
**Address given by Mrs Rinehart
Small Business Association Gala Dinner/Roy Hill Annual Ball
Saturday 21 November 2015 – Port Hedland**

Distinguished guests and friends.

A very, very warm welcome to all those who've travelled to the outback for this year's Small Business Association of Australia's annual gala ball. And shared for the first time with the Roy Hill annual ball.

What a night for celebration!

As you'll soon see, this was quite a mega project, for our then small Australian company to take on, and one which our staff can now be exceedingly proud, indeed given all the firsts achieved, others across Australia can be proud of this Australian mega project too.

At the end of my address tonight, I'll outline some more of these firsts, but before I do, I'd like to share with you some none mining experiences.

The Pilbara area you're now visiting was initially pioneered by my family predecessors, who set up Woodbrook, also known as Hancock's homestead, where my grandfather, George Hancock, and two of his family, were born, then Ashburton station, in the 1800's becoming the first pastoralists in this area.

Recently, I had the pleasure of visiting the historic cattle station Fossil Downs in the Kimberley's.

This legendary station had been owned and operated by decedents of the MacDonald and the Henwood families for over 133 years.

Like my own pioneering ancestors, the story behind how the Kimberley region was opened up is an extraordinary, largely untold important part of Australian history.

In 1883, Donald MacDonald's sons, Charlie and Willie set out from Goulburn in NSW to drive approx. 700 head of cattle and 60 horses up and across the continent.

They navigated through thousands of miles of untouched bush land, across deserts and mountain ranges, through swollen rivers and at other times, going weeks without even sighting water. They suffered losses, death and disease, and only the sons arrived in the Kimberley three and a half years later – a drove of 5600km. Not only was it the longest cattle drive in Australia - It was the longest cattle drive in the world.

It is one of the great stories of the Australian outback. Yet as they told their family members, though it took 3 1/2 years to achieve - it took a lifetime to forget. They were tough years. And they didn't want to talk about them.

It serves as a reminder that our nation was shaped by courageous, enterprising, hardworking people – Independent small business people who persevered through every hardship.

Times certainly have changed - but the old adage still stands - that major reward continues to be achieved through sacrifice, risk taking, hard work and perseverance. My own pioneering family understood this. My Fathers forebears first arrived in W.A in 1830 from the South of England. His Great Grandfather John travelled 1000 north in the little wooden boat "Sea Ripple" with family members and a few extra workers, some cattle and other livestock and despite losing almost half at sea in the rugged

Indian Ocean, limped into Cossack with damaged boat, and established the first port in the north at Cossack, went on to establish the first town in the north at Roebourne, which is still a town today - also established Woodbrook Station then Ashburton Station which is still an active Station today - then finally further inland, acquired half then all of Mulga Downs Station, and Hamersley Station. The North West areas first small businesses.

Dad later sold Hamersley Station, which is now owned by Rio Tinto, but Mulga Downs continues with our company. Some years ago I requested the W.A. Government to name half of the Hamersley ranges after my pioneering family, which was ultimately done.

Given they were the first white settlers, established the first Port and Town, first Pastoral Stations and – what became so important for the well-being of all Australians - my father's discoveries. The mountain range naming has created a lasting testament to the first pioneers of the North West.

My Mother's Dad, James Nicholas, became a leading west Australian businessman. His family was also from the south of England. He was originally a half owner of Cobb and Co. W.A. then a year later bought out his partner. He built thousands of miles of bush roads for his hundreds or thousands of horses to pull his Cobb and Co Coaches, distributing Mail, Supplies and Passengers to the inland Goldfields and other destinations. He built dozens and dozens of staging posts and Inns for Passengers to stay in overnight. Later he designed and bought the first buses from England to W.A. He also acquired pastoral holdings, including Dirk Hartog Island and ultimately became the largest landholder in W.A.

It is not governments that advance our country and its economy and raise our living standards – it's the hard work of risk taking Entrepreneurs, and of the people who work with them. Its small business and the entrepreneurial spirit.

Rules and regulations are not the reason things happen – they slow things down and make progress harder.

The stories of the pioneers and our outback should serve as a reminder that we were and should be capable of survival and Nation building without constant bureaucratic intervention. It is very fitting that the founder of the small business association, Anne Nalder, chose the outback for this year's Small Business Association of Australia's annual gala ball. It's not often we get a chance to wear dinner suits and ball gowns in the outback, let's give Anne and each of you.

Today, nothing happens without excessive government compliance.

You may have heard me speak before about how our Roy Hill mega-project had to navigate more than 4000 regulations, licences, approvals, and permits just to get us to construction, and then even more were required for actual construction!

Dealing with over-regulation in our country has become so complicated and time consuming that it's difficult to comply with all that is regulated. As I've said before, even trying to find out all the regulations that must be met, is a very hard task too! This can take years, just finding them, as we learnt for our major projects in Queensland especially.

It's giving us a rotten reputation internationally as a place to invest, and as a consequence investment continues to fall.

Here is our nation at this time in our history - in record debt, with an expectation of continuing to pay for better hospitals and subsidised health care, defence, and for an increasingly growing proportion of elderly population, and other outlays, - yet with very little apparent understanding, that Australia has to increase investment to cope with all this, instead of making it harder for ourselves to attract investment and run businesses cost competitively. Raise this and you're either shot down in the media, or ignored, indeed they manage to do both! Shoot you down without actually referring to what you say!

I spend a lot of time travelling and working in Asia, and increasingly people are turning away from wanting to significantly invest in our country. Government red and green tape is one of the major issues.

The cost that government compliance is adding - to ruin our cost competitiveness in an already high priced country - also reduces productivity as so many man hours are taken up and lost to - in many instances, unnecessary government regulation and compliance.

Politicians sometimes talk the talk about cutting government tape but in reality - is much changing where businesses are concerned? We've heard that there are reductions in progress for charities and for childcare - but with investment and exploration falling - is this very small agenda really going to help our country with its record debt?

I would like to publicly acknowledge the small business association of Australia for their efforts in spreading the message on behalf of their members and small business generally, that the government needs to urgently reduce government tape for businesses too. However, unless they are supported by more people speaking out across Australia, the reality is, little positive change will occur. It can't just be left to this organisation; we must all join in such call, in the interests of our businesses and our country.

The over-reach of government and the costs of compliance are enormous and time consuming and the taxpayer has to pay the wages and expenses for the armies of people who sit in government offices policing things that very often don't need policing.

Bureaucracy extends its reach to places many politicians have never been, seen or even heard of!

Take John and Annette Henwood back at Fossil Downs in the remote Kimberley....

Together they have run the station for over half a century. They have dealt with some of the most extreme conditions daily, with temperatures often in the 40s, earthquakes, fires, years of drought and 5-foot high floodwaters through their beautiful homestead. They've lived with isolation and remoteness, but it's dealing with the city-based regulators that's become their biggest and increasing challenge - and a cost burden. This is what governments don't properly realise or even seem to consider - the time and costs they burden us with. Or the consequences of this.

The costs of dealing with government mean stations are left with old aircraft, as can't afford new. For instance, Fossil Downs single engine work aircraft is over 40 years old! The airstrip is not sealed, nor lit at night, making it unavailable to be used for considerable periods, even in emergencies and it's a long 5 hour drive to the nearest major hospital in Broome. Less government regulation would actually help stations such as Fossil, who could put the monies saved into new safer aircraft, better airstrips, safer equipment, newer safer cars and safer machinery.

Instead the money must be diverted from safety and productivity to the costs of big government. Or look out!

It is impossible to know how many regulations actually exist. A good friend who sits in the Senate in Canberra once asked The Parliamentary Library to come up with a tally.

They came back to him with an answer, "it's not possible".

If they can't find out and they're in Canberra, what hope do the rest of us have?!

The time we all spend with paperwork is more today than it's ever been. Indeed as patron of the Small Business Association of Australia, while giving talks across Australia, I repeatedly hear of small business owners having to work during the day, stay up all night - not to improve or increase their businesses ... but doing paperwork for the government, then back to work without sleep the next day. Several have told me, they don't know how long they can keep this up.

Please speak up to government, and explain to media, and other public outlets, because currently they are not listening adequately enough to be motivated to do what needs to be done, cut government burdens - and small businesses and our country, suffer as a consequence.

It is not good for family life or people's health or even safety. And certainly not good for our declining productivity or for our declining investment.

Here we are in the internet paperless era – and yet many businesses wade through paperwork that keeps government employees in jobs!

Technology should be making government more efficient, yet the size of government departments keeps growing.

In a recent study, The Institute of Public Affairs found - that every single year state and federal governments pass roughly 25,000 pages of legislation that regulate our lives. By contrast, a generation ago it was a fraction of that.

The IPA found that expenditure by all levels of government, as a share of GDP, is pushing 40%. Even in the wild years of the Whitlam and big spending Fraser governments we fared much better.

Remember, they can only spend what they borrow and tax from us and - Here's the bottom line: Are we better off as a result?

How does any company reinvest, grow, create jobs, make a profit and then pay increasing taxes and meet government compliance and its costs to fund all of this?

I worry about where our country is heading. A month ago, The Federal government clocked up a frightening \$400 BILLION in debt.

It is the most Australia has ever owed and yet there is next to no commentary about it in the basically left, pro big government media - nor is there a sense of urgency about dealing with this frightening dilemma.

Politically, it's easier to spend money than save or enable policies to create money - what happened to the responsible view that the greatest barometer of any society - is whether it will leave the next generation better off.

It is time for tough decisions.

The downturn in resources prices may be blamed for much of our country's Budget situation, but all need to understand - that there is nothing Australia can do about international prices. If we don't cut our costs to be cost competitive to export, other nations will do so to meet the demand, and Australian living standards will suffer.

We need to be more competitive if the country is to continue to count on the prosperity that industries like mining and its related industries bring.

The same stands for all export industries.

For the sake of our future, Australia needs to stop finding reasons not to do things and pursue ways of making things happen more cost competitively.

Running deficits, over-regulation, compliance burdens, rapidly increasing licence costs, approvals, permits, mountainous paperwork, and living beyond our means, is the kind of short term thinking Australia and its largest employment group, small business, cannot afford.

ANDEV with its special economic zone policies, less government regulations and less government burdens, are needed more urgently today, than even when we first started ANDEV back in 2010. Some of our wonderful Hon ANDEV Executive are with us here tonight. Can I please ask these wonderful, dedicated Australians to come quickly to stage for group photos?

Our overspending today will be paid for by our children and probably our grandchildren. Or as has been said, "Thank god for our children, as they shall inherit the nation's debt."

Where are the next mainland mega projects like Roy Hill, that our country in record debt, so needs?

Let's go over some of the firsts achieved for this Roy Hill mega project, despite such harsh conditions.

Barry, Garry, Tad and Sanjiv, please quickly join me on stage while these incredible firsts for our mega project are showing.

Please join me in applauding what has become known as "the winning team."

Could the rest of the Roy Hill Executive team and the HPPL exec team and Roy Hill partners and bankers present please quickly join us on stage for some team photos?

Again, could you please join with me in applauding more of the fantastic HPPL and Roy Hill team?

I am honoured and very delighted to share with you tonight the debut of a very special song, created by my dear friend Jim Viets. This is one of the first times this wonderful song has been sung in Australia. It honours those who put their shoulder to the wheel to bring prosperity and focus to one of the most remote regions of the world. It pays tribute to the hardworking women and men of our country. It is sung by my friend Geoff Thompson, together with his wife, Karyn Planett and Jim Viets, who charged nothing for their services. Let's now enjoy this exciting song together.

Please join me in applauding my friends, Jim, Geoff and Karen.

Thank you everyone.

Please all enjoy the night, as Roy Hill's first ship is sailing from Asia to Port Hedland and the first train of fine ore leaves Roy Hill for Port Hedland arriving on National Mining and Related Industries Day.
