

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE
COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

REVIEW OF THE FUNCTIONS EXERCISED BY THE COMMISSIONER

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
FRIDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2015**

SESSION FIVE

Members

**Ms L.L. Baker (Chair)
Hon Robyn McSweeney (Deputy Chair)
Ms E. Evangel
Hon Sally Talbot**

Hearing commenced at 3.13 pm**Ms MICHELLE BISHOP****Manager, Inclusive Education and AISWA Psychology Service, Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia, examined:****Mr MICHAEL TEN-HAAF****Inclusive Education Consultant, Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia, examined:**

The CHAIR: On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People, I thank you for appearing today. The purpose of our hearing is to assist the committee in its review of the functions exercised by the Commissioner for Children and Young People, particularly referencing the recommendations contained in the review of the commissioner's act. At this stage, I formally introduce myself and my committee. I am Lisa Baker, member for Maylands; the Deputy Chair, Hon Robyn McSweeney, member for the South West Region; Eleni Evangel, the member for Perth; and Hon Dr Sally Talbot, member for South West Region. The hearing is a formal proceeding of Parliament and therefore commands the same respect given to proceedings in the house itself. Even though the committee is not asking witnesses to provide evidence on oath or affirmation, it is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. This is a public hearing and Hansard will make a transcript of proceedings, so if you refer to documents during your evidence, it would help if you could give the fully title.

I have five quick questions. Firstly, have you completed the "Details of Witness" form?

The Witnesses: Yes, we have.

The CHAIR: Do you understand the notes at the bottom of the form about giving evidence for a parliamentary committee?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Did you receive and read the witness information sheets?

The Witnesses: We did.

The CHAIR: Do you have any questions about being a witness?

Ms Bishop: No. I have done it before.

The CHAIR: Well, that is easy then. This has been an interesting journey for our committee. Robyn is a former Minister for Child Protection, so she knows the area very well; others of us are learning different things as we go. The committee is really very interested in the work that you would both be directly involved in around child protection, in particular abuse, sexual abuse and the like. We are really interested to hear a bit about the curriculum that you guys roll out across your schools. You might just want to start defining independent schools, and who you cover.

Ms Bishop: I might start with a bit of an introduction, and as Mick said, because he is the lead consultant, he has got all the figures and that sort of thing together. In terms of the Association of Independent Schools, possibly the easiest way to understand independent schools is if you are not Catholic and you are not government, then you are us. So we have a range of schools from Steiner schools; Montessori; independent community schools; remote Aboriginal community schools; curriculum and re-engagement schools, which are for students in secondary, predominantly from

year 10 through to 12 who have been excluded from every other sector and school to then come to a CARE school, as we call it. We have nine CARE schools. We also of course have the larger independent schools, so we have the high fee-paying schools, such as Christ Church, Guildford Grammar, Scotch, those sorts of schools, and we also have our medium fee-paying schools, which probably makes up the bulk actually of independent schools, north and south. In total, we have up to 157 independent schools currently. We are one of the few states where all independent schools subscribe to the association; so it is not mandatory. The Association of Independent Schools is the peak body that represents independent schools both at a state and federal level. However, each independent school by virtue of being independent has their own governing body. We serve in an advisory and consultancy capacity in terms of supporting our schools. At different points in time we administer, sometimes, federal funding; so we certainly did that in terms of targeted programs, quality teacher programs, those sorts of things, until the funding change. We do not do much in terms of direct funding from AISWA to schools anymore; that predominantly comes directly from the federal government, but we do still run programs, or more of a one-line budget sort of feel in terms of the student's first programs and how we holistically support students within that student-first sort of funding. We still do the funding for the state funding in terms of disability. Whilst the state government still has control of the actual funds, and we do not touch the actual funding in any way, we do have a committee that looks at eligibility criteria, levels of funding and those sorts of things.

The CHAIR: In that mix of 147 schools, does that include the faith-based schools?

Ms Bishop: Yes, absolutely. So we have a range of—we do have some independent Catholic schools that are not actually part of the Catholic Education office. I think there are only two or three of those. We have Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Jewish, Islamic and everybody else in between.

The CHAIR: Thank you; that was a very good and concise overview for us. We are really interested in what you can tell us about the input that you have to teaching protective behaviours across the 147 schools. What do you do? How do you do it? How do you know they are doing it—a bit of a chat on that?

[3.20 pm]

Ms Bishop: I will give you a little bit of a history and then I will hand over to Mick, who really does have the details. AISWA started probably the six months prior to 1 January 2009, first, talking to our schools about the imminent legislation around mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse. So we have trained all of our schools. All of our schools were covered within the first 12 months around mandatory reporting. We had chosen as an association to do all of that training face to face. Because we do not have a governing body per se, so it is different from the Department of Education; their schools report directly to their principal, whereas we are not able to do that so the flow chart looks a little bit different in independent schools. I think that is our mantra: “We’re a little bit different”. We function a little bit differently. We do not have the same systemic approach. Having said that, all schools voluntarily—we kept note of that. We have had a very close working relationship with the Department for Child Protection and Family Support. So we have had an MOU with them since before I started at AISWA in terms of sharing that information. They have always had a list of every staff member who had attended their mandatory reporting training from the beginning, from the first time that we did that. When the state government ceased funding, the roll-out of that in terms of education—we do not have an online version. For us it is the inclusive ed team. Child protection has always been within our remit and Mick, for the last couple of years, has really led that coordination of all of the training that we do. We still offer mandatory reporting training for all independent schools upon request and we run centralised sessions as well.

In terms of curriculum, we started in terms of looking at what was available nationally. After some research, we chose the keeping safe child protection curriculum, which was developed by the South Australian government, and we are happy in terms of the breadth and depth it covered.

We started training that—when I say “we”, I mean me—and for the first couple of years I was the only person who was trained to train it. We have probably been providing that for about four years now. All of our consultants are trained, bar one. In terms of the depth of the keeping safe curriculum, it was rigorous when it was first created in South Australia. We know that that was rolled out through the Department of Education and independent schools and Catholics in South Australia. It has since been reviewed by Principals Australia and certainly sits in line with the recommendations from the royal commission. We have trained up all of our consultants to train in keeping safe.

The CHAIR: Can you give us any specifics about the coverage of teachers who have gone through this?

Ms Bishop: I am going to hand you over to the very competent Mick.

Mr Ten-Haaf: Since 2013, we have had 40 schools that have requested to do the Keeping Safe program.

The CHAIR: Out of 147?

Mr Ten-Haaf: 157-ish.

The CHAIR: 157, yes.

Mr Ten-Haaf: It changes a little, and 314 teachers have been trained to do it, so 40 schools have adopted it. We do not know exactly how many schools are actually putting in a particular protective behaviours curriculum, because there is an alternative one which is the one from Protective Behaviours WA. That is also a very good program and it has a lot of similarities to the keeping safe one. The reason I think we continued to use keeping safe or present it as an option to the schools was because they could access PBWA anyway, but for the Keeping Safe program, there are actually some requirements that you have to have a full day PL—professional learning—before you can actually use that or teachers can access it. Also, now, the condition is that the teachers are all in-serviced in using that course before they are allowed to use it, whereas before the principals could use it and then pass it through to the teachers. Now it is very much you can only use it if you have had the one-day training. It is very comprehensive. It was reviewed in 2013. It has feedback from Professor Freda Briggs and a whole number of other really high level people who are involved in child protection and the training part of it. It has been very well researched and thoroughly vetted again for the new version. PBWA is another excellent program, but as I said, because schools can opt to buy that one out or in themselves, that is why we present the keeping safe one.

Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY: Is that South Australian one free to you?

The CHAIR: The keeping safe.

Mr Ten-Haaf: Keeping safe? Yes; it is, provided you have done that one-day training, yes. It is an online set of resources. The intent behind that was that it can be continuously updated and upgraded and teachers who have done the course can access that at any time.

The CHAIR: Do you have targets that you set for the take up of this? I am thinking about how you do your own job when delivering this. Are you happy with 40 out of 157? What is the target?

Mr Ten-Haaf: No; I am not happy with 40 out of all of them. I would rather see as many schools as choose keeping safe to be done with it. I do not have a particular preference over keeping safe as opposed to PBWA. One of the really solid things about Protective Behaviours WA is that a number of the people who reviewed that one, who contributed to the development of that program as well, are on the mandatory reporting interagency training group. So at least what you get in WA from PBWA is very WA focused as well, which perhaps is not as strong as it is from keeping safe. However, having said that, because we are also, as AISWA, represented on the MR training group, whatever information we can glean from that, we put into our programs that we have mandatory reporting training.

Ms Bishop: What we do know about the 157 schools is that, as a registered independent school in WA through the Department of Education Services, it is a requirement written into the standards, into legislation, that they have to have a curriculum in place. So for all schools that is a requirement as an independent school, so they are aware of that. Whilst we do not have a record or a register of who is doing what, we know that that is a requirement and they know that is a requirement and they will not get their registration if they do not —

The CHAIR: If they do not have a protective behaviours type of training?

Ms Bishop: Curriculum in place.

Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY: So Guildford and Christchurch clearly have their own, but you do not monitor it. You do not go and have a look and see what they are doing, or you do?

Ms Bishop: That is not our role. We are not a regulatory body. The Department of Education Services is the regulatory body for independent schools. Having said that, we have fairly close relationships with our schools, so we have for the most part provided that training when it is —

Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY: Asked for.

Ms Bishop: Yes, so we often will do the ongoing support as well.

The CHAIR: Do you think that they are mainly delivering this as part of a specific part of the curriculum, or do you think they have spread it across all of what they are doing? What do you think is happening out there?

Mr Ten-Haaf: It falls under the Australian curriculum, under the health and phys. ed. curriculum, which I personally have a bit of an issue with because it really focuses just on the sports teachers and they happen to be a risk group.

The CHAIR: I am so glad you said that because when I came in this morning and I said, why would you put it in that? I can understand the health bit but —

Mr Ten-Haaf: Yes. The other side to that is that the Australian curriculum is really quite broad. It is very broad, so at least by having a very specific program in place, the schools are going to cover every base that they conceivably can. The new registration standards—the draft registration standards—that are coming out are not finalised yet. They actually say it has to be a curriculum that has been developed by experts. Whereas before, they could rely on the health and phys. ed. part and then say, “Well, we’ve met our obligations as a protective behaviours curriculum”, now there is a specific requirement being put in that it has to be developed by leading experts, which is fantastic. Whether that goes to finalisation remains to be seen.

Ms Bishop: I think for most of our schools they are certainly working through it and now that there is so much more availability through AISWA, so it is only as of the beginning of this year that all of the consultants were trained, although the inclusive education consultants were trained to actually be able to deliver the program, we have probably done a whole lot more this year than prior because I was doing it on my own. We probably have covered almost double the number just in this year than in the last few years. I think as more and more schools go through their reregistration process, more and more of them are implementing it much more thoroughly.

The CHAIR: So it is not mandatory but it is built into —

[3.30 pm]

Ms Bishop: It is not mandatory through the association because we are not able to do that, but it is through registration. The 2014 registration standards did say that you had to have a curriculum in place. It did not stipulate, like Mick said, that it had to be accredited or a curriculum that was designed by experts in the field, while within the draft document it is saying that.

The CHAIR: So perhaps then we should jump now to what our committee is inquiring about and that is basically what role the Commissioner for Children and Young People might play in the

reporting or accepting reports of child abuse. You would be familiar with Blaxell and what went down, so do you have a view about that?

Ms Bishop: Quite possibly so, but before we do that, there was one other piece of professional learning that we have implemented this year on top of that as well. It is called the —

Mr Ten-Haaf: Creating Safer Independent Schools.

Ms Bishop: Thank you.

Mr Ten-Haaf: Would you like me to explain it to you? The AIS, our sister organisation in New South Wales, has a dedicated child protection unit that is attached to them, so they have got experts in this area as well. Earlier in 2013, they did a research project looking at what they could do around child protection. They put in a program which they have now called the creating safer independent schools package. As part of the development of that, they actually went over to the United Kingdom and to Ireland and they interviewed Lord Bichard and Justice Ryan to talk about what they had found out of their inquiry.

The CHAIR: The Bichard inquiry's days.

Mr Ten-Haaf: Yes, so it is pretty high level stuff then. They then incorporated all of that into a program, which we now run out for schools as well. They have allowed us to take it over. We have obviously put West Australian flavours to it and made it fit with Western Australian parts. It is a well-received course. We have had 71 leaders do it, so 38 schools so far. We started rolling it out in I think it was April this year. So really there has been quite a high take up.

The CHAIR: What does it do? Tell me a bit about it.

Mr Ten-Haaf: It is great.

Ms Bishop: I might just hand that around while Mick keeps talking.

Mr Ten-Haaf: It actually focuses on developing a child safe organisation, so that is very much a strong part of the process, which I am sure you are all familiar with, especially the 11 principles that commissioners and guardians have come up with. It helps schools to understand what they need to do to put in place a child safe organisation. If you look at that diagram that is coming around, all those elements are focused on throughout the day—it is another full day presentation that we do, our workshop that we do with the leaders—covering everything from recruitment of new staff all the way through to: do children have a voice, do parents have a voice, everything. So the whole culture around the school is focused on child safety and child protection.

The CHAIR: And it acknowledges the context that the statistics tell us about abuse.

Mr Ten-Haaf: Absolutely, yes.

The CHAIR: So it is very careful and mindful of that when the information is presented so as to not escalate if that individual that you suddenly are teaching something to has a history of abuse themselves, it will not exacerbate their guilt or —

Mr Ten-Haaf: That is right; that would probably fit more under the protective behaviours curriculum—the keeping safe curriculum. As some of their non-negotiable aspects of delivering that, that comes out there. But also for the leaders, we do advise them up-front that this is pretty heavy material here, so if they do feel that they need to take a break, to feel free but get help. We try to provide support as well and we remind schools that they have an obligation to provide support for their leaders and their teachers, and their students and their parents.

The CHAIR: By leaders do you mean principals?

Mr Ten-Haaf: Principals but everyone down as well. Teachers, as well, are leaders within the school.

The CHAIR: Everybody sees themselves as a leader within the school.

Ms Bishop: And because it is an independent school, it do not have the standardised leadership structure that a Department of Education school might have where there are principals, deputies, heads of learning areas and those sorts of things. Within an independent school, there are different leadership structures, so we open it to leaders and within that school they can decide who is the most appropriate person to send.

The CHAIR: Thank you so much. That is a really interesting piece of information. Congratulations, from my perspective, on taking such a bold step and a logical one really. Why would you not be training in child safe organisations? Now we come to the role of the commissioner, so it was certainly appropriate that you table that now. Please tell us what you think.

Mr Ten-Haaf: How long is a piece of string here? First off, I think that the work that is being done by the commissioner is fantastic and really good stuff.

The CHAIR: Have you been involved in any of it?

Mr Ten-Haaf: Michelle on a different level, me as in just absorbing as much information from the website as I possibly can. There is some fantastic stuff on there and I have to applaud them on what they have done with student voice and kids' voices; it is just brilliant.

The CHAIR: The "Listen To Us" report you mean?

Mr Ten-Haaf: All of those.

Ms Bishop: I have been working with the commission since its inception, certainly in the mental health area. I have worked closely with Kids Matters and Mind Matters, both nationally. So, we have worked with the commission in terms of how do we do that cross-sectoral approach to supporting students, irrespective of where they are, and how do we share that information and support young people. I think across all of those organisations, student voice sits at the core: how do we give them a voice and then how do we respond appropriately? In terms of an organisation, those core principles around the respect and dignity of young people and their safety that is paramount. Like I said, I have worked with them really in a mental health, wellbeing capacity for the last six years.

The CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr Ten-Haaf: I think one of the things that needs to be brought out for teachers is the presence of the commissioner because I think a lot of teachers do not know of its existence. Even leaders higher up do not know about its existence, which is a real shame. We can access leadership—we do leadership courses through AISWA as well—and we can make them aware of that and we are happy to do that to draw their attention to it. We can certainly put it on the website, but I think for the commission, that is something that they really need to consider as well.

The CHAIR: A good starting point.

Mr Ten-Haaf: Get out there because its fantastic material that needs to be out there.

Ms Bishop: And to be very clear about what they offer. At this point, it feels a little bit like an information clearing house and it is great for students, but I am still not clear exactly what they offer and I have been involved with them for a while.

The CHAIR: That is all right.

Ms Bishop: Maybe that is on me!

The CHAIR: You can say that here. Keep talking. We are only at the start of the piece of string, I think.

Mr Ten-Haaf: Certainly around continuing what you are doing in giving children a voice, including the children with special needs and disabilities, which I know you did a report a little while ago on.

The CHAIR: But you know we are not the commissioner.

Mr Ten-Haaf: That is right, yes. I was just assuming that you do have oversight there. What they are doing there in terms of disabilities and what they have done is excellent and good material as well but, again, it does not have enough circulation, so it needs more circulation, I think.

As a clearing house for evidence-based practice, they can start looking at that and developing those areas as well because there is a lot of information out on the web and I am concerned that schools and teachers will actually google it and come up with misinformation or incorrect information. It is much better to have a solid resource that you know has been vetted by somebody and this is good material here. Another area I think that needs looking at is the area of grooming and how that actually is being seen by children, but also by parents because, I think, it is a big role that parents need to understand what grooming is all about. From a school's perspective, we can certainly bring it out and get the schools to talk about it, but a lot of parents will say, "This does not actually happen to my kids; this only happens to other children. It doesn't happen to mine", which is absolutely not true. We need to prepare and give parents the strength for that as well. I guess those are probably the biggest ones that I could see a role for the commissioner.

Ms Bishop: I might even add that in terms of how we provide information to schools, we try to be consistent cross-sectorally, and I think we do that really well in WA. But I think for parents, and that is probably a big thing that Mick brought up, if the Commissioner for Children and Young People in terms of, I suppose, having that twofold role. Yes, that clearing house for information would be great and some clarity around what is grooming, how do we see it or how do we recognise it, but most importantly, how do we respond appropriately. So, those very easy sort of fact sheets that sort of say, go here, call there, ask this person, those sorts of things, and where do we go for support. I think that sort of cross-sectoral—like I said, I think we do that really well in WA across all three education sectors. I sit on lots of cross-sectoral committees, as does Mick, and we certainly have the Department for Child Protection and Family Support and health and mental health on those cross-sectoral committees. I think that would be great for the commission to have that committee where there is that voice cross-sectorally. But the parents' support as well, that information to parents, the realities of that, because I think schools are quite—feel intimidated because they feel ill-prepared to be able to provide parents with information because they do not know the answers because they are not experts in the field. They do not know. Mick and I know that there are some pretty hairy questions that come out that you really need to know your stuff. For somebody in a school, this might be a small fraction of their role. If the commissioner could provide that kind of information, they can really upskill and empower because they have the time and the resources to do that. I think that would be valuable.

[3.40 pm]

Hon SALLY TALBOT: One of the components of the AISWA–New South Wales schools that you just passed around was some culture of reporting. Can you talk us through some of the concrete elements of that? I think they go to the heart of what you are saying: without a culture of reporting, the opposite of that is pretty sinister.

Mr Ten-Haaf: Absolutely. It is the notion that everybody should have a voice, which is what our protective behaviours curriculum talks about—if children feel unsafe that they have somebody they can go and talk to. That culture of reporting then says that that information needs to be passed onto somebody who can effect a change. It should not be stuck with one teacher who just puts it in the drawer and says, "Well, I'll deal with that later when I have the emotional fortitude to deal with it." I do not think there is a deliberate intent to not pass it on, but it is just that this is a big thing, "What do we have to do with it?" Especially this notion that children might be telling not lies, but might be embellishing the truth, so to speak, because we talk about how big the fish is that we did not catch, that sort of thing, and people tend to put the same thing around these kinds of issues. I guess the culture of reporting is more than just the child obviously talking about it, but being safe

to talk about it, and also if anybody in the community sees that something is a violation of the boundaries of the code of conduct within the school, that they talk about it, and they do it in such a way that they do not wait until something really sinister or high evidence-based comes on there, but more, “I am concerned about the fact that you have this child sitting on your lap. Why is that? We have a code of conduct.” That sort of stuff.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Going back to Katanning, of course, those practices simply would not be undertaken today, I would like to think. You could not have an adult sleeping behind locked doors with children.

Mr Ten-Haaf: Absolutely; it is that notion of the building up of that reporting and that willingness to report and pass it on. And also for no victimisation of those who do come and report, so that reporting just becomes a normal part of reflecting what is happening in the practice in our schools and we will always test it against a standard.

The CHAIR: Continuing this conversation about what happens when a child has spoken up, we have heard some harrowing stories, and most of the pain and suffering in some respects has come once the door has been opened and the report has been made. Do you take any kind of steps within the independent schools to encourage the schools to have a point of reference for a child or someone coming forward—just one person? Does that ever happen or do they just stay with the teacher?

Mr Ten-Haaf: That is a hard question to answer really, because every school is quite different and the only way we get to hear about it is if the school phones up and talks about it.

The CHAIR: Okay. So what do you think is happening, or what would you tell them to do?

Mr Ten-Haaf: Certainly there is the AISWA school psychology service, so we say if you need some support there, contact your psychologist. Every school is assigned a psychologist under the AISWA program. We also would say that if the child has felt comfortable enough with that teacher who is there to disclose to that teacher, that there is a bond of trust. So do not just say to the teacher to go back to the classroom and the principal will now take care of it, because that does not make sense from the child’s perspective. Also, if there is a substantial report, it gets brought to mandatory reporting straightaway, which means that the Department for Child Protection and Family Support will also have their social workers involved. We tell the schools to follow direction from CPFS as to what they do next, but to make sure that they support the child as best they can.

The CHAIR: It is a very complex area.

Mr Ten-Haaf: It is.

Ms Bishop: Through the Creating Safer Independent Schools, and the fact that we have had 40 schools in less than a year, essentially in two terms, take it up is quite significant. I think for most schools, irrespective of their structure, they are identifying their support network in terms of what we do when there is that teacher who that child feels safe with and how we continue that until that person is safe. I think schools are much more confident in calling AISWA for that support. We probably refer to CPFS a whole lot more regularly so that they are getting advice from the experts as well. As of the beginning of this year, we have also had the psychology service based at AISWA, which has not previously been based there, so that means that our psychs are now receiving all of the training. They are fully cognisant of all the professional learning we provide but they also know what the advice is that we are giving, so it is consistent advice across AISWA at the very least and we are certainly providing that information to school-based psychologists as well.

The CHAIR: So you can with some confidence be saying that you think that the child would be in an environment where they could speak up, and from all the work from what you know? I know

you do not control the schools. I know it is a different relationship, but what do you think is happening? Do you think the world is changing in your schools? Do you think it is getting better?

Mr Ten-Haaf: I do; I absolutely do. The willingness of staff to come to these kinds of things and to ask questions is now a lot higher. There is an understanding by leaders that they have a responsibility to also do something with this, but also just the knowledge. For example, the course Creating Safer Independent Schools also gives them power to understand the process and understand what they need to do. So I think there is definitely a change. Are we going to get everybody? I do not think so, because perpetrators are pretty cunning and we have to weed them out as best we can. But I think there is definitely a change.

Ms Bishop: It has probably been the biggest uptake of professional learning that we have ever had in terms of creating safe and independent schools. Forty schools, that is almost one-third of our schools within two terms, have taken up the training to create safe organisations. I think in terms of schools really wanting to know how to do it, it has been really evident that they want to know how to create a safe environment and how to respond. I really think that is where the commissioner comes in, where the commissioner can really add that depth of knowledge and strategy and in terms of how to respond appropriately, particularly for grooming. I think grooming in particular is probably the scarier one at the moment. Nobody wants to miss it. But we need to know what we are looking for. We do not want to have teachers have a position where they feel like their every single move is being documented in a massive database; “I looked at this child sideways”, and those sorts of things. It is getting that balance between a safe organisation and a profession that just breeds a culture of dobbing, for want of a better word, paranoia, those sorts of things. We want teachers to feel empowered to create safe environments. I think that is done through education and real systemic support through organisations like the commission.

Ms E. EVANGEL: Can I just ask about the schools that have not participated yet? I think it is fantastic that you have had such a great result in such a short time. Are you proactive in any way in trying to get them to participate? What systems do you have in place to entice them into this magnificent program you have?

Mr Ten-Haaf: Absolutely. Every year when schools go through reregistration, as a certain proportion of schools—not all—we have a meeting with them and we talk about what are the new standards going to be and what are the focuses on it. We then also roll out that CSIS would be a really good course for them to come along and see. Thirty per cent of the new regulations are devoted to just one standard, which is around child abuse and the protection of children. There are 14 standards, so 30 per cent of the document is just one topic. That tells everybody that this is an important issue that needs to be dealt with.

The CHAIR: That is a valuable piece of information.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: When was that document produced?

Mr Ten-Haaf: About four weeks ago. The intent is that that will then form the registration standards for next year.

Ms Bishop: For independent schools.

Mr Ten-Haaf: Independent schools only.

Ms Bishop: So Catholic and independent will have the same standards.

The CHAIR: Fantastic. I think we have probably just about gone through the questions that we had for you, so if there is nothing that you wish to add, I will read our closing statement.

Thank you both for your evidence. A transcript will be forwarded to you for correction. Any corrections must be made and the transcript returned within 10 days. If we do not hear from

you, we will assume it is correct. New material cannot be added and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. If you want to give us any supplementary information, please just send it in when you give us our transcript back. Thank you both so much. I am always very encouraged when I hear from the independent schools because you always seem to be doing work with such clarity and innovation. Sometimes I think personally, when we hear from some of the other establishments within government, it is not quite so clear what is happening. I know there are more of them, but it is lovely, very refreshing, to hear from you. Thank you. I really appreciate what you have said and what you have brought with you.

Hearing concluded at 3.50 pm
