

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

**INQUIRY INTO THE FUNCTIONS, PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES OF THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS**



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
MONDAY, 18 MAY 2020**

SESSION ONE

Members

Hon Matthew Swinbourn (Chairman)

Hon Colin Holt (Deputy Chairman)

Hon Tim Clifford

Hon Samantha Rowe

Hon Dr Steve Thomas

Hearing commenced at 2.15 pm**Hon BARRY HOUSE****Private Citizen, sworn and examined:**

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Thank you for coming along to the hearing, which is being recorded by Hansard. A copy of the audio will be placed on the committee's website. Here today with me is obviously Hon Samantha Rowe, a member of the committee and Hon Tim Clifford, who is also a member of the committee. We have had apologies from Hon Dr Steve Thomas and the Chair, Hon Matthew Swinbourn, so you are just going to have to put up with us today. We also have our committee advisers and a Hansard reporter. You would have signed a document entitled "Information for Witnesses". Have you read and understood that document?

Mr HOUSE: Yes, I have.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's discussion or if your evidence will include any sensitive or controversial material such as allegations about another person, you should request that evidence be taken in private session. If the committee grants your request, you may defer receipt of the confidential evidence and make alternative arrangements to receive the evidence from you. This is to ensure that the evidence will be received in secure conditions. A transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. To assist the committee, please quote the full title of any document you refer to. Please be aware of your microphone, particularly as we are using Zoom. I remind you that the transcript of today's discussions will be made public. Until the transcript of your public evidence is finalised, it should not be made public by you. Would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr HOUSE: Thank you for the opportunity to have a bit of input. This issue has been around for quite a while and I think it is very opportune that you are examining it. My submission is self-explanatory in a lot of ways. I think it is timely that it was reviewed. The label "environment and public affairs" was attached during the 1990s when there was a significant change in the make-up and membership of the Legislative Council. From the general election in 1989 onwards, it was based on the regional boundaries. Until that time, I guess, historically, you could argue that the National Party always had the balance of power. There were always government or non-government clear majorities in the Legislative Council. From the 1990s on—the 1993 election on particularly—there was the advent of different parties, the Greens and the Democrats initially and since then of course we have had quite a few other parties elected to a presence in the Legislative Council so that now it is almost an impossibility for a government of the day to have an absolute majority in the Legislative Council.

When the environment and public affairs committee was first set up, it was a vehicle to recognise that change, I believe, particularly in view of the Greens and Democrats membership of the Legislative Council. Their stated platform, I guess, revolved around environmental issues to a large degree. There was no other vehicle at that stage, apart from select committees and the usual questions and motions in the house, for a significant public affair to be taken up and examined. That was the thinking behind the establishment of the committee. Since then, I think times have moved on. We have had different membership of different political parties. We have had different balances and different compositions. I do not think the adage that environment is the sole province of any one particular party stands any more. It is a mainstream issue. I guess you could argue that it has in some ways been a mainstream issue for centuries going back in our history. Kings Park would never

have been established in the first place if there were not some sort of environmental consideration, even 100-odd years ago. The EPA was set up by Sir Charles Court's government in the 1970s. You would not have got a fiercer advocate for mining, but I believe it was the beginning of a view that environmental stewardship can exist, alongside mining, forestry, urbanisation and so on. That is just my summation of the history of it, Colin.

The other important aspect of my submission is that Legislative Assembly committees are basically set up on the lines of portfolios whereas Legislative Council committees are set up to conduct our roles—I still think of it as “our roles”—in terms of scrutiny and accountability. With environment a mainstream issue alongside law and order, education, health, housing and so on, that is where I think it belongs in the Legislative Assembly and a Legislative Council committee adopts a more scrutiny, accountability approach.

The other part of my submission was that the automatic referral of petitions to your committee is a vital difference between the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly and that should be very much maintained. It is pointless having a committee in one house of Parliament that duplicates another in another house of Parliament. The automatic referral of the petitions gives your committee a lot of relevance, which should be protected and maintained. In the Legislative Assembly, they merely get tabled and there is no compulsion for the Parliament or the government of the day to take any notice of them whatsoever. So there is at least some consideration of it.

In terms of name change, I am not sure but the word “petitions” probably needs to come into the name somewhere or other—“petitions and public affairs committee” maybe—but I am sure your wise heads can sort that out.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Thanks, Barry. I think you have identified some of the challenges for the committee. We have a split personality really—environment on one hand and dealing with petitions on the other. Maybe we will talk about petitions and the petitions process, and then we will talk about the environment side of it. In your view, from your submission, petitions play an important role. Would you like to expand on that a bit and say why you think they play an important role in our society, our democracy or our Parliament?

[2.20 pm]

Mr HOUSE: Petitions are a very important way of empowering the public to provide a voice to the Parliament. Whether it is effective varies in degrees, but it is important that they still have that empowerment to take an issue to the Parliament—their elected representatives—in a joint form. That is why Legislative Council petitions are much stronger, I believe, than Legislative Assembly petitions because at least a petitioner can rely on that petition receiving some consideration from the committee, which is important.

Let me explain a bit about environment, and I do not want to denigrate people's passion and commitment to the environment in any way, shape or form; it is just how it is treated. If there is a petition involving an environmental issue, it can still be taken up by your committee, just as a petition containing a housing issue or a transport issue can still be taken up. The distinction, I believe, lies in the consideration of the portfolio of environment and the policy surrounding environment. That better belongs as a Legislative Assembly committee, to me, than a Legislative Council committee.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: We have sent you some questions but I am going to loosely go through those questions as a bit of a prompt. One of the challenges—your experience may help here—is sometimes whether expectations from petitioners about what the Parliament or this particular

committee can do for them can be met fully or not met it all. Have you got any thoughts about how we manage expectations or how the committee deals with it in that sense?

Mr HOUSE: Yes. You all know that petitions can take wide and varying forms; they can be big petitions signed by 8 000 people or they can be petitions signed by one person. They can be petitions that are very clearly thought through and articulated or they can be petitions that are not sophisticated, if I can use those terms. They can be petitions that are vexatious. They can be petitions that contain conspiracy theories. That is the first job of the committee, I believe, to have a staging process—you probably already do—a sorting process of petitions. To get to your question, Colin, you do not want to offend anybody by saying, “No; your petition doesn’t comply full stop” or “Your petition should be dealt with elsewhere full stop.” If it is in those categories, then I believe the committee should be providing a bit more clarity and explanation about where those people will go.

In the questions that were put to me, planning processes have formed part of several petitions you have had in this Parliament, by the sounds of it, and, yes, the decision-making bodies lie elsewhere. I have not read all your reports, but rather than just say, “We’re not the decision-making body, you have to go elsewhere”, perhaps a full explanation needs to be provided to the petitioners and the Parliament about exactly what the process is. If their argument, in terms of a decision-making process, is with a judicial body or some other organisation or minister, then it should be pointed out in the committee’s response to that petition.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: I think our practice has been that we close petitions without much explanation about why we are closing them, in some of our reports. We probably need to get better at providing an explanation and a way forward for some of those petitions—is that what you are kind of saying?

Mr HOUSE: Yes, that is what I am trying to say, I think. Yes, by all means you cannot consider everything and there is good reason why you cannot or should not, but if there is an obvious avenue for the petitioners to take and they do not appear to have taken it before they have come to the Legislative Council with a petition, then I think a reasonable explanation in your report saying you have considered it, “We’re not the decision-making body, but in this case we believe it clearly lies with the State Administrative Tribunal”, or whatever it may be. Give people some direction, I guess.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: I was on this committee in my first term, then I had a break for the second term and I am back on it, but in the first term we instigated that when we first wrote to petitioners, we asked them if they had taken it to the Ombudsman. Often, we would get back the one-liner saying, “No, I have not taken it to the Ombudsman” or “I have” or whatever, but we did not really ask them for any proof; we just sort of took it on face value. Perhaps something we could do is ask for some proof around those sorts of questions.

Mr HOUSE: Yes. I recall when officers of the Parliament used to have, and probably still do, a good informal relationship, if you like, with officers of bodies like the Ombudsman or like the Inspector of Custodial Services, so that officers could liaise with officers there, and without divulging any details of anything, they could get an indication of, “Yes, this issue has been lodged with the Ombudsman” or, “No, it hasn’t.” I do not think that would be breaking any serious confidentiality. It is just, “Yes, it has been raised with us” or, “No, it hasn’t.” That way, you might be able to short-circuit a lot of these issues where people’s first stop should have been the Ombudsman, keeping in mind the Ombudsman is not a decision-making body either; they can only make recommendations. Therefore, your committee will just know then how far down the track this query, question or complaint has gone.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: We have done a fair bit of research in terms of what other committees are doing around other jurisdictions; just some of our language is slightly different. I am referring to

question 3 that we forwarded to you before, where we say our function is “to inquire into and report on”, while other committees just have “consider”. That sort of fits within maybe setting expectations. Have you got any thoughts on the language there or how we should improve it?

Mr HOUSE: Yes. I can appreciate that some people may read those words and think there is going to be an automatic major inquiry into their issue. That needs to be explained very clearly that you have got a staged approach and you will go to a major inquiry if, and only if, the issue is serious enough, or you judge it to be serious enough, or it is not dealt with in any other sphere. I think that is a consideration the committee should take, too. But change the word to “consider”, if you wish, to clarify your role a bit better, but you should also retain the option of going to a major inquiry if you feel it necessary. If you look around at what is happening in other areas and it is a major issue that people have continually swept under the carpet and it needs some airing, then definitely take it up as a major inquiry, but take it up when there is a vacuum, I guess, and it appears that nobody else is taking this seriously and it needs to be dealt with and inquired. What I am trying to say? You have to make that judgement call, but in considering it you have to explain your reasons why you have taken that course of action in your reports to the Parliament and back to the petitioners.

[2.30 pm]

The DEPUTY CHAIR: From my viewpoint, one of the criticisms of ourselves would be our reporting back to Parliament in a timely manner. We have been pretty spasmodic in our tabling of our reports on petitions, I reckon. That is a criticism of us. I do not know if you can think back to if it was better in the past and people knew what was happening in the committee, or if there is a way that we can improve our transparency, I guess, in terms of reporting back to Parliament?

Mr HOUSE: Yes. There was a series of reports that bundled up quite a few petitions. I am not sure whether you still do that. If they are basically short, sharp inquiries—desktop inquiries, if you like—then you can report back on a reasonably quick basis, I believe, with an explanation that the next stop for the petitioner should be this judicial body or whatever. It is always a problem and there are always resource and time limits and so on, but the more timely you can be, the better. It is very frustrating if issues drag out for two, three or four years and nothing is heard as an outcome.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Thanks, mate. As you have already pointed out, and we sent to you, we have received a lot of petitions on planning processes. We have also received a lot of petitions on almost the same issue but couched in slightly different terms, so we would call them repetitious petitions. I would say we deal with them as best we can without any formal set of rules. Any thoughts on how we might have some process or formal steps to deal with a lot of those that are, well, vexatious, frivolous or repetitive, especially when we cannot do much about it—like local government planning laws?

Mr HOUSE: Bundle up the ones you can into the same sorts of issues and report on it that way. That is one way of doing it. But, by all means, do not allow your committee to get totally bogged down with vexatious petitions; try to sort out the real meat in what is important in terms of petitions and concentrate your efforts on that. The secret lies in then explaining exactly what your committee is empowered to do and how it goes about it, not just leave it open saying, “The committee didn’t deal with this”, or something like that. Explain to Parliament and the petitioners—in some rare cases you might say, “This is a vexatious issue”, but in most cases you will be diplomatic I am sure and say, “This is a difficult issue” and that the petitioner needs to go to this body or that body to get it resolved or reaffirmed.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: I am going to try to test your memory, because you may well have been around when this committee was first established and the debate about it. If you just think about the debate

around the petitions function, was there any clarity when the debate occurred about exactly what the committee was empowered to do on behalf of Parliament?

Mr HOUSE: Not total clarity, I admit. Look, the committee system in the Legislative Council only really started in the 1980s and it was still quite young when I started in Parliament in 1987. It was still very much evolving through the 1990s. That goes back to my comment a while ago that the advent of Greens members—Chrissy Sharp, Giz Watson and so on—and a couple of Democrats put a focus on environmental issues, and then the Legislative Council independently picked that up and said, “Nobody is sort of doing anything in that area.” At that stage, there was no comprehensive committee system set up in the Legislative Assembly at all. That only happened in the late 1990s, and they were based around portfolios and policy issues. The Legislative Council was really in this territory on its own in a sense, and that is why, yes, it was not clearly defined that that was our role and the Legislative Assembly’s role is the other role.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Yes. I think the committee is a product of its own make up back in the nineties, as you are pointing out. In my mind, it is about: does it still reflect the issues that it was established under?

Mr HOUSE: Sure. I have not followed your reports very closely, I must admit it, in the last couple of years, but I am sure you have done a mountain of good work following some important issues around and I am sure you have had quite a few time wasters, if I can be blunt, I suppose.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: I remember in my first term on this committee we had something like 100 petitions a year to deal with; you just had to get better at dealing with them. I do not think we get as many now. We get some quite repetitive ones but we get some really meaty ones as well to deal with. You have to have some sort of decision-making about you treat them, I think is the way. At the moment, it probably relies on individual members of the committee to use their decision-making ability and skills to weed that stuff out. Do you think there is any other way we could put a bit more process around it that we might be able to pass on to future committees or committee members?

Mr HOUSE: You need a filtering system, no doubt about that. Your very capable staff—I can see Alex there in the corner—can do preliminary assessments of your petitions and either group them or filter them in some way, but the ultimate decision, of course, comes back to members to either endorse that or sometimes say, “No; you’ve lumped that one in with that other one which does not fit. I think that must be separate.” Ultimately, it is your responsibility, yes, to filter it, but you need some probably better guidelines so that you leave the portfolio policy questions and just chase issues, if you like. Just like you would chase issues if it was another portfolio, not just environment; if it was transport or health.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: We did a bit of analysis of how we instigated some inquiries. There are a number of ways that inquiries begin in this committee. Some are instigated because of a petition we receive; some are self-instigated inquiries—I think one in the last term was around hydraulic fracturing, when Simon O’Brien was the chair—and as the environment committee you can get referrals from the house to take up an environmental inquiry. I do not think that has occurred since I have been in Parliament. I think looking back, there might have been only two in the last 15 or 20 years or something like that. So you have to question what is role of the environmental part of our community in that sense. That is basically what you are saying; is it not?

Mr HOUSE: Yes, it is. The Legislative Council has the legislation committee now which did not exist when this committee—environment and public affairs—was first established. It operated for 10 years before the legislation committee came into being. If you retain the words “public affairs” in your title, it still leaves it open for a referral from the house, or even a self-referral if you wish, for

an item that you as a committee or the house itself considers serious enough which is not being dealt with properly by another Legislative Council committee or is being swept under the carpet somewhere in public debate. It still leaves it open for that, I think.

[2.40 pm]

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Interestingly, we have the ability to refer a petition or an issue on to another parliamentary committee, which I think in my time we have probably done two or three times but not a lot, even though there is obvious overlap, I think. I think it is still worthwhile maintaining that ability, but then, of course, you do not have any say in if it is taken up as an inquiry or the issue is dealt with, do you?

Mr HOUSE: No. It is still vital to retain it. You might not use it that often, but I recall when I was Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Administration that we took up, over two Parliaments actually, a considered inquiry into water reform. A couple of other committees were also receiving approaches on similar sorts of topics, which they referred to us, and we bundled that up into one inquiry from the public administration committee.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: So which other committees referred it to you; can you remember?

Mr HOUSE: I think it was your committee, the environment and public affairs committee.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: We are up to about question 8 by my reckoning, so we are going to keep going, mate! This is the review into the standing orders that happened back in 2011 and that would have been done by the committee you were chair of, I would have thought, which is the privileges committee.

Mr HOUSE: Yes, it was.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: There was a change, basically, from those that are being dealt with in the courts. I just have to get the language right here, Alex; help me out here. It changed. In 2011, standing order 133(c)(vii) prohibited a petition where it sought relief or a declaration of circumstances where the matter is justiciable and legal remedies available to the petitioner have not been exhausted. The standing order was removed as part of the 2011 reforms, because the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges stated that the standing order was impractical to enforce. Can you shed any light on that? We would like some insight into that, noting that other petitioning committees in other jurisdictions maintain the ability to say, "It's before the courts and we're not going to deal with it."

Mr HOUSE: Yes. The thinking behind the removal of that clause was that the Parliament should not be taking on the roles of judicial organisations. That is why that was removed. In answer to that, the petitioners are not always aware of that; they will still come to the Parliament and say, "You're the ultimate decision-making body." But in some cases, the Parliament is not; in many cases, it is not. The petitioner needs to be made aware of it and it needs to be explained in writing. It needs to be clarified that the Parliament can inquire into things, and that is why I have underlined the word "enforce" there. The Parliament cannot enforce a judicial body to take a certain decision or line. It should be explained to the petitioner that that is not our role as a Parliament—that we can inquire into things and clarify issues and perhaps provide recommendations to the Parliament and the government, who ultimately are involved in legislation which then the judiciary are empowered to enforce. It is semantics a little bit, but Parliament cannot set itself up as the judge and jury on every matter. I am sure you would like to!

The DEPUTY CHAIR: I do not want the responsibility, thanks!

I find it really interesting that we get a range of petitions that have a range of motivations behind them. Some are clearly political, put in by MPs on a political issue; others are frivolous or vexatious and it might be on planning. But there are quite a lot that come in because of the last resort. People have kind of gone, “I’ve tried everything; what else can I do?” Then you have to somehow weed your way through those.

Mr HOUSE: Yes. That is when you need the sage advice and the wise heads of you guys there to sift through the issues. In my time, there were a couple of very difficult ones that we dealt with on the public administration committee. For instance, one was a dispute involving a university professor called Rindos at the University of WA. That was basically an inquiry of last resort, because the universities had this body called the visitor who was supposedly the last resort, but the visitor was the Governor of Western Australia and they washed their hands of it and said, “We don’t want to get involved in all that murky stuff.” I am not sure whether you remember, but another one was that there was a blue house in Fremantle. A guy had been given all sorts of grief by the Fremantle city council over many years and, as a protest, he painted his house an ugly blue colour and made it as difficult and as big an eyesore as he could. That basically destroyed his life, because he got so consumed by it that eventually it was a no-win situation. That is why they come to the Parliament, I suppose. The Parliament is the last resort: “You have to give us some sort of direction then.” We tried to, but the ultimate decision-making still lay with other bodies.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Just to get it on record, Barry, it seems to me—I do not want to put words in your mouth—that we should probably remove the environment part of the committee’s functions and concentrate on the petitions and public affairs part for this committee. Is that kind of where your thoughts are going?

Mr HOUSE: Yes, I think so, and treat environment like every other mainstream issue. You do not dismiss environment completely, but take it out of the name, because I think that confuses a lot of people that you are a committee set up specifically to give us answers to environmental issues. Sometimes you cannot. You can conduct an inquiry into an environmental issue, just like you can into a planning issue or a transport issue. But by taking the word “environment” out, I believe it stops that misrepresentation, I suppose, to the public of exactly what the committee does.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: So, then, where my mind goes to is while the Legislative Council are in charge of their own destiny, we cannot tell the Legislative Assembly what to do in terms of picking up a portfolio-based environment committee, but we can certainly point out to the LC that maybe we need to revisit how we deal with this joint responsible committee.

Mr HOUSE: Yes, and I think informally and formally you can make an approach through your Presiding Officers and clerks to say, “Let’s get an overall balance here of exactly what the Parliament of Western Australia is responsible for and who is doing it.” We do not want duplication and we do not want gaps, so that is basically it, I think.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: You would agree that that portfolio is better placed within the LA committee system?

[2.50 pm]

Mr HOUSE: I believe it is, yes.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Okay. I am just going to catch up on my notes here, mate.

Mr HOUSE: Okay. I have some red biro here, too! You noticed, I am self-isolating, and I did get out of my pyjamas and put some clothing on!

The DEPUTY CHAIR: What have you got on the bottom half?

Mr HOUSE: Like a newsreader!

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Yes. I think we have covered most of the ground, generally. Is there anything else you want to add or question? I am just reading questions 11 and 12 we sent to you, Barry. I do not know if you had any further notes on that.

Mr HOUSE: Yes. I think that I have said most of that.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Yes, I think so.

Mr HOUSE: I have the word “specific” here. I think the name of the committee being “Environment and Public Affairs”, people will logically take that as a specific committee dedicated to environment, and I do not think you are. I think you are a committee dedicated to petitions and public affairs. The specific role of environment I think belongs in the Legislative Assembly. But you still want to maintain the ability to deal with environmental issues in a general sense, but not be specifically identified as the committee to go to for the environment issues.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Yes, I think that is right, because if you look at the historic activity of the committee, it really has been driven by the petitions and public affairs part of the terms of reference. I think we have only had two or maybe three referrals from the house on the environment. So even the house does not see it potentially as an environment committee, in a sense.

Mr HOUSE: Sure, yes. I think that is true, too. And historically, that has been true. Even the 20 years of its existence, I do not think there has been a trend there of many referrals at all on environment issues.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: No. Any other questions? Anything from you, Barry?

Mr HOUSE: No. It is good to see you back at work, but no. Good luck. All I can do is reiterate that I am pleased that you are examining your role. The Legislative Council should be true to its role of scrutiny, accountability and inquiry. At the same time, the Legislative Council must be relevant and contemporary, so you must be prepared to change. I think, since the inception of this committee 20 years ago, there has been some change, which you probably need to acknowledge. I know there was talk about it in the last Parliament, when I was still there, but it never got up. But it is opportune that you are doing it, I think. Good luck.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Thanks, mate. We really appreciate you putting in a submission and being available for a hearing, because we need to draw on experiences like yours, who have seen the whole gamut of it. If we do not re-examine what we are doing, no-one is going to do it, are they?

Mr HOUSE: No.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Because we are the ones internally. So we really appreciate it.

Mr HOUSE: That is right. The house of Parliament is the master of its own destiny, and, yes, you do need to navel-gaze every now and again and look at your functions and roles and what you are doing. I will say that being a country member, Colin, it is much easier operating on Zoom like this for an hour than driving hundreds of thousands of kilometres a year.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Yes, this might be the new norm! Before we go, maybe I will be cheeky and ask you about e-petitions and what you think about those.

Mr HOUSE: I thought they might come up, yes. Look, in a modern, technological world, I can understand people wanting that facility, to do it. But in terms of your ability to deal with them, that has always worried me. If e-petitions were opened up completely, and you still had the same degree of commitment that you would conduct to at least enquire into every petition, then your committee alone would need a lot more resourcing to track down that your petitioners are not coming from

Paris or Rio de Janeiro or somewhere like that, and you are dealing with Western Australian issues, not issues outside of your jurisdiction. My view at the moment still has not changed, I suppose, from when I was there. Yes, I can appreciate the idea, but it is just too hard. I know the Clerk is very keen on it—he was, unless he has changed his mind—but if you can find a way to make it work, yes, it is logical that you could become contemporary and change with it, but you cannot subjugate all your other responsibilities for that either.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Yes, I think that is right. I think, if you adopt an e-petitions process, you are going to have to have some new internal processes to deal with it in the appropriate way.

Mr HOUSE: Yes.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Including making sure it is for the citizens of Western Australia first and foremost. I can see some real advantages because of distances in our state. If it is about an interaction with Parliament, it opens up those possibilities, but it can also go too far if you are not careful.

Mr HOUSE: Sure. Yes, it is a big enough group scrutinising petitioners with addresses and everything to make sure that they are all valid, but an e-petition just makes that ten times as hard, I would have thought.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Yes. Okay, I think that is all from me. Thank you, Barry.

Mr HOUSE: Thank you. All the best with everything.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: We will see you in the deep dark south.

Hearing concluded at 2.58 pm
