

AUSTRALIAN PROSPECTORS AND MINERS HALL OF FAME
LAUNCH COMMENTS BY RON MANNERS 28 NOV. 1996

(Thanks to Richard Tatsula and general acknowledgment of honored guests).

It had not occurred to me that this Hall of Fame should be built anywhere else other than Kalgoorlie.

You might think that just because I come from Kalgoorlie, that I may be parochial.

Let me assure you that I'm not and that my heart is full of compassion for the rest of the world who have to travel so far to visit us in Kalgoorlie", the centre of the universe".

I read in the Kalgoorlie Miner the other day of a Kalgoorlie prospector visiting Perth for the first time. He was impressed that Perth charges \$75 to get into the place.

As he came charging over the hill into Perth this special welcoming committee, with blue flashing lights and radar guns chased him and took his \$75 before they would let him in.

He didn't feel too bad about it as he realised that there was not much chance of Perth supporting itself from its own endeavors.

Ladies and gentlemen my main emotion tonight is the tremendous sense of responsibility that the Hall of Fame places in our hands.

There has been a key group of players who have so far kept their heads down, working hard to achieve much in a relatively short time.

From enquiries it would seem that Peter Bridge, the proprietor of Hesperian Press, and publisher of a whole library of Australian mining history books, with some urging from Alf Thompson and Bill Moriarty actually took the first step by registering the business name of Australian Prospectors Hall of Fame, in July 1993.

Peter then discussed the concept with Kris Laurie at the first Balzano Barrow Race in Kanowna on Oct 10 '93.

The idea was obviously a good one because it was picked up by the very active group who have taken it through to "final feasibility". These people are already mentioned in the excellent information package you have been provided with but I'm sure that there are many others.

This reminds me of a speech I gave in 1993 covering the history of the Museum of the Goldfields. I specifically mentioned 16 people who had helped or hindered the project and it only got me into trouble for not mentioning all the other key

players who had some involvement over the 28 years spanning the development of that Museum.

The good thing about our kind of people is that we have sufficient self-esteem to enjoy participation in such projects so we don't easily get our noses out of joint.

Well, that's enough of the history of the concept and I extend my sincere thanks to those who have brought all these threads together for us now to contribute our support. With support from people like you, and I mean personally as well as your companies, this project instead of taking 28 years like the Museum of the Goldfields, should meet the deadline of five years and be completed within the budget of \$12M.

The aspect of responsibility hits me when I consider that all of us, in fact all Australians owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to those whom our Hall of Fame is designed to recognise and acknowledge. This goes beyond the well-known names in prospecting in mining. It extends to the unknown foot-soldiers of our industry.

These are the countless people that we didn't actually see do anything spectacular, but if they had not done it, we probably wouldn't be here tonight.

As Napoleon once said, in a burst of modesty "I do not deserve more than half the credit for the battles I have won. Soldiers generally win battles; Generals get credit for them".

We are more conscious of the contributions of those who have come before us; to Australia's prosperity, to our standard of living and we are certainly more conscious of the key role in Australia's future, our industry could make, if encouraged to reach its true potential.

We are all very aware of the key factors that are forcing our industry to spend 43% of its exploration budget in other countries. The ill-conceived and poorly drafted Native Title Act has caused project insurance against Sovereign Risk in our own country, to be higher than in some neighboring countries that we condescendingly call "emerging nations".

If there ever was a country that I would like to see "emerge", it is Australia.

We are more conscious of these facts because, unlike 95% of Australians who have spent all of their lives huddled together around the coastal cities, we have had first-hand contact with the industry that has emerged as Australia's economic driving force.

Amongst that 95% of "coastal huddlers" there has developed an anti-development literature, an anti-development philosophy and a glib feeling that Australia would be a better place if we concentrated on erecting even more barriers to development.

That anti-development group has done untold damage, damage now that we have the responsibility to repair by creating this Hall of Fame to act as a visual and Internet interface between our industry and Australia's and the world's population, in particular students and educational institutions.

This anti-development brigade has been largely funded by the unsuspecting Australian taxpayer and has had a long lineage of anti-development philosophers, possibly starting with Rousseau, whose impact on Manning Clark, H C Coombs has been passed on to contemporary politicians and academics, even extending at popular level to Australia's Prince of Pernicious Prattle, Phillip Adams.

This type of thinking is alive and well in the Evatt Foundation whose dream, outlined recently in *The Australian* newspaper, (date?) reveals a longing for the collapse of enterprise so that they can be part of the ruling elite of socialist planners.

All this has been happening while we the "captains of industry" have been unaware of the proliferation of the anti-development in Non Government Organisations (NGO's), again largely funded by the taxpayers, all speaking the anti-development message via the most sophisticated communication network, landing their pre-written media releases on the news-desks and wire services in a far more professional style than any of us ever dream of.

(Give references for RBM speech plus Professor Jackson's speech in Melbourne).

This Hall of Fame project gives us an opportunity to present an intellectually sustainable alternative to these nattering nabobs of negativism.

I'm not alone in my concern and let me quote from Dame Leonie Kramer's 1993 Sir Robert Menzies memorial lecture "At the same time, some humanities studies, which I hesitate to call disciplines, enjoy a good deal of success in undermining the legitimate claims of science and even in ignoring actual achievements".

Ladies and gentlemen, I consider that moderation in the pursuit of tolerance for the constant string of attacks on our industry, is no virtue, and enthusiasm in the defence of our industry is no vice.

I'm old enough to remember the era when miners were heroes, and I know that this will happen again when we get off our knees and start defending the very Western Civilisation that has made possible our on-going achievements.

This brings me to the concept of responsible leadership.

For better or worse we are our industry's leaders so we need to face up to that responsibility.

It goes further than just simply running a company and meeting our corporate responsibilities, it goes to the debt we each personally owe our industry.

Our responsibility extends to regularly reminding our politicians that we elected them to give leadership, not some more of those suffocating taxes.

We should pressure our politicians to instead support "wealth creation", as it is the only means of delivering an attractive future to "all" Australians.

As background, let me talk about the measurement of political leadership, by mentioning three political leaders who emerged in the seventies.

1. In the UK, Margaret Thatcher.

2. In the USA, Ronald Reagan.

3. In Australia, Malcolm Fraser.

We now have that wonderful quality of hindsight to help in this judgement.

1. Margaret Thatcher or Baroness Thatcher, as she is now known set out in the early 80's with the aim of shrinking the relative size of government. Now more than a decade later some of those privatised companies are starting to give Britain a real edge in communications and transport, two critical areas for globalised business.

Sure, Margaret Thatcher was unpopular in some quarters as she had identified a large element of disguised welfare, where people were on the government payroll but they had no real jobs. She was more interested in being right than in being popular and the benefits were real and exist today. She scores highly.

2. Ronald Reagan, relying heavily on the language of leadership, gave Americans a welcome vision of a self-reliant and proud population, but he was unable to shrink the ever expanding government.

In the end, his only lasting achievement was to substitute debt and inflation for taxation, as a way of paying for the heavy cost of government.

3. Malcolm Fraser used the words that were borrowed by his speech writers from the free-enterprise philosophers, but unfortunately did not deliver at any stage the actions to match the fine words, so he managed to "blow it". Perhaps his only achievement was to give free-enterprise a bad name. Apart from that nothing remains, so he rates poorly despite two election victories.

In like manner, in the mining leadership stakes, we do not wish to "blow" the opportunity that the organisers of this Hall of Fame project have created for us.

In conclusion, there are two contemporary visions for Australia.

One vision, I have mentioned is the vision of the anti-industrial brigade which will lead to an escalation of our disgraceful national debt, and the continuing preaching of the politics of envy.

The other vision for Australia is one that sounds three hardy cheers for all productive Australians and reminds the whole population that good policies could again encourage the simple release of creative energy in our own country, and this will give us all a better future.

The Prospectors and Miners Hall of Fame project is a living tool in this vision for Australia and as such it commands your full support.