PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2015

SESSION TWO

Members

Mr S.K. L'Estrange (Chair)
Mr B.S. Wyatt (Deputy Chair)
Mr W.J. Johnston
Mr M.H. Taylor
Mrs G. Godfrey
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Hearing commenced at 10.53 am

Mrs CHERYL ROBERTSON
Chair WA, Australian Information Industry Association, examined:

Mr THOMAS GARDNER
State Government Liaison, Australian Information Industry Association, examined:

The CHAIR: Good morning. On behalf of the Public Accounts Committee, I would like to thank you for your appearance today. At this stage, I would like to introduce myself and other members of the committee present. I am Sean L'Estrange, member for Churchlands and the committee chairman; to my left is Mr Ben Wyatt, the deputy chair and member for Victoria Park; and fellow committee members, Mr Bill Johnston, member for Cannington; Mrs Glenys Godfrey, member for Belmont; and Mr Matt Taylor, member for Bateman. Today's hearing is a proceeding of Parliament and warrants the same respect that proceedings in the house itself demand. Even though you are not required to give evidence on oath, any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament.

Before we commence, there are a number of procedural questions I need you to answer. Have you each completed the "Details of Witness" form?

The Witnesses: Yes.

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

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Did you each receive and read an information for witnesses briefing sheet regarding giving evidence before parliamentary committees?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Do you have any questions relating to your appearance before the committee today?

The Witnesses: No.

The CHAIR: Thank you for your submission to the inquiry; the committee appreciates your contribution. The purpose of today's hearing is for the committee to gain further understanding of the industry's perspective on some of the key things being explored through this inquiry. We note the primary focus of your submission is on best practice in procurement and innovative methods of procurement. While we will explore this issue with some of our questions, the committee might also seek your input on other matters, such as the kinds of innovative ICT solutions currently being procured by governments in other jurisdictions. Before we commence with our questions, would you like to make a brief opening statement? You do not have to, it is up to you.

Mrs Robertson: I appreciate the opportunity for the AIIA to come in front of the committee. As you are probably aware, the industry association is full of a lot of diverse companies from small to large and a lot of input, so sometimes it is hard for us to balance out that whole feedback loop, but it is important for us also to be seen as an industry. I think the way that the world is progressing, technology is making such a significant impact to business and to government across the world, so it is really important that we get heard and we try to help the government even more than we do now. I guess that would be my opening statement.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Gardner, do you have anything to add?

Mr Gardner: Nothing further to add.

The CHAIR: Thank you. On page 5 of your submission you make reference to a best practice procurement guide that you are developing. Has this guide been finalised?

Mrs Robertson: No, it has not. It is currently out to draft to our members. We had expected it to be finished by now. We are now expecting it to be finalised early in the new year.

The CHAIR: When it is finalised, would the committee be allowed to have a copy of it?

Mrs Robertson: Absolutely.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Based on your work in this area, what do you see as being the defining features of best practice procurement specific to ICT projects?

Mrs Robertson: A lot of them are already listed in our proposal—there are a whole range of things. I guess the one that comes to the top of the pile, if you like, at the moment, is tying procurement to business outcomes, making sure that it is actually a broader statement than just procuring for procuring sake; it is about the business outcome and the result that you are trying to achieve. We see that this is happening in the commercial space for most of our vendor companies. The focus is really about understanding more fully what the business outcome is and then trying to align the solutions that we will have to that outcome. I think that, under a procurement framework, is the hardest thing to probably make sure is managed in there, but it is also the most fundamental to make sure that these projects are successful.

The CHAIR: You make reference to broadening the criteria for determining the successive ICT delivery to include more than the traditional on time, on budget method. Are you able to elaborate on this shift and provide the committee with your view on the best way to measure or define success in ICT delivery?

Mrs Robertson: I guess on time, on budget is one metric of measuring projects. Whilst that is useful and interesting, sometimes it gets in the way of making sure that the business outcome or the value statement is actually there. We recommend broadening that out to: whilst it still has to be on time and on budget, is it meeting the business outcome and has that business outcome changed along the way, because some of these are long-term projects, and is there a point in time when that should be assessed along the way? I think there are a lot of things in there that the industry would like to see broadened out from a key performance indicator. Sometimes it is about who is on the project. Has the team changed? Does the government team change? And is there even any reference or review periods along the way? I guess we would recommend that we think about that more holistically and depending on the size of the project, because you can also wrap in so much checking and measures, that the project is costing too much to do that. So there is a balance there about how much checking and measuring you should do, but also thinking about the broader outcomes than just the money and the timing points of view.

The CHAIR: Thank you. An area of particular interest to the committee is looking for government ICT solutions for Western Australia. On page 14 of your submission, you discuss some of the key ICT procurement trends that you have identified. Can you please elaborate on any of these trends that in your view are providing tangible benefits to government ICT service procurement and delivery?

Mrs Robertson: I think a lot of them—probably all of them are adding tangible benefits in different ways. It really will depend on how transparent and how much of a partnership it is with government. I think just putting it out there and expecting the result to come from the industry is not always going to work. I think you need a two-way discussion point on that and also a two-way reference, if you like. Some of the things listed in there are quite interesting, so this prize is not procurement. I notice that our government is putting out a similar thing at the moment from the point of view of asking for a broader thought process from industry, and I highly recommend that process, because industry often has a lot to bring. Whilst it might not always be a government

example, quite often some of the things we are doing in the commercial world tie very closely to business outcomes again and can be translated quite well to government. I think when we lock down to looking for examples that are specific to government, we tend to go and look for just those examples around the world and miss the opportunity to be quite creative and really get focused on good technology outcomes.

[11.00 am]

The CHAIR: Have you identified any that you believe would have application in WA from industry?

Mrs Robertson: There are a lot of them. I think most of our member organisations could bring you at least one or two, if not 20, different things that could actually help government. I think probably the hardest part for the industry to work out is: How do we profile those types of things? How do we actually give you a broad overview of those without spending months on end showing you these things or overselling some of those opportunities? We have been in discussion with the new office of the government CIO on how we actually get industry to profile what they think might be useful or what they think could translate to government. So there are lots of opportunities. Some of the examples, which I think are in the paper, are things where whole governments have completely outsourced just about all their IT infrastructure outside of the country for a whole range of reasons including, you know, unstable political environments and all those sorts of things. There is a whole range of things from that extreme down to small, particularly business outcome or service outcome, solutions that can be put out to the market.

The CHAIR: Regarding cloud computing, you mention that many of your member organisations have experience, knowledge and case studies around the use of cloud-based solutions that showcase real saving and broader business outcomes. Are you able to provide the committee with some of those examples?

Mrs Robertson: Again, because we have such a broad member base, I am sure we can provide a whole lot of specific examples from a whole range of members. In my day job, I work for Microsoft, so we actually have a whole range of examples there but, you know, in the spirit of being here as the industry, I would say that yes we could certainly do that, but I would rather do it with a broader perspective from the industry. Again, lots of different examples, where you might put out just infrastructure, so you do not have to own any physical thing, you just manage the service, right up to having somebody else manage the whole service for you and deliver a service to constituents, as opposed to even having the government involved in that. I think you could have a range of different outcomes there.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Just picking up on that, I am not sure if we can ask that by way of follow-up. I think it would be useful for the committee if we could get those specific examples, because it just gives us something a bit more.

Mrs Robertson: Yes. I would be interested in a format for that: How much would you like to see? How much time do you have to see it? Or is it reading material? That sort of stuff, because, as I say, I can go back to the member base and say that you would like to see examples, and you might get 200 hours of presentation material. Do you know what I mean? I think that is a little bit—how do we tighten that a bit for you?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Maybe what might be of use—I will let you dictate to Michelle on this—is a list of perhaps projects and a brief summary at this point, because I think that would be at least something we could look at. Maybe one or two, you could write some more information on. I am aware that you have a day job and I do not want to create a burden of work—I assume it will be you.

Mrs Robertson: Perhaps we can go back to our members and ask them for the one or two examples that they showcase an opportunity for the government.

The CHAIR: I suppose, from my perspective, not necessarily the committee's, I would be looking for an example which demonstrates the economies of scale that are being able to be achieved. So it might be one of the companies out there that is on a very large scale that has gone into a cloud-based approach and the net benefits that they have seen and how they have been able to quantify what those benefits are from what they were previously doing. Does that make sense?

Mrs Robertson: Yes; absolutely. There are a lot of tools out there that help quantify that. I think that is probably useful for you as well—to understand what sort of measures are there and what is becoming almost an industry standard on the measures of the benefits or the measure of the value.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I would like to go further on this issue. You commented before about the on time, on budget philosophy but, of course, what people tell me about ICT is that it is not just about doing what you currently do, but doing what you could do. Government is not very good at thinking about what it might do next; it only ever thinks about what it is doing now. How then can government use procurement to change what we are doing rather than just do what we do?

Mrs Robertson: I agree. I think part of that is a matter of use cycle. We should be reviewing these projects; you do not just set and forget them over 10 or 20 years. You should be looking at: okay, when you respond, what is the potential new way after that, so everybody has the next step in mind, and/or have a review cycle where vendors can come back to you and say, "Look, this has changed" or "This is where the new world is" or "Hey, this new technology has come along, maybe we can do that". I think that is hard, because often that will send them back to the procurement table to change or to update or to do something different, and then it becomes this big cycle of, "We have to go back out to tender. We have to justify what we have already done." That makes it quite complex, and I think that is where the cost comes in for vendor companies as well. I would really welcome some thought about how we do that, but also how you ask for that up-front.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: On the question the member asked: is it possible for the association to filter what comes through to us? As an association, you might be aware of certain members that would have probably the best case examples in certain areas that you could then ask them to provide some information for the committee, rather than us receiving it all and having to filter it ourselves.

Mrs Robertson: I guess we do a lot of that anyway, trying to manage the feedback that we get.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: So that maybe what we receive is actually what you think are the best examples from your membership as to what that relates to.

Mrs Robertson: Yes; we can do that.

The CHAIR: I do not want you to feel burdened by asking everybody in your membership. We will take it on you as being the industry representatives to decide who you want to ask and how you want the information to come to us.

Mrs Robertson: Sure, and I would also be interested in your advice on the background about whether there is anything specific that you would like to see around healthcare or education. Health, education and policing obviously are high profile, but what else is there that you might see as being an opportunity? I mean, you hear it from constituents—I would like to almost be able to filter that way too; it would be interesting.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: In response to that, part of the committee's intent is to sort of look at it: if we had a blank canvas, what could we do? It is more about us being educated about some really good examples out there, as opposed to coming from the current position of what is the natural next step evolution. Maybe somebody is doing something out there that is a leap ahead that actually could be applied in Western Australia that would add a lot of benefit. From my perspective, anyway, it is more of a blank canvas approach. Obviously, it has to be able to be implemented in Western Australia, so there are those constraints, but in terms of what the technology is, I think a blank canvas would be good.

Mrs Robertson: That is a very good point because our members get caught up on what they think is possible in the guidelines of what they can see now.

Mr Gardner: A lot of our member base deal not only with the public sector, but also with the private sector—it is sometimes taking some of those lessons learnt on how we engage with the private sector. It comes back to a lot of the points we put back on page 4 around that early engagement with agencies and having almost normal transparency and having discussion prior to procurement so that there is a more educated public sector and more exchange of information. It is very much, in some instances, for our members, at arm's length and there are issues around being able to share information with some agencies and some processes because it may be seen to impinge on the potential probity or whatever it may have been prior to actually engaging in procurement. How do we educate that public sector around opportunities that are outside that space? A lot of what we are trying to do is share that information and best practice back through the OGCIO as a starting point and hopefully seeing that as almost a communication method back into the public sector.

Mrs Robertson: It is quite a challenge, especially for our SME businesses, to actually get an audience at any level. How do you actually get them a profile? How do you teach them that it is not all about the selling, it is about the outcome? There is that fine line of us trying to educate our members to add more value in how they showcase, but also how do they get access to that showcase too? Often it will be to CIOs or IT people when, in fact, it should be to business. Getting any traction with the higher end of the business layer in government is very difficult for most companies, especially SMEs.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It was put to me by somebody in the IT sector that one of problems in the public sector in WA is a lack of senior leadership. Is there anything you would want to add or comment on that idea that really if they do not have leadership at the high level and they know what it is they are trying to achieve, they are never going to do it?

[11.10 am]

Mrs Robertson: Yes, and I guess what I would do is I would preface it by saying it is not just public sector. It is changing quicker in commercial ranks because business necessity is driving it. But it is about seeing technology as an enabler to the business as opposed to technology. What I do find, and the conversations I have had with quite a significant portion of the DG level population, is that they do not want to know. They are not interested; they do not understand and, therefore, they do not want to know. That is starting to shift in varying degrees, but for me personally, it is about leadership, and that is where I think a lot of this—but also a lot of the opportunities—are being missed because there is no clear articulation of the business issue, tied to the service level outcome, tied to the political outcome that gets even explained to the people inside that organisation, let alone outside to the industry. I think there is a very real opportunity to get broader engagement. I guess what I would also say is even from a cabinet level down, we have the same problem. At a cabinet level often is the understanding, or maybe the nervousness to understand because everybody thinks that you need to be a technologist to talk to a technology company. That is actually part of our problem, because we talk bits and bytes a lot of the time and we often, as a collective, forget that we need to talk about business and talk about things in simple and layman's terms.

The CHAIR: Do you see value in the appointment of the Government Chief Information Officer to help address some of those leadership issues that you have alluded to?

Mrs Robertson: Absolutely, I do. I think there is a big portion of that which is around education and it is around how we bring the education and knowledge in a way that is easily translated to business level. I think that office is certainly trying to do that. We are working very closely with that office to do that. I think it is just a matter of how do we actually do that. I think, from the government's perspective, it is how they then ensure that their leaders across the agencies and across cabinet fundamentally understand the opportunity that technology can bring to enable not

only cost savings, but to enable services to enable coverage of this state—all those things to enable the disadvantaged. There are a thousand different things that we can enable. How do we bring that to each and every part of that? It is back to the point about leadership.

The CHAIR: You have highlighted the concept by building a model as a successful ICT initiative adopted by governments. Are you able to provide the committee with a bit more detail on the benefits of this model, perhaps by using an example of a government agency that has adopted this model for procurement?

Mrs Robertson: I guess with this model there is a fine line between what sort of project you are trying to do, so I think you need to think about the outcome that you are trying to achieve. If it is a significant outcome or a significant shift or a significant change that you are trying to do, then I think this is the model that actually works quite well. We have had a lot of discussions with Minister Marmion about this, with the office of the CIO, obviously, about how we actually get a forum or a workshop going where we can actually bring multiple layers of industry or multiple thinking levels of industry to a forum where we understand a business issue—a business issue is put on the table. We are not just having an IT discussion; we are having a business discussion with the leaders, with the finance people—with the people that are involved—to actually think about this more broadly and then to be able to go away and think, "Well, that business issue could be solved probably in 10 different ways. What are some of the creative ways we could do that?" I think the industry is very keen to do that. I have been involved in a number of government departments in varying degrees. I have done it at places like Landgate, where they are trying to solve a business issue. I have done it at Police, where they are trying to do that, and Health. A lot of these places are doing niche areas of that. I think you have probably had some opportunity there too. To be honest, in the commercial world, we do this a lot where we get brought to the table as part of the partnership to deliver a better service or to deliver a service that maybe is not there already, or to address an issue which is out there in the public domain. I think one of the ones we did was around domestic violence, particularly for women. How do you actually speed up that process, because, at the time, it was taking way too long to get women and kids off the street and into safe housing, and AVOs being put out—all those things. How do you get all that information and speed up the process to actually bring an outcome to the community? There are a lot of good ideas and good solutions when the business issue is what it is about. That is what that concept is about, and I think that particularly could be one thing that really drives an outcome.

The CHAIR: You have also mentioned the South Australian government's $100 million open expression of interest as an alternative method for procurement of innovative ICT solutions. Are you aware of how this initiative is tracking and if any ICT solutions have been identified through this approach or this process?

Mrs Robertson: I only know from a Microsoft perspective. Part of that was about moving to the cloud for their office technology solution and how do they actually do that instead of everybody doing their own individual thing. I know that is progressing quite well and it actually has some cost savings and some staffing savings and some infrastructure savings—those sorts of things. I do not know how it is going more broadly, but we can certainly get back to you with an update on where that is tracking. I know the industry took that very well from the point of view of having, I guess, some of the barriers removed to their thinking. Your broad canvas is a little bit more of an opportunity then because you can step back and think, "Well, I could put something out or I could pose a solution that is not necessarily so prescriptive that I have to be black or white."

The CHAIR: So that was probably an example, then, of some leadership being shown to engage with industry more broadly, moving outside of the common use arrangement–type framework.

Mrs Robertson: Yes, absolutely. There is a new—I assume you are aware—EOI that is out from the office of the government CIO at the moment, which is, I guess, part of a step towards that. I would like to see more of that.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: As members of Parliament, we get complaints from constituents about having to deal with different agencies and why does the constituent need to know where to go. Often, that is a very difficult problem for government to solve because you actually have the silos— it is not that you do not want them, but they are there—whereas an outsider might be able to see a solution. Do you think there is any capacity for government to say to the industry, "Come up. You might recognise a problem that we don't even know about because our silos have prevented us seeing the problem. You suggest solutions to us and we'll make a value decision on whether your solution works or not"? Do you think that is something that could be looked at?

Mrs Robertson: Absolutely.

Mr Gardner: I think that is aligned back with where South Australia was looking at it. It is almost unsolicited proposals of how we can look at doing things differently, rather than waiting for an agency to come out with a request for tender for a specific solution for an area. It is actually seeking that input and innovative thinking, which is probably a little bit different to the way that general engagement has been from procurement within the ICT space.

Mrs Robertson: I think that it has happened over time. I think we have all, probably, put up the opportunity to cross-pollinate, especially when there are systems that do potentially go across agencies. I know personally we have been involved where you end up with child protection and police and a whole range of agencies that tie into a specific business problem. Often there is a culture that says, "Well, we'll do the police bit" or "We'll do the child protection bit", but then that is not our jurisdiction always. So we end up with those issues too about there could be so much more but there often is not. A lot of our feedback to the office of the CIO is around that, about making sure that when you come to market for any solution, you think about the interfaces that you have to the other agencies, but also that we help you think about what you could do with that. I think the other thing is about data. There is so much data sitting in so many siloed agencies that could be helpful for other agencies when you are doing your research or you are trying to deliver a service. I think there is opportunity for us to come and be creative, but also there is some opportunity to show some leadership in taking a step back from, "This is my agency" to "We are the government." I think that the industry would help, has tried to help, and could potentially help.

The CHAIR: I have concluded my series of questions; I am going to open it up to the committee to dig a bit deeper, if they would like to.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: In relation to that last statement, do you believe that the government has done that first important step in terms of the open data policy—creating a single warehouse for data? Mind you, I just learnt that it is being quite selective. It is not about quantity; it is about quality of data that goes into that.

Mr Gardner: It is a fantastic first step. I think WA was probably a number of steps behind a number of other states, so it is great to see WA step up from that perspective. Obviously, from a geographic and spatial perspective, there has been data sharing for a number of years within the state. It is very encouraging to see it being more broadly expanded out. That is one of those opportunities, especially around access to open data, which actually can help drive innovation. It can actually drive the development of new industries and organisations, and opportunities for new businesses and potential innovations and start-ups within the state. That is something that has probably been lacking, so that is definitely a tick from the industry's perspective. How much access to information is there? Obviously, there is always that challenge, when you have data, of exposing it to the public or making that accessible. I guess one of those questions is if there is a strong reticence not to expose the information because some of it may not be 100 per cent. It all needs to have that caveat in regards to the quality of that data. Opening that data up to the public may actually also enable feedback to identify errors that can actually help improve the quality of the public sector's data. Hopefully, that can then contribute to better-informed decision-making. At the

end of the day, you are using information to actually make decisions on a daily basis, so if anything is going to help improve that process —

[11.20 am]

Mrs Robertson: If I could just add to that, there is some work required by the government to look at the State Records Act and to look at the legalities of legislation as to where data should be, could be, and what can be shared. I guess what we have found is that, firstly, there are differing stories between who you are talking to, whether it is a majors level or whether it is State Records or whatever. What I do find is that their understanding or their line about where data is, what data it is, whatever, is quite dated. I think the world is moving so fast that we need to actually stop, think about what is really possible and what data is it and how confidential is it. What is it about? We can be quite parochial as a state anyway, and even as a country, but when it comes down to what is the classification of data and why is it there, I think that will open up, firstly, a load of opportunity; secondly, a lot of research; thirdly, a lot of outcome; and, fourthly, a lot of opportunity for the industry to help. If you could actually work on that, it would be a game changer. We find that in the commercial world a lot where even the big companies like BHP have started to understand that everything that they thought was sacred is not as sacred as they thought, and by actually using that data they find trends, they find business opportunities, they find a whole range of things. I think that is something the government should consider.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: Just to clarify that, how are you saying that the open data policy can be improved?

Mrs Robertson: The policy itself is quite good and I think it is a game changer. It is a little about being a bit more risk aware of where they should push that policy to and what data should be in there. It does not have to be perfect data, it does not have to be tight data. It needs to be thought about what else could be in there. I worry that we will be so cautious about putting very specific data that we will not actually get the bigger opportunity. I think you need to go back to, as I said, State Records and State Solicitor's to understand what else could go in there and why, and also make sure that agencies do know that they can put data out there. If it is not as clean as it would like it to be, that is okay; we can deal with that because we do deal with that, but the caveat system of, "It might not be the world's cleanest data", or, "It might not be in a format that everybody likes, but what could you do with it?", I think that is your opportunity. Thinking a bit more broadly with a little bit of a risk-averse nature would be your opportunity there.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: My final question along this line is: is there a jurisdiction that does do that well?

Mrs Robertson: I think they are all doing it differently. They are all grappling with what to do. I do not know that anybody specifically in this country is doing it well, except to know that they are all doing it. They are all —

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: Not necessarily restricted to this country —

Mrs Robertson: I have it under consideration.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: — are you aware of any jurisdictions?

Mrs Robertson: I think the US does a lot more of it. The UK quite often does a lot of it, and sharing it, and are quite willing to put it out there to trial it. Those GovHack-type things, they are the things that actually do give up to these opportunities. If we did more of that, even if we took a topic or a business issue and then looked at where all the data possible was, and then, "Why can't you have it?" would be somewhere to go on that. I think that really opens up a broad range of opportunity for everybody.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: We are obviously focusing on making sure the taxpayers get value out of the activity and the value is not just about cash value, but as a broader community. I suppose the

other thing is about the question of local engagement in industry development. Does the association have anything to comment about in terms of that? If we are going to a smaller number of larger contracts, is there a problem with making sure we have got a local capacity in the IT sector?

Mrs Robertson: Not at all. I guess I have always been a strong believer in local content for tenders. Most of us partner with local vendors; we like to help them out. A lot of creativity will come from those smaller, more agile companies. I think the opportunity for mobile technology is for app development. It can come from not just local organisations, but from the general public. We find that they are the ones who want to do crowd sourcing, they are the ones who will give you feedback on things, and they are the ones who will tell you where potholes are in the road and report it back to Main Roads. Your opportunity to harness that is significant. I guess, as an industry association, we are now looking at broadening our membership base to include start-up organisations and development organisations that have a whole raft of individuals who are part of the organisation—having them as a member to actually get broader access to that. I think we can help engage that. The government needs to step a bit back from trying to lock them down on all the terms and conditions of procurement because it is harder for them to actually do that. They need to come through multiple layers of other vendors to even get to have somebody like Microsoft or anybody else back them, from a risk liability point of view, to put something on the table that is interesting. But that is another significant opportunity because there are some really smart people out there.

I would also say to you that that is an opportunity to engage the employment challenges we have around changing industry sectors. When the mining sector is down again, really smart engineering-type people can very easily turn a hand to that. How do we encourage them to actually think about developing apps or to come and work with a small business to bring some business knowledge to it? There are lots of opportunities around that too, so I would like to work out how we do that better.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: The economics and industry committee is doing an inquiry at the moment on innovation, so it is in that space. If you are not aware of that, it would be good for you —

Mrs Robertson: We are currently responding to that too.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: Yes; great. Our inquiry is about world's best practice ICT for governments. We have heard a bit from the government perspective. Falling out of that were some key areas about a one-stop shop or a single portal around the electronic identity management cloud–based services and interoperability and common platforms. You might want to take this on notice, but from your association's perspective and from the private sector perspective I am quite interested to hear from you about world's best practice that you are aware of in those areas. Are there examples that you are aware of that you think would be worthwhile for the Western Australian government, through this committee, to consider as an option for implementation in Western Australia?

Mrs Robertson: It probably is better to take it on notice to get a broader view. From our identity perspective, there has been a lot of work done around having even a government staff identity that translates to any department that you are working with so you do not drop your agency name or whatever. How do you have this more generic, more agile opportunity to be the identity? Further to that, how do we get our citizens to have an identity so that when they do go to one agency and another, they can still be the same person and somehow have a correlation? A lot of work is being done on that. Again, it is a cultural issue of being accepted. The mood out there in the consumerisation of IT down to a phone, most people want ease of use; they want that single sign-on to everything. That is coming, and it is available in a lot of places. I think it is just the adoption of it, and again understanding the risk of it, and the real risk of it, and how big a risk that is for the ease of access, ease of use on the mobility side is really the fundamental around that. There is a lot of work there. There are a lot of governments, and, indeed, a lot of commercial companies that have moved that way, not necessarily wanting to own the identity piece so tightly that it is our government identity, but putting it there, going, "These are our identities. This is how you get to us

and this is how we filter around that." There is some stuff we can give you on that. A lot of our members can give you some papers on that as well.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: One final question: I was interested in your comment about the UK, I think it was, with smaller projects, the 20-week limit. It is referred to on page 14. I have always been told to avoid the big bang in IT procurement because they always go wrong. Is that really the view? On the basis that government rarely knows what it actually wants, it therefore is usually not asking for what it needs.

Mrs Robertson: I think your bigger statement is the fact that it is very easy to think you know what you want and go out with a big bang, and often it does not translate that way. To be honest, often it is a cultural issue where you go and mandate something, and agencies all of a sudden have to play that game, and they do not want to do it, so they fight against it and put barriers up and all those things; therefore, it is not successful. I think that 20-week idea was around the fact that there is a lot of opportunity to do some business-real change, to do some business-real agility, to do some business-real tweaking to processes that could have significant cost impacts to you, but also significant productivity gains. Sometimes, particularly in our SME world, they are the opportunities that are just sitting there ready to be done, and especially if you can then translate that across agencies. If you could find an application that fixes an issue with an agency that is a fundamental issue for constituents, that might be simplified down to a point of part of the solution and then translated across other agencies, and if we could have some leadership around those, I think there is a huge opportunity. Again, it is really about getting quite clear about what are those issues and/or not thinking that they are so small that we should not worry about them; we should be thinking big. I think we miss those opportunities. Process is probably a significant one. The process flow stuff about putting a form in or getting a grant application approved or tracking a grant application across multiple agencies, some of our members are working on, and have worked on, those things and they get significant impact, but they do not necessarily float to the top because they are not fancy because it is a process. I think we underestimate that in so many ways. If we were to do those types of projects, even if we put in a bucket of all those little projects that everybody thinks could be good and/or ask constituents what they would like to see—they would like to be able to do all their licensing in one place—those types of questions I think you could get answers to quite quickly, and those 20 weeks, or whatever it might be, are an opportunity to set a bar on our side to say, "We're not looking for a big bang opportunity. We know you can give us a $20 million solution, but, at the end of the day, what we are looking for is something that will help the process of somebody trying to get access to something for these reasons", or an outcome you are trying to get. It is about how you position it, how you think about it and how collectively, as a leadership team, you prioritise it, is the answer to that.

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

Hearing concluded at 11.33 am

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