

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT OF THE PERTH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL PROJECT



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
FRIDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2017**

SESSION ONE

Members

**Dr A.D. Buti (Chair)
Mr D.C. Nalder (Deputy Chair)
Mr V.A. Catania
Mr S.A. Millman
Mr B. Urban**

Hearing commended at 8.59 am**Mr MURRAY THOMAS****Chief Executive Officer, Master Plumbers and Gasfitters Association, examined:**

The CHAIR: Good morning. On behalf of the Public Accounts Committee, I would like to thank you for appearing today to provide evidence relating to the committee's inquiry into the management and oversight of the Perth Children's Hospital project. My name is Tony Buti, I am the committee chair and member for Armadale; to my left is Hon Dean Nalder, the committee's deputy chair and member for Bateman; to my right is committee member and member for Mount Lawley, Mr Simon Millman; and to his right is the member for Darling Range and committee member, Mr Barry Urban. It is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of this committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. Your evidence is protected by parliamentary privilege; however, this privilege does not apply to anything you might say outside of today's proceedings.

Do you have any questions about your attendance here today?

Mr THOMAS: No; it is fine; thanks.

The CHAIR: Just before we proceed, your written submission, unless you have —

Mr THOMAS: That is fine.

The CHAIR: You do not mind if it is a public document?

Mr THOMAS: That is fine; yes.

The CHAIR: And also the transcript from these proceedings will also go up.

Mr THOMAS: That is fine.

The CHAIR: Would you like to make a brief opening statement before we proceed with questions?

Mr THOMAS: Just before I start, I have some supporting documents. I am not sure whether you want me to circulate that now so that when it does come up, I can talk to it. Is that okay?

The CHAIR: Yes, thank you.

Mr THOMAS: Thank you very much. Obviously, everyone has got their submission, so that is fine.

The CHAIR: I will start with a question and then hand over to my colleagues. In your submission you raise concerns around the WaterMark certification scheme and the enforcement of compliance. Can you maybe elaborate on that?

Mr THOMAS: It is really about the enforcement by the jurisdiction here in Western Australia. The WaterMark scheme is promoted and established by the Australian Building Codes Board but the enforcement in Western Australia—that was part of my submission as well—was that the compliance was lacking because of the enforcement. One of the documents I have got there is in relation to the number of plumbing inspectors that are here in Western Australia. Currently, we have nine plumbing inspectors in Western Australia and it has been increasingly harder to enforce with the low numbers of inspectors. In other states, if you refer to this document here, which has got "plumbing inspector shortage in Western Australia", which I shared with the Minister for Commerce at the middle of last year. In relation to the numbers of plumbing inspectors in Western Australia, if you turn to page 3, you can see that there are 295 plumbing inspectors in Queensland but the system in Queensland, is that each council has its own plumbing inspector, so

it is a different way of compliance. In Western Australia at this point in time, it is only eight, but there has just been one employed in Broome so there are now nine. The other states have larger numbers.

This seems to be a fault through the construction process; that is, who is checking the checker as far as the construction process goes? Obviously, in Western Australia we have a hydraulic consultant who does the design, so the design is done by an expert, or supposed to be with expert judgement. Once the hydraulic system and components are submitted, they are approved and tested. That is the first step. It is all under the national construction code so it all applies to the codes and standards, which we agree with. We have a great system; it is about just making sure that it is working. Then also we have a qualified plumbing contractor that installs it, which I am sure happened at the hospital—that was fine—and ensuring that the work meets the AS3500, which is the code that the plumber works to and the WaterMark information. In regards to WaterMark, there are 60 000 products that are currently under the WaterMark register—you have probably heard that before—under the ABCB's jurisdiction. We are concerned that the plumber has to have access to the website to see whether all the 60 000 products are compliant, so in our submission, we asked that point-of-sale controls go in place, so that when it is being sold, the plumber knows that it is WaterMarked. We are not saying that it has not happened in this case but it is part of our submission to say that the system needs to be more robust. We need to have checks and balances in place to follow through.

Mr D.C. NALDER: From our earlier hearings, we have been advised that it is not illegal to sell un-WaterMarked plumbing products in Western Australia; it is just illegal for plumbers to use them.

Mr THOMAS: Yes, illegal to install it. That is the problem.

Mr D.C. NALDER: So what you would be pushing for is that legality to be changed up-front so that it is illegal to sell them?

Mr THOMAS: Yes, well tighter controls at all plumbing outlets. It is legislated that they must sell controlled product. If you have the borders controlled, and you have those stores controlled so that they can only sell compliant product, it would go a long way to meeting the requirements of WaterMark.

The CHAIR: So you want the compliance at the point of sale?

Mr THOMAS: Yes.

The CHAIR: Is it true also that only licensed plumbers that need to comply with the certification, not the —

Mr THOMAS: Yes.

The CHAIR: That is why the point of sale would alleviate the problem?

Mr THOMAS: That is right, yes. The other problem regarding the hydraulic consultants is that currently they do not need to have a licence. They can just put up a shingle and go out there as a plumbing consultant. We would like to see that licence regulated so that these guys are controlled and it is a controlled part of the industry. It is an important part in the formative design of a hydraulic system, then you have got the checks and balances going through the system.

The CHAIR: Who have you been lobbying?

Mr THOMAS: I have spoken with the Minister for Commerce. Since 2012, we have been pushing for the regulations to be reviewed, so the first minister we spoke to was Minister O'Brien. We have been six years waiting for the plumbing review to occur. We are pleased that Minister Johnston has just announced that there will be a review of the plumbing regulations in Western Australia and that

will go a long way to ensuring that what we have got in place in the future will be good. Also at a national level, we have lobbied Mr Laundry. He is aware of where we want to go with this, where we want point-of-sale legislation to control the products and also tighter border controls. Obviously, through China, we have problems with counterfeit product coming through, which is an issue. They put a “W” on a product for a dollar. There is a lot of tightening up to be done to ensure the product is right.

Mr D.C. NALDER: The regulations we have here in Western Australia about the installation being the point, is that consistent with the rest of the country or are we behind?

Mr THOMAS: We are behind. We are very narrow in our legislation in Western Australia. That document you have got there, which is the “Plumbing Code of Australia”, which is this one, a document about the Plumbing Code of Australia, which you have probably heard about—in WA we only regulate water, sanitary and drainage. In other states they look after water, sanitary, drainage, roofing, stormwater, mechanical services—so the scope of plumbing, which is on page 2 is what we want. When you look at this document, we want the Plumbing Code of Australia in its entirety in Western Australia. Other states have it; we do not have it in its entirety in Western Australia.

The CHAIR: Why do we not?

Mr D.C. NALDER: Why not?

Mr THOMAS: That is why we want the regulation review, because under the current regulations and the act of 2000, the Building Commission only polices water, sanitary and drainage under its current legislation. We need that review to be in line with the rest. That is a really important piece.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: You mentioned China and we have had evidence in the committee so far about non-compliant building products coming into Australia. What is the master plumbers’ view on document checking as opposed to actual scrutiny of the product? Is it sufficient for a construction company or a licensed plumber who is doing installation to just look at the documents that are coming out of China or do they need to do a proper examination of the product as well? The context for that question is the asbestos in the unitised roof panels that we saw in the hospital. In that situation they just looked at the documents without doing any destructive testing when the panels arrived. What is the master plumbers’ view on —

Mr THOMAS: We have a similar view. You have probably heard of the pods that are coming in which are fabricated in China. They are saying that everything behind the wall is all compliant; it all meets the test. But we want to make sure that whoever is doing that quality control measure in China—that it is exactly what they are saying. It is more or less we are just taking on trust that what is behind the wall is what is stated here. That is a bit of an arms-length approach. But also with the product, as we found out with the product at the children’s hospital—when we destructively tested some of this, the components of lead may have been excessive, so that is a bit of a tough one to control. When you have counterfeit product coming in that may have a “W” on it, you do not know what within the component of the valve or whatever. That is an issue for us to more or less ensure that the “W” has gone on because the testing system is pretty thorough. If you are using the testing system that is in place in Western Australia and Australia, it is a thorough testing process and it is reliable. As long as we can ensure that it has gone through the CABs, which is the Conformity Assessment Body, we can ensure that the levels of lead that are in that brass are not the levels—we are a long way from ensuring they are at the levels they should be.

Mr B. URBAN: Why do we let the foxes look after the chickens? Who actually looks at and tends the chickens? We have heard this through many people. It was given as evidence in here in the hearing. They all say the same thing but how do we get to the situation we are in because all this stuff comes

from China. For some reason, somebody accepts all this stuff that comes in from China and nobody does anything about it. They all whinge about it afterwards when the hand is caught in the cookie jar, but until that point, why are we in the position we are in?

[9.10 am]

Mr THOMAS: It is all about the procurement of product. If someone procures a product and brings it in and then says to the plumber, “Now install it”, whoever procured it has come from another source so the plumber is then saying, “Well, I’ll install it.” He has not been in that chain; he has just got the product there. That is a lot of the problem with who initiates that.

Mr B. URBAN: The hand is in the cookie jar and the only reason why they are actually caught and they have gone like startled rabbits, “Oh, deary me”, is because we have caught them. Why do we not get to the point whereby your members are from? Why are we at that point? Why are we not at the point of stopping it before the kid gets his hand caught in the door? Why are we not stopping it at that point? Why do we accept the stuff that comes in from China and somebody does not do a DIP test on that, because it is evident to me—I am probably the least one here with any knowledge in this space—that somebody has got to be accountable for this and until the startled rabbit in the headlights says, “Oh, I’m caught”, that is when we all start pointing fingers. Why do we not point fingers and sort it out before we have to get to the kids trapping their hand in the door?

Mr THOMAS: I totally agree with you and that is what we need to tighten up. But what is happening through the process is the builder. He supplies the product. The plumber is onsite and says, “Now I want you to install it”, and he says, “Well, I’m not going to”, he will get someone else.

Mr D.C. NALDER: What is stopping your association from self-regulating?

Mr THOMAS: The current regulation. We would like to be the technical regulators in the industry because we do not have a thorough technical regulator under plumbing in the state, so we would like to do that.

Mr D.C. NALDER: All I am saying is you are an industry body; you represent the plumbers. Is it because plumbers will ignore your body and just do their own thing?

Mr THOMAS: No; I think the plumbers would embrace it if we could get that across the line. It is just the government —

Mr D.C. NALDER: Could you not establish your own governance framework as an industry body for yourselves?

Mr THOMAS: Through this review process, we are looking at doing that. We are putting forward a submission that we would like to take on that role.

Mr D.C. NALDER: Yes, but you are looking to the government to do it for you. Going back to Barry’s point, why has industry not got together and gone, “This is wrong; we’ve been asking government to do it for six years, but we’re going to set up our own set of agreements that we all agree to be bound by”? Why has industry not done that?

Mr THOMAS: Just through our discussions with the Building Commission, they say this is the framework you must use under the national construction code and they say it does not align for an independent body like us to do that. We would like to do that but with discussion with the Building Commission it has been more or less said, that cannot happen under the current legislation.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Can I ask the question differently? I do not know whether this is what has happened at the children’s hospital but let us deal with it as a hypothetical. John Holland has purchased the components that go into the TMV boxes—purchased them from a proprietor in China. John Holland has contracted with a plumbing company to fit and install those components.

That plumbing company, in accordance with the terms of contract, has undertaken that work. Unfortunately, some of the product that has been installed by that company at the direction of John Holland has been installed when it is not compliant, when it is not WaterMarked and it is not consistent with Australian standards. Are there unscrupulous operators within the plumbing industry in Western Australia who would just do as they are directed by John Holland because if they do not do the work, they are not going to get paid and the principal contractor is just going to find somebody who will do the work and take the pay?

Mr THOMAS: I would say what we are talking about, that componentry that was within where the TMV was, was put together and constructed off site. That was then given to the plumber, from my understanding, to install their component, so it was more or less like a pod that has come along and said, “Now hook up to it.” So the plumber has thought that it has gone through—we understand—the proper process with regards to its installation. For its procurement, he had gone through that process, so the plumber is probably not privy to that. He has just been supplied that and been told to install it. As per your question, would plumbers do that under a rogue-type set up, I think plumbers are very aware of their compliance and they are aware that they need to stick to the system, and they know the system.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: It is a bit of “don’t ask, don’t tell”. You say that they are aware of their compliance and they need to stick to the system. The plumber who has installed this has, arguably, not examined the componentry within the box. They have relied on John Holland, for argument’s sake, doing the certification, and they have not done their own rigorous interrogation of whether or not those components are compliant. The reason I am worried about that is because the guy who has got his neck on the chopping block is the plumber because the regulatory framework all comes, if I am right —

Mr THOMAS: Yes; you are right.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: — back to the licensing regime, so the risk sits with the plumber, despite the commerciality of it. It is John Holland who is, in fact, making the purchase. So John Holland is shifting that risk to the plumber, saying, “Trust us; the components in this TMV are fine; you just get on and install it; you install it, you get paid”, and the plumber is like, “Fine, I’ll install it and if I just turn a blind eye to what’s inside, then she’ll be apples.”

Mr THOMAS: That is exactly what I suggest happened. The plumber has seen what is called the Mattsson TMV—the thermostatic mixing valve that was sitting there. He knows that is a tested and reliable product.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Or he is relying on the certification.

Mr THOMAS: Yes, on the certification.

The CHAIR: That is the question: what actual documentation does the plumber actually examine before they install any equipment?

Mr THOMAS: If I was putting that in—because as I said it is more like a vessel on its own—I would have a certificate to say that this component has been tested and assured. The plumber has just taken it probably on face value without going through the proper checks. I think now that circumstances like this have happened, it really draws a line to, “Let’s check the checker; make sure it is right.” But also, as we spoke about with plumbing inspections, if plumbing inspections are happening at the level they should be, it would be checks and balances on checkers and checkers happening continually across the process.

The CHAIR: In the regulations, what legal obligation does the plumber have in respect of what they actually check if documentation is concerned?

Mr THOMAS: They have to install WaterMark products. So the plumber should have asked the question, if it was procured somewhere else: have the WaterMark checks —

The CHAIR: You can ask the question but what would they physically have to see?

Mr THOMAS: Usually with that valve, you will see a marking on it. It says it is tested.

Mr D.C. NALDER: But they would not check every valve?

Mr THOMAS: No.

Mr D.C. NALDER: Is there documentation?

The CHAIR: But there is no actual document.

Mr THOMAS: There is no paperwork.

The CHAIR: That is amazing.

Mr D.C. NALDER: If a plumber comes in as a subcontractor and within that contract, there is no clause that you would recommend plumbers have, as an industry body, that says, “If you’re supplying product, they meet these standards.”

Mr THOMAS: Now that will be 100 per cent that we will make sure —

It is a problem in the procurement of the product. In a lot of jobs, the plumber has to supply and install. Once the specification comes out and it says it has to be X, Y and Z, the plumber gets to deal with the merchant and he has the responsibility of either procuring it and then installing it. But in some other cases, John Holland may procure the whole lot and say, “Now put it in.” So in your terms, like you are saying, you have to say, at the bottom line, I want to ensure that all these have gone through WaterMark testing and all is compliant, but I do not think that is at the level we would like and I do not think what you are talking about.

Mr D.C. NALDER: Again, it is not government regulation or legislation that will help you assist that. That is a contract between your association members and the contractors. It sounds like that does not exist at this point in time.

Mr THOMAS: No, but I think there is a thorough education piece that we need to ensure between the builder and the plumber that this is the process and make sure you have ticked off and are really educated about it because the education process has not been as thorough as what it should have been, I believe.

The CHAIR: As far as you are aware, between government projects and non-government projects, do the plumbing inspectors, of which there are only eight, concentrate more on government projects or do they randomly split between private and government?

Mr THOMAS: I think they randomly just try to get as much done as they can because they are so thin on the ground, they just try to deal with what they have got. If we look at Elizabeth Quay, that was more or less under the MRA where inspection was not part of that whole development. There have been some things that have not included inspections at the level they should have been. These inspections are really important as far as the process is concerned.

The CHAIR: I assume you probably do not know, but do you know how many inspections occur on an annual basis in WA?

[9.20 am]

Mr THOMAS: It is more or less done by email. The contact on site is very minimal. I think under the legislation, only five per cent of work that is completed by a contractor needs to be inspected.

The CHAIR: Five per cent.

Mr THOMAS: Yes. It is a very low level. They are more or less going on the trust and the self-certification of the plumber to be doing the right thing.

The CHAIR: In regards to Perth Children's Hospital, do you know —

Mr THOMAS: I am not sure. The special projects inspector from the Building Commission, I think he is very thorough; I think he is very good. The person was Dale Froby; I am not sure if he has presented to this committee. People like him are very light on the ground and we do not have enough of them. That is the problem. He just cannot be in all the places he needs to be, and he is the one with all the expertise.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Are there any sort of special whistleblower protections or anything like that? If you have plumbers on site who are anxious about the componentry that they are installing, is there some way that they can refer that up the line, maybe through you as the industry body spokesperson and then you can then pass it on to the Building Commission and say, "We're worried about what's going on at this particular site, can we get somebody out to have a look at it?"

Mr THOMAS: They could use that system. In a lot of cases they do not want to rock the boat over the project and conditions of what they are doing. We may get that where they go, "We don't want to make this public." It is a bit of a process in trying to continue their relationship with who they have got without, you know, upsetting them —

The CHAIR: As a subcontractor, they are not going to be protected.

Mr THOMAS: Exactly right.

Mr B. URBAN: I just want to go through your submission and I am going to ask as the first question: do you stand by all the statements that you made in your submission?

Mr THOMAS: Yes.

Mr B. URBAN: There are a couple of things that I just want you to expand on. I read it yesterday and it felt like it really needed some room for you to expand into. It starts with the paragraph —

Even the highest standard of governance will fail to prevent problems from occurring if there are flaws in the underlying regulatory regime.

In the next paragraph, I want to add into it —

We believe this is the case with the lead contamination at PCH.

Could you expand into that?

Mr THOMAS: I suppose it is about the enforcement just to make sure that that is happening. Under the current regime, we do not think it is robust and thorough enough to check every job and make sure that it is—we are saying if you had more people out there and you check the checker and all these things were really—the technical regulator should be able to look after that and make sure it is all happening. At the moment under our current legislation, without the presence of a technical regulator to the level that we have, we have problems. That is what that statement is surrounding.

Mr D.C. NALDER: There are three components in the TMV that do not have the watermark, but from the hearings the other day they intimated that they did not believe the source of the lead contamination was from those three, that it has come from other brass fittings that do have a watermark. Even if we get into this issue about these things not being accredited, it does not necessarily point the finger at the broader issue we have that there is lead in the water. This issue around lead inside brass fittings, does the industry have a view on that as to whether they have broader concerns about leaching of lead into the water system?

Mr THOMAS: I think we do, and I think if you look at the Canada and USA exercise—I do not know whether you have had a look at that—they have gone through a similar process with reducing the lead content within the brass. As a plumber, if I look at a fitting, you can tell if it is a soft brass or a hard dezincified brass. When you pick it up, you go, “This looks pretty soft.” And it does break down over time because it is soft brass. We want a high level of brass that does not contain—I think four per cent is the content it should have in it.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: That is the US standard. The evidence that we have had is that it is four per cent. It is still six per cent in Australia, I think.

Mr B. URBAN: It has gone down.

Mr D.C. NALDER: It has gone to four.

Mr B. URBAN: It has gone down in America?

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: Yes, to two and a half.

Mr D.C. NALDER: It is lower than four here.

The CHAIR: But four here.

Mr B. URBAN: It is 0.25 per cent in America now.

Mr THOMAS: That, to us, is an issue. In regards to the product, we are just taking it that it is the proper DR brass and it meets the standard as far as the—the Australian standard is good, as long as everything is complied to it. That is the problem.

Mr D.C. NALDER: These products comply, potentially that have created the lead, so there is this potential other issue about stagnant water and dezincification and all of these that they are talking about.

Mr THOMAS: This is the issue. When you look at the whole report that came out, there are a whole lot of variables. Now they are saying it is contained around these 12 000 valves. We looked at the mystery of the dead leg. Did that have a problem? Is it the chlorine in the water that is causing the problem? Is it some other problem that is mixing with the chemical imbalance within the hydraulic system? It is a real mystery what has happened at this hospital because it does not normally happen. As what was done, they knocked out all the variables and said, “It is not the dead leg, it is not this and we’re trying to break through everything” and now they have come to this point, whether or not this is going to a hundred per cent solve the matter is yet to be seen. We hope it does.

Mr D.C. NALDER: In a professional view, is it your view that it is the brass fittings that is causing the problem?

Mr THOMAS: I would think that is the number one problem. I do not think the dead leg and water being in the system for a period of time would have caused this problem because it has been flushed continually and it has been cleared. The amount of flushing it has had—then you have had the phosphate installation as well to try to coat the pipe. I think that has probably helped. It is just a mystery as to why the lead levels are so high. Just on the testing side of it, the industry has done a really in-depth report as to a thorough testing process that should be used when this testing for lead is happening, because now there is a bit of an epidemic, people are going out there and getting a bit crazy about it, “Has this got lead; has it not?” We have put together a process which we would like to share with the government—this is from the manufacturers of plumbing product—to say that this should be the testing regime to ensure that we are testing properly and it is consistent in the testing process.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I was going to ask you a couple of questions. You mentioned manufacturers of plumbing product. Does your membership include manufacturers?

Mr THOMAS: Yes. We have a subcommittee that includes manufacturers. They are all associate members of the association. A group of 16 sit on a subcommittee that reports to the executive committee of the Master Plumbers.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: What generated this August 2016 document? Is this just part of your ongoing campaign over the last six years?

Mr THOMAS: Yes. But also it is highlighted by Elizabeth Quay and what happened through there.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: I notice there is a regulatory recognition regime that is in place in Queensland so that local government employees can discharge state-based legislative or regulatory requirements. Do our local governments have the capacity? Do they employ inspectors and so forth who could be readily recognised under a state regime or is that something that we should build from the ground up?

Mr THOMAS: Yes. In particular, they have a building inspector; they do not necessarily have a plumbing specialist. In Queensland, they have a plumbing specialist inspector in those councils, if that answers your question.

The CHAIR: We are running out of time, but I want to allow the member for Darling Range a couple more questions.

Mr B. URBAN: I have only one more question. I want to expand again. In your submission, you actually talked about plumbing regulation is not red tape. I would like you to expand on these two paragraphs —

In recent years, we have been fighting a popular perception among government bodies, commercial interests and consumers that what we are fighting for is unnecessary ‘red tape’.

And the next one is —

The example of PCH is a wake-up call that shows the opposite is true.

I would like you to expand on that, if you can.

Mr THOMAS: Sure. Through the previous government’s regime, there was an appetite to knock out red tape in a lot of areas. We have said to them continually, “Don’t knock out red tape if it’s going to make public health and safety suffer.” That is our point. You can reduce a whole lot of things, but do not reduce to an effect that is going to affect public health and safety. That is really the point that we have been pushing through with all this red tape reduction. They were talking about deregulating certain parts of trades and industry et cetera, but if you did that, we would have results a lot worse than what we have currently got. We are saying, “Hold on to the regulation that we’ve got and if there is red tape that needs to go, if it is paperwork-based stuff, then make sure you’re looking after public health and safety in regards to plumbing matters.” That is the point.

[9.30 am]

Mr B. URBAN: And look after your members. It comes back down to your members. If everything goes downwards —

Mr THOMAS: We have a professionally trained system in Australia and everybody wants what we have got. Because there has not been too many—there is cholera and dysentery and back-flow cases have happened and people have died from certain things—we have been in a bit of a, well, everything is all right is it not? We have it right, but we can make it better, because everybody in

the world wants what we have in Australia. Let us continue with what we have and make it better. That is the point.

The CHAIR: You actually want more regulation though, do you not?

Mr THOMAS: Yes; and the industry wants that. You would say, “Why do plumbers want to be regulated to such a degree?” But we need to control the whole system and protect the public. That is what it is about.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: But greater regulation also protects your members —

Mr THOMAS: Exactly.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: — vis-a-vis unscrupulous principal contractors.

Mr THOMAS: Exactly right. The whole system is better with that regulation. Do not reduce it for red tape.

Mr B. URBAN: I want to make this statement to you. One of the things that has frustrated me for many years in my police role and everything else is that we are deregulating everything and we are allowing people to self-regulate, so we are giving the fox 10 chickens. I keep using this metaphor to everybody because it is only thing I can get across to people. We are giving the fox 10 chickens and then we are asking him every once in a while how many chickens he has. When we eventually go back to him and ask, “Where are all the 10 chickens?”, they flew away. So we do not know when it is. We do actually need to be on top of this.

Mr THOMAS: I am with you.

Mr B. URBAN: That is why I keep using this metaphor. It is a bit basic. Sorry, Gary.

The CHAIR: There are a lot of wild foxes in Jarrahdale.

Mr THOMAS: You may like to read the article that was in our last magazine that was about the point of sale issue. It just explains it in a bit more detail in regard to what our thoughts are surrounding that.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Thomas.

Mr THOMAS: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you for your evidence before the committee. A transcript of this hearing will be forwarded to you for corrections of minor errors. Please make these corrections and return the transcript within 10 working days of receipt. If the transcript is not returned within this period, it will be deemed to be correct. New material is not to be introduced via these corrections and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. Should you wish to provide additional information or elaborate on particular points, please include a supplementary submission for the committee’s consideration when you return your corrected transcript of evidence. Once again, thank you.

Mr THOMAS: Thank you very much.

Hearing concluded at 9.32 am
