

**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
MONDAY, 15 JUNE 2015**

SESSION SIX

Members

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

Hearing commenced at 4.16 pm**Ms VICTORIA WILLIAMS****Senior Policy Officer, Aboriginal Legal Service of WA, examined:**

The CHAIR: On behalf of the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People, I would like to thank you for your appearance today. The purpose of this hearing is to assist this committee in its review of the functions exercised by the commissioner, with particular reference to recommendations in the review of the commissioner's act. At this stage, I introduce myself, Lisa Baker, member for Maylands, as the Chair. My colleague Hon Robyn McSweeney, member for South West Region, is our deputy, and our fellow member is Hon Dr Sally Talbot, also from the South West Region. This is a formal proceeding of Parliament and therefore commands the same respect given to proceedings in the house. Although the committee is not asking to provide evidence on oath or affirmation, it is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. This is a public hearing and Hansard will be making a transcript of the proceedings. If you refer to a document, it would help if you could provide the full title for the record.

Have you completed the "Details of Witness" form?

Ms Williams: I have.

The CHAIR: Do you understand the notes at the bottom of the form?

Ms Williams: I do.

The CHAIR: Did you receive and read the information for witnesses sheet?

Ms Williams: Yes, I did.

The CHAIR: Do you have any questions?

Ms Williams: No.

The CHAIR: We are really interested in the ALSWA submission. In particular, you may not have had a chance to read the evidence that Peter Blaxell gave to us a few weeks ago to elaborate on his original report. He clarified a lot in his report to us then and he said that he never recommended that the commissioner would be an investigative body for child abuse complaints, and there were several other things he went on to say. So it has been a really insight process having these hearings. Some of the questions I will ask you will really focus on your submission, but there are a couple of general things I want to ask first of all. You were talking about a suitably qualified special adviser on issues impacting children and young people and you recommended it as a preferred option over the deputy commissioner role, which I do not think is supported by the review. I am really interested if you would explain why you think this is important for the commissioner.

[4.20 pm]

Ms Williams: Absolutely. There is one matter I want to raise before I actually answer any questions. I thought it was important that I just explain my previous background in terms of my involvement with the office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People. I have been working as senior policy officer at the Aboriginal Legal Service for almost a year next week. I previously worked there some 20 years ago as a lawyer in the criminal unit for about seven years. In between, I have worked for myself as a sole practitioner and consultant. During that period, the previous Commissioner for Children and Young People engaged me as a consultant for various different reports and research that were prepared. I just felt that it was important that you were

aware of that, one of those being an internal research brief in relation to the functions of the commissioner at one point. I have had some involvement with the office prior to my current capacity.

The CHAIR: That is really helpful; thank you. Again, would you like to think about that role and tell us a bit about why you think that is important?

Ms Williams: Yes, absolutely. Certainly, in terms of the previous arguments, there have been arguments for a deputy commissioner. There are arguments on both sides, in my view. There is a strong argument that the needs of Aboriginal children and young people are, as they are in the act, high priorities and very special, unique needs in WA as we currently are positioned. There is a risk, in the ALS's view, that if it is a deputy role, that brings with it a connotation of being less important and that the commissioner—people would see the commissioner as being more important or having a stronger role—should be the person who is responsible for ensuring that the rights and interests of Aboriginal children are considered actively and at the forefront of the thoughts and proposals of government in relation to children. The role of a special adviser, in my view and the ALS's view, recognises that there are special and different needs for Aboriginal children and that an Aboriginal person who is suitably qualified and experienced would have the knowledge and cultural knowledge to provide special advice to the commissioner. So, together, they could work to improve the circumstances of Aboriginal children and young people in WA.

The CHAIR: Has that role been considered previously, Victoria?

Ms Williams: Not that I am aware of.

The CHAIR: Have you had any response to that, apart from what the review said?

Ms Williams: No.

The CHAIR: That is interesting. It is a very good point and something that is quite appealing to me personally. I do not know what my committee thinks, but it is quite appealing.

Ms Williams: It is also consistent with what the ALS would say more broadly; that government agencies and bodies of this nature need to work in partnership, alongside Aboriginal people, if inroads are going to be made and that Aboriginal people need to have a voice. That is why the role of a special adviser reflects that cultural advice and partnership approach rather than having a deputy that is perhaps seen as less important.

The CHAIR: With the Blaxell recommendations, there are issues in particular that he wanted to raise with us in his evidence about the plight of children in rural and remote Western Australia and he raised Indigenous children—Aboriginal children—as being a very problematic group to contact and work with and to build confidence and trust with. So he did go to some length to talk to us about his concerns around that. Do you want to just talk about what your thoughts are in relation to Aboriginal children and the potential to connect them with the commissioner without any complaints, just the potential —

Ms Williams: Generally, without —

The CHAIR: Yes, just generally first.

Ms Williams: Certainly, face-to-face visits to remote communities would be essential, and I understand that that has occurred to some extent already. I am not sure exactly when and how much.

The CHAIR: Is that a fly in, fly out mentality, though?

Ms Williams: It needs to be regular. You need to avoid the situation where it is a one-off, “Here I am; this is what I do”, never to be seen again. There need to be links with the community and important people in the community to maintain —

The CHAIR: How do you do that? Sorry to interrupt. How do you do the links?

Ms Williams: That is where having a special adviser is one way of making sure that you get the right links with the right people in the communities that are going to be able to maintain a relationship and contact in the future.

The CHAIR: So it is about the importance of establishing that relationship with the right people and then maintaining on a regular basis and refreshing those conversations.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Can we establish what you mean by “remote”?

Ms Williams: There are degrees of remoteness, obviously.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: There are a lot of people who think that Broome is remote.

Ms Williams: In comparison with other communities, it is not, but I would still consider that if you are not visible in an area, whether it is Broome or a remote community that is miles away from anywhere, you are not going to be accessed or accessible. It is very different if you are in the Perth metropolitan area and you can go to the commissioner’s office if you need to. Because that is not possible, there needs to be a mechanism that ensures that those other communities, regional and remote, are aware of what the role is and how to access.

The CHAIR: Just before we move off the more general comments—I know some of them have been specific—I have a general one. One of the issues that has been raised just this morning by one of our witnesses is the role that does not exist under this legislation but they would argue should exist. I think you are arguing it should exist, too, which is kind of an impact statement function for the commissioner on legislation and policy that has been drafted. My colleague to the left, who has great experience in this —

Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY: I never sit on the left!

The CHAIR: My colleague to my right has suggested that it would be—now she has put me right off what I was going to say! Do you want to talk about that for a minute and I will think of the question?

Ms Williams: Yes, absolutely.

The CHAIR: It was the role of the executive and how that would fit in about when you would provide an impact statement.

Ms Williams: The role of a legislative impact statement.

The CHAIR: Yes, and when you provide it. You know how the Human Rights Commission works, where the impact statement goes to Parliament when the legislation is, I think, first read in. I think it is read in with a statement of impact. Robyn was saying that it would be a cabinet document, surely, that would be required, not something past that point.

Ms Williams: I would see that you could have it from the cabinet stage throughout. The concern that was raised in our submission was that if it just goes to cabinet, that is where it may stay. If other members of Parliament who were not part of government and cabinet do not have access to see what impact this bill is going to have on children, and we would say on Aboriginal children as well, how can they argue and debate that bill properly if they are not aware of it? Secondly, for members of the public, such as an organisation like the Aboriginal Legal Service, if we wish to comment on a bill, whether it is media comment or where we advocate to a particular politician to explain what we are concerned about, if we have access to something like that, it is just public debate.

The CHAIR: Let us look at the specific child abuse complaints support function, which is a pretty important focus for this review that we are looking at. The question for us is if and what the commissioner’s office should be doing. One of the stumbling blocks for some people that appears is that they are thinking that the commission does not have resourcing. I think you should put that to one side as an issue. Whilst it is really important, of course, it is not the basis on which you make

a decision over whether something should be or should not be done at the first instance. It appears that you are generally supportive of this function in the commissioner's office. Could you just talk to us a little about why you think it is a good thing to have this role in the commissioner's office?

Ms Williams: Absolutely. I have read some of the submissions of other agencies, very quickly—I have not had time to read them all in great detail—and some of the evidence that has already been given. It seems to me that a sticking point for a lot of people is this fear that it is going to contaminate the investigation, especially if it is an allegation of child abuse. The way that the Aboriginal Legal Service would see a support function for the commissioner's office is in some ways no different in theory from a child going to a teacher, a social worker or a counsellor and disclosing for the first time an allegation of child abuse. That happens all the time. I find it very hard to believe that children would walk into the WA Police child abuse squad for the first time that they have ever disclosed abuse. Although the role for the commissioner's office would be akin to other people in the community that may be trusted adults that a child feels comfortable to go to, for those children in particular who do not have those trusted adults available, I would see it and the ALS would see it as being an additional tool, not instead of. Perhaps the terminology "one-stop shop" was a bit misleading, suggesting that it all has to go there. We would see it as being another option, especially for vulnerable disadvantaged children, whether it be in detention, residential facilities in some remote areas. If there is the visibility and the access, it may be that there are regular visits to a particular remote community explaining what the commissioner can do with the appropriate Aboriginal people supporting that process. There might be that one visit in which they say, "I need to tell you something", and that is a good thing.

The CHAIR: That is really clearly done. Thank you, Victoria. The next question is: What does the commissioner do with that information? Does the commissioner have something in-house, somebody in-house, some people in-house—a unit—to investigate further? Everything we are seeing says that the investigative role should not be part of the commission.

[4.30 pm]

Ms Williams: We would agree with that.

The CHAIR: Is it the referral?

Ms Williams: It is the referral, making sure it is referred to the right agency so that children are not being shoved from one place to another because people are getting it wrong. Whether it is a unit within the commissioner's office or a particular group of staff, who would obviously need to be skilled and knowledgeable about where they should send different types of complaints—obviously, child abuse is very specific, but there would be other potential complaints about mistreatment or inappropriate treatment by government agencies that you would not be sending to the child abuse unit.

The CHAIR: The Ombudsman?

Ms Williams: The Ombudsman, yes, or the Corruption and Crime Commission. There would be different mechanisms for investigations. We would agree that the commissioner should not be duplicating that role.

The CHAIR: What do you think of Blaxell and other suggestions about the commissioner having some kind of role watching that child through what is bound to be a complex and difficult journey through a system of reporting? I think I can say that sexual abuse is probably the thing that we are very interested in in this issue. How would you see, if at all, the commissioner should be helping that child, supporting that child, through the process?

Ms Williams: Ideally, I think the commissioner's office should have the appropriate staff, if that child wishes it to be the commissioner's staff to support them along the way. They may say they have a really close older sister or somebody that they are happy to have come along to the interview or to go to court with them, but the commissioner's office would make sure that that child is

not being left alone. Once again, it is an alternative option rather than that they have to do it for every child.

The CHAIR: You have submitted that a full analysis of the whole complaints process would enable appropriate reforms to improve the complaints system. I am really interested in hearing you talk a little more about perhaps where you think improvements could be made in that journey. A full analysis of the entire complaint process would enable appropriate reforms that may improve the complaints system. Talk to us a bit about where the gaps are, in other words.

Ms Williams: I am not sure that I have the expertise to actually talk about the current gaps. I do not have a particular background in child abuse complaints. It is more as a matter of principle that if the commissioner, as the commissioner does now, has a function to monitor complaints and the outcomes of complaints, it is not just about monitoring the process. How long it took, for example, is a process issue, and whether or not the child or the parent acting for the child was informed of the progress.

The CHAIR: Or the due date.

Ms Williams: They are all process matters. But it is also the outcome, because the outcome is: What was the end result? Was it to the satisfaction of the complainant would be one issue, and also if it involves government employees or contractors, was there disciplinary action? Were there criminal charges? How did the person investigating or the decision-making body decide to deal with that allegation? I guess, from our submission, it is not all about child abuse; it was more broad. If there is a trend, if you have 100 complaints about the same thing, hypothetically—I am making something up—you might have 100 complaints about —

The CHAIR: A particular part of the process.

Ms Williams: It is hard to think of something off the top of my head.

The CHAIR: Breaches in the time frames or something.

Ms Williams: If you identify that through that trend, you can actually make a recommendation to improve it.

The CHAIR: She has that role under the current act. Again, the committee is very interested in your response to the Attorney General's comments. I might just read from his media release back in August last year when the review was tabled in Parliament by the Attorney General. He put out a media statement that talks about the effectiveness and gives in-principle support to recommendations and invites public comment. I just want your reaction to one of the things he says, because you have already given me some indication of what it would be, but I am interested in hearing some more about that. It reads —

“Full implementation of the proposed child abuse complaints support role for the Commissioner for Children and Young People will be deferred to allow for the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission to be taken into account,”

That being the royal commission into institutional abuse. I note that you commented that you consider it unnecessary to wait for that final report. Could you elaborate on why and what your concerns are?

Ms Williams: Firstly, the time it is likely to take; there would be a lot of children potentially disadvantaged in the meantime. Is it settled at 2017?

The CHAIR: Yes, well, proposed.

Ms Williams: Yes, and then you have to wait for the government's reaction and response to those recommendations. Given some of the reports that have already been published, it would be a lengthy report, so I am sure 2018 would be the earliest that the federal government or any other government would respond to a series of recommendations, so the time is one issue. Also, we do

not see that the suggested complaint support function—as I have just discussed with you and described it as being an additional tool; there is a lot that is already allowed under the legislation, as it is now—is such a big stretch from what the commissioner could be doing now to justify that degree of delay. It is about making the system easier and more accessible to children; it is not a new system. I think perhaps in the earlier days, when there were discussions about the one-stop shop, it may have given the impression that, looking at some people's submissions, you cannot take it away from the police. I do not think that has ever been realistically considered, but it is just people's interpretation of it. Something like that, yes, maybe you do need to wait. If there were a brand-new system for investigating and dealing with child abuse then, yes, perhaps the royal commission should be the starting point. But this is about supporting children and making it easier for them to disclose and lodge a complaint and have child-friendly support processes where there are no other support structures in the community for them.

The CHAIR: Thank you. The Aboriginal Legal Service has also submitted that the proposed support function of the commissioner should not be limited to child abuse but broadened to include incidents of inappropriate behaviour by public sector employees or contractors—for example, racism comments by police or detention staff to Aboriginal children and young people. You note that this is especially important if a proposed role of the commissioner is to include regular regional visits. We are interested in knowing: do any such avenues for a complaint currently exist to your knowledge, and are they effective?

Ms Williams: You can always make a complaint to the police directly and, in certain circumstances, it is my understanding that a complaint can be made to the Corruption and Crime Commission, but I am also under the impression from the changes that that is going to become more difficult; it would be with the Public Sector Commission instead for lower level misconduct. I may have misinterpreted it.

The CHAIR: No, you are right.

Ms Williams: The first point, from a legal service point of view, is that we have to have a client that comes to us, that wants to make a complaint, for a start.

The CHAIR: From a regional or remote area.

Ms Williams: That becomes very difficult.

The CHAIR: Yes. How do they know to do that?

Ms Williams: We have staff that do outreach and attend on a regular basis, but if they are not in the community on that particular visit, or it comes down to resourcing organisations such as ours as well—we do not necessarily have the resources to take on every single matter that may come through the door.

The CHAIR: So you use the outreach program whereby you have an officer going into communities on a regular basis that you might use to pick up these things? Okay. It kind of begs the question: what do they do when you are not there? Which is part of your argument about —

Ms Williams: It also comes into the education and awareness of your rights, and that is where I see the role of the commissioner in terms of understanding that it is not okay for the police to make racist comments. The Aboriginal Legal Service certainly currently does not have the scope to go around to communities across the whole state providing education to children and young people about their rights and needs.

The CHAIR: I quite understand that.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: There is also a question of conflict of interest, is there not, if you are a child complaining about the police and the police that you are directed to are the same police?

Ms Williams: Yes. There is another issue with the current process. A lot of children will not want to go down that avenue.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: The same with detention.

Ms Williams: It is perhaps even worse with detention, because if they are in detention, there would be real concerns about making a complaint while they are in there.

[4.40 pm]

The CHAIR: If there were a new complaints support role agreed to for the commissioner, how would the ALS use that role to improve the position of Aboriginal children and people in the community? How would you tap into it?

Ms Williams: We would certainly want to work closely with the commissioner and with any staff involved in that process so that we knew exactly what it was that those staff were doing, where they were visiting and when. We would offer our assistance as much as possible in terms of community networks and knowing who to go to. Also, if we have clients that come to us for advice about matters and perhaps they are not happy with the existing option, for whatever reason, then we would offer them the option to get additional support. But we also cannot assume that every Aboriginal child is going to come to the Aboriginal Legal Service.

The CHAIR: No, of course. You deal with the disproportionately high number of juveniles who are under community work orders or in the community juvenile justice system, or whatever it is called this month. I am really interested in whether you think—because you work with that group—the commissioner should have a role in working with that group—that is, the commissioner as the role exists at the moment, let alone a morphed version of it? Should the commissioner have a role in that area, working with incarcerated youth?

Ms Williams: I think so, yes. It really depends on the extent of the role we are talking about, but in terms of the general current functions of the commissioner in education and awareness raising, absolutely.

The CHAIR: Has it happened so far, that you are aware of?

Ms Williams: I am not aware, no.

Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY: She has a broad charter; if she wanted to, she could do that.

The CHAIR: Has the ALS ever spoken to the commissioner's office about working with that particular group of disadvantaged youth?

Ms Williams: Before I started last year, I could not comment. I know that there certainly has been regular communication with the commissioner's office—not so much, that I am aware of, in the last 12 months or so.

The CHAIR: So you have not had a lot of communication with the office in the last 12 months or so, that you are aware of. That is very interesting, too.

Ms Williams: I should clarify that it is not just myself that would be contacted; there are other people who might have been contacted.

The CHAIR: I suppose in some respects the group of people with whom you are most concerned are more likely to have come to the notice of authorities along the way, so in some respects maybe it has a different degree of importance than with other groups that the commissioner might work with. Given that the situation in Katanning, which Blaxell wrote about, was about children who were not on anyone's radar—they were just kids going to a residential hostel to go to school every day; they were not on the register of concern of Child Protection, Housing or anyone else, yet different children over a period of 20 years met with this abuse—and given what is happening at the moment with the reporting of complaints, do you think the system is effective in allowing children

from the groups you work with, who are not on anyone's radar, to come forward? It is probably a small group, but do you think it is working? Sorry, that was a long question.

Ms Williams: That is a difficult one to answer. We all suspect that there is a lot of child abuse occurring that is not being disclosed, and no-one really knows how much there is. In some ways, the groups of children that are highly disadvantaged and in detention or under the care of the state through Child Protection have so many other complex issues that, if they are being subjected to some sort of abuse, it may not be their biggest issue; their biggest issue might be finding somewhere to sleep.

The CHAIR: Immediate.

Ms Williams: Immediate needs. It may not be something that perhaps could just get buried because "I can't worry about that now, I have to deal with the reality of my harsh life". One area of concern ALS has in addition to, obviously, children in detention is children under the care of the state on orders, but perhaps that slightly older cohort who may not be directly under the radar of Child Protection. We see clients in the Children's Court in particular in both systems, which is a troubling aspect of it. They are living with family, they are under the care of the state, and perhaps Child Protection does not want them to be living with that particular family. But their options are some residential placements that they then get—"kicked out of" is the best terminology—told to leave because they might have broken one of the rules and been smoking a cigarette or doing something they are not supposed to do. Then they are back on the streets or then they go back to another family member, and I am not sure whose radar they are under either. I am not sure they are under anyone's radar truly. We will not necessarily see them unless they come to the Children's Court.

The CHAIR: I reckon the best thing you could do for us at this point in the afternoon would be to give us, in precis, your view of the role of the commissioner into the future, and how that might be best shaped to address the problems with your particular type of group, if that makes sense.

Ms Williams: It does make sense, but one suggestion that was put in our submission, which is a very specific example of something that could be done, is the idea of a special inquiry on, in particular, that group that crosses over both Child Protection and juvenile justice. At one stage, I think in doing a submission for the federal out-of-home-care inquiry, I could not get hold of any statistics that tell us how many children are in both systems at the same time. I am not saying it is not known to government, but it is not —

The CHAIR: Available?

Ms Williams: — publicly accessible to a research person like myself looking for it. So, you do not really know, but anecdotally from our lawyers who work in the Children's Court, anywhere from 20 to 30 per cent each day would be their guess; that is obviously anecdotal. It is a real concern. The Children's Court is dealing with the older children, so we are not talking about young babies and infants; we are talking about teenagers who are highly troubled and constantly or repeatedly in the Children's Court, officially under the care of the state. One of the greatest concerns is that they are often in custody on remand because there is no responsible adult.

The CHAIR: Yes. I worked in the justice system before, and I know about this problem. It is fraught.

Ms Williams: We have had plenty of inquiries, federal and state, in the past in relation to over-representation concerns. I think the time has come when we have done enough repeated inquiries about why is it happening.

Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY: We know why it is happening.

Ms Williams: Yes.

The CHAIR: That is what Victoria is saying.

Ms Williams: What we need to get to is what government agencies and non-government agencies can do to fix it, or to at least make some inroads. I would see that if the commissioner was to hold a special inquiry with the powers that go with that, there would be some scope to try to work out what is happening to some of these children who are highly disadvantaged in both systems and where is it falling down. It would be a more practical inquiry that would actually get to the root causes of what is happening on the ground with these children, rather than generally why Aboriginal children end up in custody—we know that. I think there is some scope to use that special inquiry process to really look into it, and not just Corrective Services and Child Protection, but also Housing. As to the involvement of Housing in terms of the disruptive behaviour management strategy and the impact that has had, no-one seems to know how many Aboriginal children are being evicted or forced into being evicted because their families are being evicted. I cannot find easy data as to how many children are being affected, and then the link between those children and being in court. Anecdotally, once again, we hear situations of children's sentencing being adjourned because the report says they have been evicted, there is nowhere for that child to live at the moment, and the court does not want to finalise the matter until somewhere is found, so it gets put off, which is not a good, ideal way of dealing with children. There are so many links between all these different agencies and government departments with that cohort that we are obviously mainly concerned about.

[4.50 pm]

The CHAIR: I was a little bit surprised, talking about the royal commission into institutional abuse, that at the moment the figure is at 28 per cent for reports or concerns raised by Aboriginal people who have been alleging they have been abused in institutions. Quite frankly, I was quite amazed that the number was so low, and I wonder if it is because the commission—I do not know enough about —

Ms Williams: Is that directly to the commission?

The CHAIR: Yes. I do not know how they are marketing their goods, but you hear a lot about churches and other places where this might have been going on, and I find it impossible to think that of the whole spectrum of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, only 28 per cent of Aboriginal people have come forward to that. To my knowledge—and I know that both my colleagues are very well connected with various colleagues who are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent—I know many who have suffered abuse and sexual abuse, but they have not gone to the commission. I am sorry; it is a slightly off-keel question, but I am interested in what your thoughts are about that.

Ms Williams: I am aware, through some of our other staff at the Aboriginal Legal Service, in particular from our civil unit, that they have great concerns that Aboriginal people are not coming forward because of past experiences with things like Redress WA. I am not suggesting that that is the only reason, but there is little bit of the mentality of “We’ve said all this before; nothing has happened. Why go again? Why go through the trauma again?”

The CHAIR: Yes; that is dreadful.

Ms Williams: I think that has had some impact. The Redress WA experience, from ALS's point of view, was not a great one. There was a lot of trauma experienced by both the people who came forward and also the lawyers who were working on it.

Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY: I think Redress was very hard for everyone, including the minister.

The CHAIR: It was a very difficult thing.

Thank you for that. I know it was not directly relevant to us, but I was very interested in your observation because I scratched my head a bit about that, too. Thank you very much. Is there anything else, Victoria, that you wanted to tell us at this point in our review process?

Ms Williams: I will just have a quick look through the submission to see if there is anything.

The CHAIR: It is not the only occasion you have, by the way. When I read my closing statements I say that if there is anything further you want to submit, you can do so. Take a moment and have a think.

Ms Williams: No, there is not.

The CHAIR: Thank you so much for coming. The principal research officer—she who sits to my right—may write to you in future about additional matters the committee wishes to clarify as a result of this hearing. A transcript of the hearing will be forwarded to you for correction of minor errors. Any corrections should be made within 10 days of the letter attached. If the transcript is not returned, it will be deemed correct. New material cannot be added via corrections, and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. But should you wish to provide anything else, you can do so as a supplementary submission when you return your corrected transcript of evidence.

Thank you so much for coming. I really appreciate the opportunity to have a chat to you. I am sure there will be other things, Victoria, that we might want to pursue, so take that as gospel that we will be back in touch. Thank you so much.

Hearing concluded at 4.54 pm
