# STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

## FOLLOW-UP HEARING IN RELATION TO THE ESTIMATES HEARING WITH WA POLICE ON TUESDAY, 5 JUNE 2012

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE TAKEN AT PERTH FRIDAY, 22 JUNE 2012

### **Members**

Hon Giz Watson (Chair)
Hon Philip Gardiner (Deputy Chair)
Hon Liz Behjat
Hon Ken Travers
Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich

#### Hearing commenced at 10.13 am

#### Hon PETER COLLIER

**Minister for Energy, examined:** 

**The CHAIR**: Minister, on behalf of the committee, I welcome you to the hearing. Thank you for your attendance.

This hearing is being held in public although there is discretion available to hear evidence in private either on our motion or at your request. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request the evidence be taken in closed session. These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard. A transcript of your evidence will be provided to you.

Minister, thanks very much for coming back in.

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: My pleasure.

**The CHAIR**: This hearing is a follow-up from the hearing we had with you and the Commissioner of Police. We have some further questions. I will lead off. What information were you provided with in preparation for the hearing?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: In a general sense?

The CHAIR: However you want to answer that.

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: I had a file which basically had the division and information on specific areas of the police budget. I received that, I think, the day before.

**The CHAIR**: Did you receive or have a briefing in addition to that?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No.

**The CHAIR**: So you were just provided with the file?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Yes.

**The CHAIR**: Were you given any instructions in terms of how to respond to questions?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: Only one; there were no other instructions. There was one question with regard to the issue of the watch-house. The Minister for Police explained to me that that situation was still under investigation and that police would not be answering questions on it. That was the only instruction I was given.

The CHAIR: That was provided to you orally.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

**The CHAIR**: From whom?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: The Minister for Police, Rob Johnson.

**The CHAIR**: And when did you receive that?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: That was on the morning of the hearing. I was in cabinet. It was at the end of cabinet. He mentioned to me that there was an issue with regard to the watch-house and that the police would not be responding to questions with regards to the watch-house. He said it was still under investigation.

**The CHAIR**: Just for my clarification, you were provided with a file of briefing notes about the budget —

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

**The CHAIR**: — and an instruction from the minister.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

**The CHAIR**: Were you aware of a media statement that had been prepared and released by the police with regard to the watch-house matter?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No.

**The CHAIR**: Why did you not allow the Commissioner of Police to answer questions?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: With regards to this issue?

The CHAIR: Yes. I should say that our interest is in the questions around the watch-house.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Sure. As I said, the police minister told me that the police would not be answering. He said that it was still under investigation and that it was inappropriate. He said it was budget estimates hearing. He said they would not be answering any questions with regards to this particular issue. When I arrived at the hearing, I spoke very briefly with the Commissioner of Police just prior to it beginning. I told him that I understood that he would not be answering any questions about the watch-house issue. He was comfortable with that. When the question came up, I was basically following instructions.

**The CHAIR**: Were you aware that the commissioner actually had more information that he could have provided to the committee?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: No. I did not discuss the issue with him at all. I did not discuss the issue with either the minister or the commissioner.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH**: We heard from the commissioner about the issue of answering the question. He said you did not let him answer any question and that you were very specific in estimates about not passing any questions to him to answer. Why was that the case?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Because I had been under—well, the police commissioner—the police minister said to me quite specifically that the police were not to answer questions with regard to that issue. He had been quite clear about that. That was just a few hour hours before—actually no, police was in the evening. Earlier that day the police minister told me that. As I said, I mentioned it to the commissioner just prior to the hearing and he was quite comfortable with it. I was essentially following instructions.

**The CHAIR**: To give you feedback from the committee—and the reason we are having this further hearing—it is fair to say that the committee was unhappy with the answers provided or the lack of information provided. It is also fair to say that we felt that we perhaps had been treated dismissively in regards to this matter. My next question is: do you acknowledge the committee's expectation to be provided with full and frank information?

[10.20 am]

Hon PETER COLLIER: Absolutely. As I said, if I felt that the commissioner could have provided information that would have been beneficial, it would not have been an issue. I was under the impression that there was sensitive information and that is why I was instructed not to allow the police to respond. It is as simple as that. I cannot even remember if I knew anything about the watch-house issue at that stage. It may have broken, I think, that morning or the morning before. I only knew what I read in the papers. The information that I had about the watch-house, I did not have any more information than anyone else. I was led to believe that the issue was sensitive. I could only go by what I had been told and what I had been instructed. I certainly did not have any understanding of what occurred with regard to that incident.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH**: Minister, you just said in relation to the question that I asked you that you had a discussion with the commissioner.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Very, very brief.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: In the evidence he gave to this committee on Monday 11 June—I am referring to page 3 go the draft transcript—he claims "I did not speak to him at all". He was referring to you, the minister. He said "The first time I saw him or spoke to him was as he stepped into estimates on the Thursday night". He also said he had no previous briefings with him about any matter whatsoever to do with estimates, let alone this.

Hon PETER COLLIER: That's exactly right.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: You just said that you spoke to him briefly.

Hon PETER COLLIER: No, no. I thought I said this earlier, I said "I understand you're not commenting on the watch-house issue". I said he felt comfortable with that. I think at the very most he said "yes"—and that was it. There was no discussion per se. I just said "I understand" and it was as brief as that. I literally said "I understand you're not commenting on the watch-house issue". And he either nodded or said yes—or words to that effect. But we certainly did not have a discussion. We did not have any dialogue with regard to the issue. I was acting under instruction from the police minister and, as I understood, I got the impression certainly that the police probably were supportive of that approach. As I said, I was of the impression that they were supportive of that approach because I assumed there was some sensitive issues that could not be articulated publicly at that stage with regard to this particular issue.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH**: Why did you not just ask him; why did you assume so much?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Because I was under instruction from the minister and —

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Not to talk to the commissioner?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: No, no. To not have this issue discussed in budget estimates. The police minister had said to me quite specifically that morning that I should not allow any discussion of the watch-house incident. It was quite clear.

**The CHAIR**: And you were comfortable with following that instruction?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: Yes, I was. I am not police minister. I understand that certainly in operations and in any sort of criminal operations or potential criminal operations they may be sensitive. I was genuinely of the belief that this must have been a sensitive issue and, therefore, the reason I was being asked not to allow any questions on it was because it may have compromised an ongoing investigation.

**The CHAIR**: But of course, minister, you would be aware that the committee has the capacity to go into closed session.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

The CHAIR: As is read out at the beginning of every hearing. I just wonder whether you had considered that, because, quite frankly from the committee's point of view, if that had happened I think we probably would not be doing this now because we would have actually been able to hear from the Commissioner of Police. Subsequently at the hearing we did have—the follow-up hearing—he was able to tell us the answers we needed to hear. I guess maybe that is just my point back to you, that parliamentary committees have that capacity and we do hear sensitive information regularly.

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: Yes, I take that on the chin. In retrospect, probably we should have gone into a closed hearing, and, as I said, I was genuinely acting on instructions because of what I assumed was a sensitive issue in terms of information that did not want to be publicly aired. So, yes, you are quite correct; I probably should have gone into a closed hearing.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: That would have been an appropriate pathway, there is no doubt. But what worries me, really, is that a minister from the other place can issue an instruction like that that compromises you, but, more importantly, the commissioner, who actually did have additional information, which is actually public. I mean, this had been released by that time, and it does say that there were charges laid. I understand there were still sensitivities, but that is okay. But he would have had information that he would have been able to give to the committee; you would not ask him, because of an instruction from the minister. Somewhere in that train there is something that is not right. I do not know whether the minister in the other place does not understand how an upper house committee operates. That is what makes me very concerned, that there is an issue here that needs to be taken up somehow. It is bigger than just us; it includes them. When I say "them", the minister in the other place.

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: I do not know how to respond to that.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: It is an observation of what has happened.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Yes.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER**: I guess the only question then is, as a representing minister, how you should have handled that, given the instruction given to you and given your understanding of how a committee in the upper house operates.

Hon PETER COLLIER: As I said, again I cannot respond to that. I think I have told you everything that I know. As I said, probably the point the Chair has made is the most valid one, and probably if I had been given that opportunity—you are right, I should have prompted it, or perhaps if someone had said to me that we could have gone into closed session, we probably would have done it. I am not handballing the responsibility back to the Chair, all I am saying is, yes, probably if we had gone into a closed session, because of the sensitivities of it. I genuinely assumed, also, that the police were comfortable with that position as well—that there were sensitivities, and that is why they did not want to talk about it.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER**: That is where it comes to a dangerous assumption, because they did have information that was not given fully and frankly to the committee to the questions we were asking.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Yes, but I did not know that.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER**: But what he should have been able to do was say, "Look, minister, I am sorry; I do have information here that is relevant to this question." So how does that emerge in the future?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: I cannot answer that. I can only go by what occurred in this instance.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER**: So, if someone is withholding full and frank information, what is their culpability in that circumstance?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: I cannot answer that; I do not know. As I said, I can only go by the information I have already provided.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT**: I am sorry I was late for the beginning of this hearing, but I went to the CEO Sleepout at the WACA last night.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Well done.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT**: So, I do apologise.

You may have already answered this question, so stop me if you have. But my understanding of the estimates process in the upper house is that if we have a minister who is sitting in for a minister who is resident in the other place, the minister from the LC giving the evidence usually gets a full briefing from senior advisers from that minister's office. Did that happen in this instance for you?

Were you given a full briefing by those senior advisers or did you perhaps just get information provided to you?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: No, I got a file with information on the various areas within the division, but there was not a briefing per se.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: So no-one from that office sat down and said to you, "These could be the possible contentious issues." You just got the file and off you went.

Hon PETER COLLIER: No, I got the file. That is right.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT**: That is unusual; am I right?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: Yes. An officer brought the file in, but, quite frankly, I had not read the file at that stage. I did not know if there were issues or not. But certainly this one would not have been within that file anyway.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Did you read the file at all?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, I had a look through it.

The CHAIR: Does the file not usually contain a kind of contentious issues sort of —

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: Yes, I did have a look at it. I cannot recall. As I said, I had three estimates hearings that day and I cannot recall this issue being within those contentious issues.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH**: Can we just check to see if there was a note of contentious issues in that file, please? Can you take that on notice?

[Supplementary Information No. A1]

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: I do not have the file anymore.

The CHAIR: No, we might have to ask the police for that.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS**: I guess, minister, you have indicated today that you have made a range of assumptions. Do you accept now that a number of those assumptions were incorrect?

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** I am not quite sure what assumptions have been incorrect.

[10.30 am]

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Assumptions about there was not enough information and yet the police had issued a press release prior to us going into that hearing. Even that would have provided more information than you gave—that it was sensitive and nothing could be provided. I think you went through a range of assumptions. You made assumptions about those sorts of things. Do you accept that a number of those assumptions now were incorrect?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: Yes, I do actually. I think probably given the circumstances as they evolved, probably the police could have provided at least some information on it.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS**: Do you also accept that even as a representative minister you have an obligation to test the instructions and advice that is provided to you?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: Yes, I do. In normal circumstances if there is an issue, you know, if you know the instructions you have been given are to play a political game, to avoid answering, say, on an efficiency dividend or something, for example —

**Hon KEN TRAVERS**: Were you given an instruction like that?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: Absolutely not. I can assure you, absolutely not. But I know that is —

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I think that is funny that is the first one that came to your mind.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Because I know that that is a contentious issue and —

**Hon KEN TRAVERS**: So you did not need the instructions; you knew not to answer it.

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: Can I just give you a bit of insight here? We do not just take at face value questions that we get for ministers at question time. Very frequently we challenge questions that we receive because you feel that they are just not appropriate. I hate, I detest, standing up and saying, "Go to a website," or something else that might be —

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Google it.

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: Google it or put it on notice. I hate that. In opposition I hated it and that is why I never do it myself. I always say I will get the information. I never say put it on notice.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: We will test that.

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: You have a look. You will never find where I have said, "I will put it on notice." I have always said, "I will get that information." I just wanted to give you a bit of background.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER**: That is fair enough.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS**: I know at least one of your colleagues—I am confident now—regularly tests the answers that are provided to him.

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: Yes, that is right. I have lost where I was. I was on a roll too.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: About the efficiency dividend you got to.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I received no information, but in this instance, because it was from my limited understanding of the issue at the time it would appear to have been a sensitive operational issue from, essentially, what I read. Given those circumstances, that it would have potential to be a sensitive issue for police et cetera, I assumed that, therefore, the instruction I was given was to present anything occurring that may hinder the investigation into that situation.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS**: Minister, I do not think there would be a member of the upper house that would actually want to ask questions that would hinder the investigation.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Sure.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I guess the key point here for me is—and I appreciate your answers, because it is about, for me—how we make sure as we go forward we have all got a clear understanding of how the process is. It strikes me that the issue was there was an instruction issued by the Minister for Police and really that where that needed to be tested was with the Commissioner of Police whether or not there were the sensitivities or whether or not the commissioner could have provided more information. My reading of it, from what you have said today, is that that never really occurred because it was just the commissioner sitting there saying, "I've been given an instruction by the minister, so what can I do" and you sitting there saying, "I've been given an instruction by the minister, what can I do". If you two had had a conversation, you might have actually realised that there was information that was appropriate to be provided in an upper house committee format. I mean, what they do in the lower house is their business. I guess the thing I am looking for is assurances that that is going to be the process in the future, and you accept that on this occasion there were things that we probably could have done better, with the benefit of hindsight, and that they will occur in the future.

Hon PETER COLLIER: One hundred per cent I agree with everything you have just said. As I said, certainly the discussion I—the communication is, I have been through this before with the commissioner, at that time was extremely limited. As I said, I did say to him, I remember right at the beginning saying, "I understand you won't be commenting or you're not to comment on the watch-house issue" and he indicated that was the case. It may have been a nod, or certainly a yes, but I got the impression that he was comfortable with that position, which led me to believe that there was something that was of a sensitive nature. That was the extent of it. But you are right, this has probably revealed something in the fact that we need to be perhaps a little bit more forensic in

terms of those instructions, because if there was a situation where information could have been provided and given the respect the estimates committee deserved, I would have done it. You know, I certainly was not trying to hide anything from the committee. As I said, I was acting under instruction, but I genuinely felt, given that instruction, that there were sensitivities behind that investigation.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I guess the other area that caused me concern was when you were asked how long the investigation would take. You may recall that you said, "How long is a piece of string", which gave some impression that you did have an understanding of these matters, where, I suspect from what I have heard today, you had no idea. As it turned out, the police commissioner was out the next morning providing a lot more detail that if it had been provided to the committee the night before, this would not be happening.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Right. Again, it was to coin a phrase and it probably could have been worded better. The thing was I genuinely did not know. I did not know that the police commissioner was going to come out the next day with a media statement or where the actual investigation was. So by saying, "It's as long as a piece of string", I should have just said, "I simply don't know", as opposed to that. That is what I should have said.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS**: And I think that is right. That is what I am getting to. Certainly, if you have not informed yourself—and I guess the other issue is should you have informed yourself of how long the investigation would take before answering a question like that.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH**: Minister, you made reference to the contentious issues section within that briefing file that you just seem to have scanned. I am really keen to find out what other contentious issues you may not have given attention to. So I am wondering, through you Madam Chair, whether we could get all the contentious issues that that file contained and whether they could be —

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT**: I think this is only a hearing about the Perth watch-house matter.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Whether they could be provided to the committee.

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: Not unless there are any—again, are there any sensitivities? I do not see that there is an issue with that.

**The CHAIR**: I assume that was just an adjunct to supplementary information A1. It is just an expansion of supplementary information A1, just for clarification.

[Supplementary Information No A1.]

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I would want to ask about that email in relation to Mr Munnee.

**The CHAIR**: I have got some comments I wanted to make but I have not got any further questions, so if you wanted to ask a question.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH**: We heard, when we had the police commissioner in, from Mr Munnee about an email that was sent from Mr Munnee to the commissioner. It was in respect of an email —

**The CHAIR**: Just hang on a minute. We will just give the minister a copy so he knows what we are referring to. It seems to be the fair thing to do.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: It was an email addressed to —

Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner,

From the Minister's office — if Peter Collier is asked any questions on the —

Perth watch-house —

... incident tonight he will not provide a response and say it is not related to the Budget Estimates.

He will also say the matter is before the court and not appropriate to comment. He will not pass the question to either of you.

Now, the question I want to put to you is: was that matter before the court at that time?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: I have got no idea. As I said, I was told that the matter was under investigation, as I have said before. The matter was under investigation and we were not to comment.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH**: If you have no idea, is there any possibility that the matter was not before the court at that time and, in fact, this line had been prepared so as to suggest that it is a legitimate reason as to why the line of questioning could not be pursued?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: I do not know what your question is, sorry.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH**: Basically, the instruction was that you would say that the matter is before the court and it was not appropriate to comment. You have just indicated that you have no idea whether it was before the court or it was not before the court. On what basis would you have then said this?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: I was told that it was under investigation. I do not know anything about this email. I have never seen this email before today. It is not to me or from me. I was under instruction that it was under investigation.

[10.40 am]

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH**: You do not know whether the matter was before the court at that time or it was not before the court?

Hon PETER COLLIER: No.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH**: I think that is a critical point. When did the matter go before the court and when did it enter the court system?

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: It is probably something you need to ask the commissioner.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Okay, but you had no idea.

The CHAIR: Just for clarification—correct me if I am wrong—I understand that the limited information you had as to why you were not going to answer questions, and neither was the commissioner in regards to this, was because it was an operational matter. Is that right?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, it was an operational matter. As Hon Ken Travers pointed out—it was probably a wrong assumption—I assumed there were sensitivities involved and it may compromise the investigation.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** What time was this news release released? Do we know that?

The CHAIR: We will just check that.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT**: It had been released at 1.39 pm, so by two o'clock in the afternoon this had been released. Yes, it was before the court. Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich is trying to find out if it was before the court. Yes, it was because it says it is. Your question has been answered.

**Hon PETER COLLIER**: There you go.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH**: Can we get an exact time that the matter did go before the court?

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT**: As at 5 June, at two o'clock, it says, "As the matter is before the court and is subject to ongoing investigation, it is not appropriate to release further details at this time."

**The CHAIR**: Has anybody got further questions?

**Hon KEN TRAVERS**: This is probably a comment. The issue to me is that the questions were not about those matters. The court is actually irrelevant because I think what people wanted to know

was not about the specific details of what had occurred but the security arrangements that were in place at police stations and at the watch-house and other places to ensure that this was not happening or how it had occurred rather than the specifics of the case. I am not sure that the court matter is relevant.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT**: That would make it sub judice.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The specifics of the case would be, if you were talking about that, but if you were talking about the general security arrangements at the watch-house, that would not be sub judice and is a legitimate area for this committee—staffing, resources, all those issues, which we have since had the opportunity to ask the commissioner about and found that there is a problem there with a lack of resources.

The CHAIR: Which might be your point. Unless members have got further specific questions, I just wanted to make a couple of comments, because there was a suggestion that questions around the watch-house were outside of the terms of reference of the committee. I just wanted to be very clear that the committee has very broad powers of investigation. Any questions going to the operations or financial position of an appearing agency or department are relevant questions. I just wanted to make sure that that was on the record. I feel very strongly that any suggestion by the Minister for Police that we were outside of our terms of reference is plainly wrong, and that needs to be put on the record. But also I say we are very mindful as a committee of operational matters, whether they are police matters or investigation of unlawful activities by any agency, and we have the capacity and the powers to hear that information and then decide what will or will not be made public. I take your point, minister, that the committee could also have said we would like to go into private session and hear more information. So, you are correct; either of us could have made that call. But it is a point to remember that committees of the Parliament have that right and expectation to get that information.

I think the other thing is that my concern about directions from ministers in the other place can put the committee in a situation where we are not getting full and frank information, and I think that is something that I want to look more closely at, because it creates a problem for you as a representative minister and it creates a problem for Parliament as the representative of the community to get information from all departments and not have things blocked by instructions which, it seems to me, are trying to hamper potentially the operation of committees. I also think perhaps I could feed back. I think that the requirement for representative ministers to actually be fully briefed perhaps needs some attention. I appreciate that ministers and parliamentary secretaries are busy people and there were a lot of hearings going on on that day. But it seems to me if there had been information there on your file, it would have been useful if you had been made aware of it or had actually been briefed on it. Then I think we would not have found ourselves having to call you back in to try to tease this out.

I just wanted to offer those comments to indicate that this committee takes its work very seriously and we do not take kindly to finding out that there have been instructions which potentially hamper the operation of the Parliament. I realise that those are not your instructions, but that is why we felt that this needed to be followed up, and we might choose to report on it. That remains to be seen. I do not know whether other members had anything they wanted to add.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS**: No. I am satisfied that the minister has indicated that in future whoever sits in those positions needs to be a bit more vigilant in ensuring that they do not just take the advice they get at face value. Again, I think he has accepted that.

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** Fair cop.

**The CHAIR**: On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you very much for coming in this morning. I appreciate your full and frank cooperation with the committee. There will be that one

question on notice. You will receive a copy of the transcript and have the opportunity to review that. Otherwise, I think we are through.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH**: I am assuming that the efficiency dividend contentious issues will be in amongst those answers on the contentious issues.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: The only issue that I still have in my mind—I do not know whether the minister is prepared to do it—is obviously we cannot, without going through a very convoluted process, call the minister. I was wondering whether you could approach the minister and see if you could get any further indication from him about why he issued you that instruction—unless you have spoken to him since then—and maybe provide that as supplementary information to the committee about both why he did it and whether or not he now, like yourself, accepts that, certainly for the upper house committees, it is appropriate for us to be given that information and we will be able to get that sort of information in the future.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes. I will speak to the minister.

[Supplementary Information No A2.]

**The CHAIR**: Thank you, minister. We will close the hearing.

Hearing concluded at 10.49 am