keep those two people, consists of only about \$50 000 State

money, permanent State money that we can rely on coming in each year and the remaining is spread over funding that we're going to attract from, some six different funding sources, so that's, that's typical and so each year, some of those funds might be for two or three years and if you want to keep those two people involved in working with the pig industry, we just have to keep trying to find funds to keep them employed, which is the challenge at our end of the job and the challenge at their end is to make sure that they deliver the outcomes that those half a dozen different people might want, they're not necessarily all the same goals that they want, so it makes program planning and writing, how they work with them, in there, quite a challenge.

[23.24] Of the funding in this situation referred to are the pig industry, is that coming from industry sources?

Yes, it's coming from a whole range of things

[23.30] So, they've probably got a vested interest in, the outcome

A third of that money will come from, direct industry levies and that we've applied for, to, support specific programs for them, as they, a quarter of it comes from the State funds, another quarter of it comes from a specific targeted project which the, State, the Food Council identified and this is, this is a classic case of the – Government, instead of employing a permanent job – identifying the need for a strategic plan in the pig industry and we've been able to win some, \$50 000 in this case to actually, assist the implementation of the strategic plan, which has been, already been launched and developed and now it's filling into an operational phase and we've got funding, I think, for two or three years to, to try and get the outcomes of that plan implemented. At the end of that time, or during that time, we'll obviously be trying to find other funding, whether it's within making, help to make that aspects of that plan more operational, get it implemented better or whatever, so, it's a constant challenge to create those sort of on-going jobs and roles, whereas previously, you had this substantial core of public servants, in the case of these two folks, it would've been certainly funded how the state funds and you didn't have to spend the time trying to get those, no, this is a, I guess a move in industry development in more recent times, it has been more entrenched though, would have to say I think, in the research area for a longer period of time, so that, probably the vast majority of research funds now are, are certainly on a similar sort of temporary basis.

[25.36] From a personal view, where do you fit in terms of securing the funding? Are you the person out negotiating in industry or, are you writing letters or ministerials, or?

Yes, that, that's one of key roles of our group, our group, now, is all about industry development and so we're trying to find ways that, whether it be the pig industry, dairy industry or the beef industry, how can we get the best investment, or from the State's investment, get the best return on our dollar and how can we lever that meager State investment to get industry dollars or outside dollars to try and extend that, the value of that dollar further, so in, in our group, we are constantly on the look-out for listening in to the recent Federal Government budget, for instance to see what change in directions they might've made in programs. The case was, that we've heard that they've

announced a program for industries at risk, and so, if we can identify that the pig industries at risk for some reason from imported pork, maybe, say, then we'll be out to try and to suss out from the Federal government, what are the key, key criteria to make one of those, that they put on, getting funding for that project and then trying to build a project to get funds to make sure we get a South Australian share of that dollar, or to try and get more than our share if we can and to help us to, retain our highly specialised staff, in this case, the two officers that we have got in, in pigs and of course, the outcome can be, that they might be highly trained in technical area of, of pig management or something or other, but these projects might be about, the adjustment in the industry taking a different approach or something or other and so, we need to, once again, look at re-training or re-directing them, or are they the most appropriate people for that project, do we really want to go and get that money, is it appropriate for South Australia and things like that, so that's a key part of our job now in this group is to seek out any funds we can to try and improve the productivity of our industries in South Australia.

[28.15] That sounds like, you're competing, both within PIRSA and outside with industry and other states and other, at other levels, you're both competing and also collaborating, on trying to get results, but you've got to compete with people to get funds and,
Yes.

[28.32] There's a delicate balancing act I guess.

It can be, certainly is competing across States, for funding, and if the funding amounts are limited, you're putting in cases and hoping that you win them and it can be collaborating, for instance, we got some quite big dollars over a period of time out of the Natural Heritage Trust to look at, the spreading of effluent from feed lots, or piggeries on farming land, in a sustainable manner and we combined, initially with Environment Protection Agency and put up a joint submission there and then when, the DWLBC was formed, three agencies, so it was breaking out of our silos and working together on a project there that, both we could see from PIRSA's perspective that it was a, an opportunity to make farming more efficient and increase productivity and link in with the Environment Protection Agency, you had the role of making sure that the disposal of the animal waste was done in a sustainable manner, so it makes for challenging times and interesting times, trying to, break down the silos, to work with other groups, to identify the areas that, so you can make a difference and go and find those funds to make sure you can achieve it.

[30.02] Some of that funding work and research and policy areas, have you worked with, a case like the Waite Institute, the CSIRO, Roseworthy? Do they still feature on the radar?

Yes, not as closely in the past as we should've, I think. The separation of SARDI from the rest of PIRSA has been a very marked and bad demarcation of them moving away as a strict research organisation and us, moving down our traditional extension, industry development area, whereas in the past, it was all one big happy family, to a, work, I'm certainly early on, we're, our conferences were all combined and things like that, we now have three groupings in the agency. We've got rural solutions, who're delivering, operating, as almost an independent consultancy

arm or extension in industry development delivery, we've got the purchasers or funders as we're called within our group, who try to look at the broad policy issues and seek funding to carry out things and then you've got SARDI off doing this research on the side.

It, it's an area that we can't afford to sustain, in my view, the three separated groups because we're only a small State and we certainly need to try and function as one team rather than, in this case, three different teams. In the beef area in recent times, we've tried to pull together the University as well, with the SARDI group leader and ourselves and we've had a couple of sessions talking about it in terms of how we can work together on dual projects with joint issues and have a more, congruent approach and one of things that he's driving at, is that there is a new CRC Cooperative Research Centre being developed and for the State to win dollars in that, they have to put up matching dollars and we're working, we know that the university is keen to put up a substantial bid to be part of this, it's a national CRC, not necessarily based in South Australia and we're trying to, certainly work together to show that we're, or come together and work as a combined group in trying to get the best return, best input of dollars and outcomes of that project within South Australia.

[33.03] TAPE FINISHED

AN INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY BERNARD O'NEIL WITH BILL GILES ON 25 MAY 2004

(Tape 5, Side B)

[0.04] The cattle, the sheep, or ...

Yes. I guess, one of the reasons that the pig industry has retained two staff and until recently the cattle industry, beef industry, had shrunk down to no staff at all, where we had virtually putting no involvement into it, is their political nous and their pride within the industry, plus helped by the fact that they had two very competent staff members who, hung around, whereas in the beef industry as blokes retired, or left for various reasons, they haven't been replaced and the consequence of that is, region, I guess to a certain degree a redistribution of funds, the pig industry has throughout this period retained, we've been able to retain the staff as we said on the previous tape, partly by 75% or 50% of the funds coming from outside the government and coming, certainly not from consolidated revenue, whereas in the beef industry we weren't able to attract that sort of funding and so, there was a redistribution and I guess, that's a bad reflection on ourselves in that we weren't able to build strong enough cases to get funding for the beef industry, or whatever, having said that we have, I guess, changed a slight focus on the pastoral area, where we've put a lot of effort into the effort into the pastoral area, partly as an effect of, the fact that they've had to pay serious drought on, in parts of it, but getting back to the specific question, there certainly is competition for dollars and the Department has tried being based predominantly with scientists to find a means of calculating a formula that can say, 'Hey, this, this group ought

to get so many dollars, this group ought to get so many dollars' or whatever, because, it's either on the size of the industry or its potential for growth and the, we've through all sort of machinations by economists and things to find ways of investing the Government's dollar in the most efficient and productive way. I would have to say, that, it has been pretty unsuccessful and the squeaky wheel probably still gets the dollar to a certain degree and the ability to, of an industry, to have matching dollars or to have a, and also to have, issues that are easy to find and able to be tackled so that, as I've said we've run the beef focus right down or we had run the beef focus right down, we identified recently that there is a real scope to increase productivity in the beef industry, particularly in the south-east by, pasture-utilisation and by working together in groups, or to achieve that by working in groups and we've been able to win dollars to appoint a person, effectively getting some internal dollars, not permanent dollars from within the State budget, but, from within the rural industry's adjustment fund to part-fund the person, plus we put some of our State dollars from the livestock group into the person, position, and been able to effectively have core funding to appoint a person from another, for two or three years, we've appointed that person as a result of hearing what the National Meat and Livestock Australia bodies key goals are and that it dovetailing with our approach, which has recently now won industry funding to go with that project which, all but doubles the size of the funding that we've got for the project, so, I guess that's a demonstration of the fact that we've been now able to retain the pig boats by getting a large portion of industry funds and now, also, re-build the beef side of it and have some resources being put into that area. So, yes, it's and it's a competitive basis within our group that we can win dollars and if we are going to win dollars then we may withdraw them from a particular industry sector and put them into another and in things like the rural industry adjustment fund, they're not attached to any particular group, so it might be the crops group, go and win some dollars out of there, or we might win some dollars out of there, so there is a level of competitiveness in there.

[6.40] It's very different to, former times.

Yes, very much, very different, and quite cut-throat in the effect that if you don't get the dollars, you don't have the people. We put on a beef person, Beef Development Officer, for three years and I'm confident that we will be able to keep the project going for well beyond that time, but if we aren't successful in netting dollars, the 20-odd thousand out of the 100 000 that the State will be putting in, won't keep the person on at all, and then you would be moved on.

[7.22] At another level, Bill, the, those twin themes, to put a competitiveness of collaboration, you mentioned Rural Solutions, SARDI and yourselves, all in the one organisation, what sort of friction, what sort of cooperation between those groups?

It, talking initially about the SARDI and the PIRSA one, there was, I came out of the research base at Struan, I've worked with cattle all the time and for much of my career kept a close liaison with that. In recent times, would have to say that that separation has been quite abysmal in that we've just gone our own ways, doing our own projects, rarely meet together or discuss technical

issues between each other, what the researchers doing has little, we have virtually, have had virtually no input into that in recent years, although working on industry issues that are relevant from our perspective or, and likewise we haven't followed through with picking up on what the research outcomes have been and extending them necessarily within our programs, so it's been quite a backwards step, I believe, the separation of, it was, I think, Kym Mayes as Minister who implemented, the establishment of SARDI, for no doubt very good theoretical reasons and the appointment of the leaders and their briefing to create a fully independent research institute meant that a wedge was clearly driven between to split off a bit of the old block of, our Department into two separate organisations and while they haven't been separated totally from the agency, there is certainly been attempts to achieve that and the retirement's got close, for some reason it's been backed off, in the, in retained within the umbrella of PIRSA, but, I think in recent times there has been a better spirit of cooperation and attempt to be more cooperative in having common points of view as to where research should be done, or whether industry development should be done, what are the key issues and things there.

[10.39] Where do you see the push for that coming from, from management down, the staff up?

I, well, no, I think it is from the pressure of reduced dollars and the need to win things nationally and I'm talking particularly from our perspective, I can't speak for crops and thing like that. If we're going to be players in the national field we got combine our resources together to do it, particularly for middle management.

The linkage with Rural Solutions, let me start off by saying, the approach of having separating the purchaser from the provider and the principal of trying to make things more accountable has been an, or was an essential need, but the way it was carried out with egos involved and with no debriefings to create a completely separate consulting arm at arms length, from the organisation, and I guess tied with the need to recover dollars and the competition policy and issues like that, has meant that we've gone through a very difficult birthing stage in my view and has been a major hindrance in and a backwards step for the Department in the way it's actually happened and been carried out. Some of its been personalities, in particular in some of the areas that we had to deal with and that has been to a certain degree, or to a large degree addressed in recent times and a quite different approach has been taken, but there is still the difficulty of the dollar which is created two different goals and roles with the two, two organisations and I'm not sure, I'm not confident that we can get back to as productive situation as we were in prior to the establishment of ...

[13.40] So, rural solutions are in the position of, you know, having, once it generates funds, which you could call 'profits' in inverted commas, for PIRSA.

The theory of it is that they buy resources from us to deliver our particular programs. Or really we borrow resources from them, to deliver programs, in the theory is that they, to get a better bang from the government's buck, or to try and have more people out in the field available to

deliver the government's programs, more highly qualified technical people that they go out and provide paid for services so a person might be working part-time on a particular project funded by us and then part of their time might be working on, or winning dollars and working on, paid for projects, which may or may not be, in the worst case scenario, working for the same goals, so you could be in a worst case scenario find us trying to produce something, push something for a State development perspective that there's a ... and then being paid to do something that was not going to help State development. Haven't really had any cases of that, but ...

[15.28] Potential's there?

Potential is there. However, if it were to come off and the right, and they were able to pay, retain highly qualified technical people, then obviously when we want to buy things you've got a higher qualified person in there for the other people to lure it, so, the theory is good and I, as I said, the accountability side of it has meant that we have, it really brings home to both our level of operating, the costs of delivering services and also brings home to the senior management the cost of delivering services. An example of that, would be in a drought situation, in the past when I was a livestock officer and if we ran into a drought, we just abandoned our programs and moved into drought extension, in running field days or providing advice on how to feed sheep and things like that. Today, if I were to ring up Rural Solutions and say, 'Look, we've got a serious problem with drought and we want two people to work in the pastoral area on running a program', they'd say, 'That's jolly good, who's paying, where's the dollars' and that, for instance this year, well last year, when the premier provided for \$5 000 000 I think, for, from the State in a specific project to help with drought assistance in the Mallee and the north-east pastoral area, we 'quarantined', for want of a better word, I think, I can't remember the dollars but it certainly, \$150 000 springs to mind to run a, which we bought into our program to buy services from Rural Solutions to deliver updating drought bulletins and providing field days and workshops in the country and things like that, and so, ultimately when you do a report on that program of what's happened to the Premier's money you can identify clearly that there's \$150 000 spent on drought extension work, whereas previously, talked earlier about any reports and things it would've been and the Department ran a good program on servicing drought and the, meeting the needs of farmers in that area. We wouldn't have been able to for it in dollars and cents in any way, shape or form. So in theory, it, it, accountability, it, it's a great way to go, maybe it's using a sledgehammer to achieve a particular result.

[18.48] Well, there's a certain element of 'creative accounting' and you got a section of an organisation, paying another section, in the same organisation, to do something or to fund something, or whatever, but there's this, shuffling amounts across the spreadsheets.

Yes. That's what it is, we have what we call, service level agreements, for all our projects with Rural Solutions where they deliver things for us and those agreements in theory, are written in outcome terms, we don't write them in people terms, we say if we want certain outcomes to work and they agree to do it for a certain amount of dollars and the dollars come into our group and

then periodically over the year they're transferred according to over the agreed formula is, to their, to Rural Solutions, employ the people and pay them.

[19.39] Thanks for your comments on that, and I, I wanted to ask you more generally, how we talk about those three groups in particular, but more generally about PIRSA, as it has become, you started out in Ag department, you've seen the transition to Primary Industries SA, PISA and now into PIRSA, have you got any comments on the, the merger and coming to grips with their new structure or do you see that as a, here or whatever, you isolated little world?

Yes. The name change is, are always a joke at the time and after you've been around a while, you just roll with the punches. You bring two agencies together and, I guess, at the high level of management, it probably is far more traumatic than it is, at the operational level. I would, thinking back on my country days, whether we were with Fisheries or without Fisheries, whether we were with Mines, whether it was without Mines, whether it was Forestry, or without Forestry, didn't impinge in the way I worked in a day to day sense. The nearest it might've got to impinging would've been you might've had a Fisheries Officer in your, in your particular office or in the case of the Mt Gambier area office, you had two officers, one in the town and there was a decision made to move the Mt Gambier, old Ag Department group out to the Forestry headquarters which is on the periphery of town, so they were, at the grassroots level, although the level that I was were probably the, the, biggest impacts which were extremely minor and didn't, didn't impact on your day to day operation tool, other than taking the flack from the public about a, 'what's the name of the agency this week? Is it PIRSA or Primary Industries, or Ag Department or whatever?'.

I have to say, we've stuck with this current name for a long-time, we must be clearly due for a major shake-up of some description. So, at that level it didn't have much impact at all. It, I guess, it hasn't impacted on the Primary Industries or the Ag Department people as much as, because we've tended to be the Big Brother in most of those amalgamations, and so if you came from the Department of Fisheries and then became Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, you probably felt a bit like a pimple on a bum, stuck on the edge of it and I know, some of the Mines people certainly felt that way. I remember talking to a person a few years ago and it hadn't even occurred to me as an issue and probably, because we just naturally cut along thinking we were still Ag Department, anyway. A positive, as is always, the fact that you are thrown in, or you're silo is broken down a bit, so you're exposed and we're a very insular mob in Agriculture, training wise and the way we operate, have been for a million years, so, to get thrown into a workshop on some training aspect, which may not be purely on livestock or something or rather and get exposed to a mob of fishermen telling you, or Fishery staff, saying, 'Well, we do things this way, and it's a bloody sight better than the way you do', is good, makes you stand back, think about what you're doing in a different way. I did a middle management training course at some point and it was a mixed bag of, people from different agencies, predominantly, a couple from, the majority from Agriculture, but two or three, soon after Mines joined us, and that sort of thing is excellent and

does us good in agriculture to, to expose to how different people have worked and, I'm in a simple example is, in the reverse situation the miners can't understand why we have to run big programs and things like that, and why we, need to talk to so many damn people, do you want to sort something out in the mining industry you talk to Santos and maybe one or two other mining companies and you fix them up, and tell them what we're going to do and you don't tell them what you're going to do. In our case, if you're talking to Beef Industry, you might be talking to 3000 farmers that, that may or may not want to listen to you all, they'll have to and so there is those little things, they're good.

[24.28] Well, you have certainly touched on one of interest in the aspects, the mix of cultures, the cultural background of these organisations and the difference and perhaps there's a feeling, if one's being unkind, that, you know, PIRSA exists in name only, it's an entity, but you still have these separate empires within it.

For sure. On a number of meetings in 101 Grenfell Street and in the same floor that the miners were on but as a matter clearly walks the door or anything, the integration in the current straight down in recent times has been minimal, really, It's not critical of Miners or Mines or our people, Energy or whoever, you're all the same I think, you just go on about your own business, maybe from the hierarchy there hasn't been enough attempt to throw us all together.

[25.18] They are incompatible and to a certain extent, they just have to co-exist, and say, we do belong to this one entity, but, you know, we got out to the miners and the farmers.

I think that's right. In 80% of our work, there is not the compatibility, I think there's more compatibility with the Fisheries people and they still probably haven't grown far enough down that road, particularly as they moved more to, from wild catch to farming, maybe at the issues of diseases and things like that, will become more similar to what we do, farming, in the sense of having to, leave fishing issues, more that sort of thing, start to, genetics and breeding with, starting from scratch, where we've been doing it for, 150 or for 500 years if you're talking about genetics and cattle and things like that, so, those things that we learnt from them and they've learnt from us, yes, totally different and different cultures of course in the way that they operate and we have operated in the past. Can't think of any clear examples, but when you get together as a group you can see that they've come from different, come from different perspective to us, that's in the ??? than we do here.

[26.30] It might, be seem to be drawing a long barrow to go back to where we started today when we talk about Mt Lofty and you started talking about a region and what impacts would happen across the region and, you know, for that community or the communities from the region. Is it something similar happen, with PIRSA activities now, so you have to take into account, you know, miners, the aquaculture people, the Forests ...

In fact the reverse has happened in the forming of, the forming of DWLBC, Department of Water, Land, Biodiversity, Conservation. You've now got an agency, that's gone off, on its own and where, when it was formed, I mean, not all that long ago, it was clearly going to have, a very green approach on the one extreme, very green approach together with the brown approach of agriculture, but the net effect, I think, we'll agree that DWLBC will get greener, and we will get

browner, rather than being a collaborative situation, I think it will become more of the SARDI, PIRSA situation, which is clearly bad.

[27.40] Were Lands and Agriculture of E&WS/Agriculture in former times, seem to stand of their own Departments and do their own thing?

Well the agencies have and, I, I think, groups, I guess my position would be that, where it has been appropriate, the silos break down to a, to a reasonable degree and if the issues get strong enough, or bad enough in an environmental sense or something like that, then people are forced together, but, and then, you know, I, I was going to say it's an unhappy marriage, but no it's not in those situations, it's generally a happy marriage, it's the ongoing, plutonic arrangement where we decide to, that we've got our own things to do and we don't mix together that's probably a more serious issue.

[28.44] Things like, the current hot topic with the River Murray, you might have farmers grazing stock in the vicinity of the River, was going to say, Water, Land, Biodiversity Conservation Department, got an obvious interest in the Murray. Do you work together or ...?

Yes, I think that's a good example, probably I'm not closely involved because it's mainly to do, Tony Morbey but is, regularly up there, meeting with both the farmers and the environmental groups up there. Natural Resource Management area, DWLBC area and we need, we have certainly a clear perspective of industry development that they come, that we come from and then they have the protecting the environment, bent in their goals and hopefully we work together and come up with a workable solution. It's a, I think a, a symptom of the Westminster system that you're going to have it wherever and there's going to be changes in agencies and groups like that, it's up to the public servants to make sure that it doesn't, that we don't get into the silent mentality and get too opposed to each other, got to be a matter of cooperation at that level. It won't matter what the Minister's do, they won't, they won't make it come together, it's got to be a spirit of cooperation within the agencies.

[30.25] So that sense develops within the agencies and, the people within the agencies.

Yes. In some cases, that they're very at a very high level, or I would imagine this River Murray stuff, we could write up a Wickes' sort of level, they would be meeting and discussing and debating issues at that level at the operational level that Tony and I work at, and his equivalents in the DWLBC and SA Water. We're at a different level of cooperation and then, they'll probably be appointing, maybe people who'll work across all the agencies, maybe employed by one agency, but delivering packages which are agreed between the three agencies.

[31.23] Okay Bill, we've covered quite a range of areas over a series of tapes and perhaps if we wrap it up now and follow through with comments on the transcript or even another session down the track just so we can complete the record in due course, but thanks very much for your contribution to this part of the project.

It's been a pleasure, look forward to, not reading it all, that would be most embarrassing, but hoping that something comes out of it, because I think, it would be a great shame to lose the wealth of history that could be written out of the history of the Department.

[32.04] No, we'll try and capture more, and thanks very much for the enjoyable time we had on this session. Thank you.

[32.14] FINISHED