

CORRECTED VERSION

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into 2003–04 budget estimates

Melbourne – 30 May 2003

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Mr R. Hulls, Minister for Industrial Relations;

Mr P. Harmsworth, Secretary; and

Mr P. Lorraine, Executive Director, Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development.

The CHAIR — I declare opening the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings on the budget estimates for the industrial relations, Workcover and Attorney-General's portfolios. I welcome the Honourable Rob Hulls, Minister for Industrial Relations; Mr Peter Harmsworth, Secretary of the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development; Mr Paul Lorraine, Executive Director, Industrial Relations Victoria; departmental officers; members of the public; Hansard; and media.

All evidence taken by this committee is taken under the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act and is protected from judicial review. However, any comments made outside the precincts of the hearing are not protected by parliamentary privilege. All evidence given today is being recorded. Witnesses will be provided with proof versions of the transcript early next week. Before we proceed I ask that all mobile phones be turned off and pagers turned to silent.

Minister, do you intend to do an overhead presentation of the more complex parts — —

Hr HULLS — Not an overhead. We just going to hand stuff out.

The CHAIR — All right, excellent. So we will ask you to then give a brief presentation of the handout.

Hr HULLS — Thank you. It is great to be here on a Friday afternoon — —

Mr FORWOOD — We been here all week!

Hr HULLS — Particularly in relation to the new portfolios that I have, industrial relations and Workcover. At the moment we are here for industrial relations. I thought I would just briefly talk through these slides.

The CHAIR — Slides 1 and 2 we have seen plenty of times.

Hr HULLS — Have you? So we will not touch on them. Slide 3 deals with the budget. It makes it pretty clear that the overall budget for Industrial Relations Victoria in 2003–04 is \$11.4 million — a slight decrease of about 4.2 per cent on the previous year. This funding will ensure that the objectives of IRV can be carried out, but also there is a new initiative on better work and family balance at a cost of \$2 million over four years.

I guess the main drivers for IRV are the implementing of this new better work and family balance; and creating an environment of fair employment conditions in this state, including our key legislative reforms — outworkers, child employment and the federal awards unitary system. It will also promote cooperative workplaces, providing the government with key advice in relation to a range of areas including the building royal commission and also promoting the Partners at Work program.

The next slide is about policy objectives, and is pretty straightforward so I will not go into any detail in relation to them. The following slide is on achievements and, again, they are fairly straightforward. There has been a fair amount happening in industrial relations in Victoria over the last short period, including as you can see administering the Partners at Work grants and the Premier's awards, and in particular the legislation, the Federal Awards (Uniform System) Bill and also the outworkers legislation. We have represented the state before the Australian Industrial Relations Commission in a number of test cases; that is fairly straightforward.

The following slide is about initiatives for 2003–04. Again it is mainly the legislative agenda and implementation of our new initiative of better work and family balance. It also shows that we are examining the operation of labour hire. I announced a review of labour hire just recently and I think that will commence later in the year. There is also our policy of long service leave. The policy is about trying to establish national consistency of long service leave. The slide speaks for itself.

The final slide sums it all up, really. We will work towards implementing our industrial relations policies of fair and more cooperative workplaces, helping to attract businesses to Victoria and helping to make businesses more productive.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much. My first question goes to budget paper 3 where in your industrial relations portfolio you refer to performance measures for industrial relations policy, specifically policy advice provided by IRV. Can you give the committee some examples of what policy initiatives the government is developing to ensure cultural change in the building and construction industry?

Hr HULLS — Yes. This document here is the much-touted 10-point plan that I have spoken about on numerous occasions. I think it is true to say that the royal commission into the building industry did recognise the need for cultural change in the building sector. I guess you did not really need to be a Rhodes scholar or Einstein to know that there needs to be cultural change. I do not think we particularly needed a \$60 million royal commission to come to that conclusion.

I guess from the businesses and the workers in the building sector that I have spoken to, they all realise there has got to be a better way of conducting industrial relations in Victoria. They make it clear — and I make it pretty clear to this committee too, as I have done in the Parliament — that we need to change the philosophy that exists under the Workplace Relations Act that actually proscribes strikes and lockouts as the ways to manage industrial relations. We think there is a better way, and that philosophy has to be changed; but we have to convince Tony Abbott, the federal minister, that that is the case.

I have to say that I think he has been somewhat isolated and fighting his own class war really when it comes to industrial relations. I have been telling him for quite some time that the 10-point plan is actually the way to go about changing the culture of industrial relations. I presented it to him personally on at least one occasion — on a number of occasions actually — and I am still waiting to hear specifically what his views are in relation to it.

But, if adopted, I believe it will change the culture of strikes and lockouts as a way of resolving industrial disputes. It proposes that dialogue is the best way to resolve disputes; and where discussions actually go off the rails this plan gives a central role to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission and would actually allow the commission to intervene to get the parties back on track.

We have taken the lead nation wide in relation to this. This 10-point plan, while it does not necessarily purport to have all the answers, is a start. All other states have now got on board. There is a working party comprising all states and territories to further advance this 10-point plan. They are using this as a starting point. They intend to flesh out this plan with a view to seeking urgent amendments to the federal Workplace Relations Act. I am keen for Tony Abbott to participate in this. Otherwise, as I have said before, it is a real wasted opportunity, because we now have all states lining up and agreeing that there needs to be a change of culture — and they want to work together to achieve that outcome.

Mr FORWOOD — My quick supplementary question is: as part of that cultural change do you think we could see an end to no ticket, no start?

Mr HULLS — The fact is that I have made it very clear that any inappropriate — that is, any illegal — activity on work sites, whether it be thuggery or any other illegal activity, should not be tolerated — and you would expect me to say that not just as IR minister but as Attorney-General. But we all know also that disputes are always resolved. Every dispute is resolved, but it is a matter of whether it is resolved with goodwill or bad blood. I think unfortunately the current Workplace Relations Act says there is only one way or two ways to resolve disputes — strikes on one hand or lockouts on the other. It is just not the way to conduct a modern, 21st-century industry relations system.

Mr CLARK — You have told us what you have urged the federal minister to do. As you know, Victoria is probably the worst or second-worst state in the nation with regard to misconduct in the building industry. What are you proposing to do as a state minister and have your department do as a state department to tackle these issues?

Mr HULLS — As I said, I have made it pretty clear that illegal activity should not be tolerated but what Tony Abbott is proposing is setting up, if you like, a building industry task force or police force that proposes at the moment — and we have yet to see the fine detail — in effect to act as his private group of storm-troopers. That is not how you resolve disputes.

What we have done in this state is set up a Building Industry Consultative Council, a bit like the Manufacturing Industry Consultative Council, which is a tripartite group made up of all stakeholders that are looking — and I am actually refocusing that group — at long-term strategic objectives for the building industry. That includes things like apprenticeships and training of people in the building industry. If you look at the average age, for instance, of people working in the building sector off the top of my head I think it is well over 50. You have to rejuvenate and regenerate that industry.

Part of changing that culture is getting people involved in the sector, which is what the Building Industry Consultative Council is all about. We have given it direction to have a look at some of these long-term needs of the

building sector, but what I do not intend to do is set up my own private police force here in Victoria to act as storm-troopers running around on building sites. That does not work. What you do need is cooperation and collaboration with the states, and you also need to stop this culture of strikes and lockouts.

Mr CLARK — You have as one of your performance measures at page 189 of budget paper 3 a measure of Victoria representing major industrial relations cases. You report as actuals and targets 100 per cent across all four items measured. On the case relating to OMV, the gas plant being constructed down near Bass Strait, I understand that Victoria did not intervene in that case. Do you regard that as a major industrial case given its significance for the Victorian gas industry? If so, why did Victoria not intervene in that case?

Mr HULLS — In relation firstly to intervention, what this is talking about in effect is major test cases including cases in relation to wages, working conditions and the like, but you have asked specifically as I understand it about OMV?

Mr CLARK — Yes.

Mr HULLS — In relation to the OMV matter, if you can bear with me — I am taking advice from the head of industrial relations about the nature of the dispute — —

Mr CLARK — It was a dispute where, as I understand it, three unions boycotted the project as it was nearing completion. It was a project that would have supplied about 10 per cent of Victoria's natural gas supplies and therefore, in light of Longford, is quite important strategically for Victoria. My understanding is that you did not intervene at all in that case, as you made known. Eventually it resulted in federal involvement and fines being imposed by the ACCC on the unions involved.

Mr HULLS — I will take that on notice in relation to the actual dispute. I am advised it was a dispute that emanated quite some time ago, over 12 months ago.

Mr CLARK — Around October or November last year.

Mr HULLS — I will simply take that on notice and get back to you in relation to the specifics of that particular dispute.

Mr FORWOOD — I make the point that it seems strange to me that the state would intervene in Saizeriya and not intervene in OMV. OMV was a \$120 million investment. How do you decide which ones you intervene in and which ones you do not? I accept the argument about major test cases, but Saizeriya was not a major test case; that was a problem overnight.

Mr HULLS — You have to understand, as I am sure you do, that the industrial relations regime in Victoria is governed by the federal legislation. As a result the levers we have in Victoria are not the same legislative levers that other states have, because other states have their own industrial relations regimes, their own industrial relations legislation. But that does not preclude the state government from getting involved as a facilitator and as a mediator when it is appropriate to do so. We have done that on a number of occasions, and I have personally spoken to participants in industrial relations matters on some occasions with a view to ascertaining the nature of a particular matter with a view to getting a first-hand understanding of the particular dispute. But in relation to the particular matter that has been asked by Mr Clark, I will take that on notice and get back to you.

Ms ROMANES — Minister, budget paper 2 at page 227 outlines a commitment of \$2 million over four years for better work and family balance output initiatives. Could you outline to the committee what particular initiatives are being considered as part of that program. It is a program that has been well received in the community by women and various women's groups, and I am sure by many men's groups. Could you tell us a lot more about the detail of it?

Mr HULLS — The better work family balance program comes under the bailiwick of IRV. I should say at the outset — and I think we all realise this, particularly me with a young son at the moment — gone are the days when you had a full-time male breadwinner and a female homemaker. Those days are long gone. Mr Forwood is smiling, but the fact is they are gone and today we certainly have many more fathers who want to spend time with their kids as they grow up; we have mothers launching careers; and we have more single parents who often have to balance work on the one hand and child care on the other. We also have more part-time and casual employment and less permanent full-time employment. The common factor is juggling work and child-care commitments.

The other side of that equation is that we have employers who want to keep the skills that their employees have acquired over a period of time. Many employees understand that a flexible approach to employment which acknowledges the demands of work-life balance is good for their business. The question is how you go about implementing that.

The government believes it has a role to encourage that. We intend using these funds to research and promote those employment practices that have delivered for both business and employees here, in other states and overseas. We want employers to benefit from the successes of other employers and in order to promote success stories we are looking at having a work-life balance award which will be part of the Premier's awards, and pilot projects which will assist workers to balance their work and family commitments. They will be funded and successful initiatives will be promoted to other businesses.

Already I have had a look, on a preliminary basis, at what is happening in the UK. In the UK they have recently legislated in relation to work-family balance whereby they have made it pretty clear that if so requested an employer must give consideration to flexible work hours for employees who request it on a bona fide basis for child-care arrangements. The UK legislation does not go a lot further than that, but a huge amount of consultation took place over the past 12 months and the Blair government has just introduced this legislation. My preliminary reading of it suggests that it is now legislated that if a reasonable request is made by an employee for appropriately flexible working hours, there is an obligation on the employer to consider that. Now, as I said, part of these funds will be used to look at what is happening around the world and I suspect there will be a fairly tight focus on that type of legislation.

Mr FORWOOD — How do you decide what is fair and what is not? Do you have a tribunal?

Mr HULLS — In the UK it is basically if an agreement cannot be reached under the legislation it is arbitrated and it would go off to something like the AIRC. I have only had a preliminary look at what is happening in the UK, but I think we do have to look at all options. If we are fair dinkum about this we have to look at the alternatives that exist around the world and the UK has just introduced this legislation in the past few months, as I understand, after enormous consultation. But it has legislated and if there is a dispute it would go off to an AIRC-type tribunal.

Mr FORWOOD — I refer you to the output group on page 189 of budget paper 3 which is the 'key advice' one. I note that the 2 May issue 1396 of *Workforce* states:

NUW assistant general secretary, Lloyd Freeburn, has been seconded to Victorian minister for sport Justin Madden's office for six months as an advisor. NUW general secretary, Greg Sword, said Madden faces a number of IR issues in the lead-up to the 2006 Commonwealth Games.

I wonder if you can explain to the committee the relationship between IRV and yourself as the minister responsible for industrial relations and the role Mr Freeburn will play in IR matters advising the Minister for Commonwealth Games.

Mr HULLS — I am the Minister for Industrial Relations — just so there is no demarcation dispute — because Justin will no doubt read this transcript and he is quite clearly the Minister for Commonwealth Games. Obviously the government has adopted a fairly comprehensive industrial relations strategy for the 2006 games. The industrial relations strategy aims to contribute to the achievement of on-time and on-budget objectives of the games building and construction program. It is a massive program, as you would understand. We also want the unimpeded delivery of all the requisite services to the games events. The strategy has been developed by Industrial Relations Victoria working closely in conjunction with the Office of the Commonwealth Games and the M2006 organising committee as well as other relevant stakeholders. Again this reflects our partnership approach to industrial relations. IRV is working with the Commonwealth Games coordination unit to pursue a comprehensive IR strategy. There are two components: a strategy for the 2006 games building and construction program; and a distinctive games service delivery strategy. You have asked me what the specific role of Lloyd Freeburn is — —

Mr FORWOOD — What the relationship is.

Mr HULLS — Well, you say the relationship — the relationship between IRV and the Commonwealth Games is a collaborative one. IRV has worked with the Commonwealth Games coordination unit to put in an overarching IR strategy for the games.

Mr FORWOOD — How much of the output group, last year and this year, relates to the development and implementation of the strategy? What is the total cost of it?

Mr HULLS — I am advised that it is not separately costed; it is embedded in the cost of the output group. It is a core activity.

Mr DONNELLAN — I refer you to page 227 of budget paper 2, which provides for \$2.3 million in the 2003–04 year for the government’s industrial relations legislation agenda. How will the government’s legislation agenda address the needs of Victorian workers?

Mr HULLS — We have three pretty important legislative initiatives. You are right — we have set aside \$2.3 million for that. The first is the outworkers bill and we believe that will provide outworkers with decent wages and conditions and, just as importantly, an effective means of enforcing those initiatives. I am sure many, most, all members of this committee would know the appalling wages that some outworkers earn — as low as \$3.60 an hour. Even when outworkers are entitled to decent terms and conditions their employment arrangements often make it very difficult for them to recover their entitlements. There is the corporate veil, a multitude of supply chain contracts, and they make it very difficult to ascertain who the actual employer is, and therefore who should be paying the entitlements. So the bill puts in place a mechanism to provide entitlements from the parent employer or from the principal contractor. From the \$2.3 million there will be funding for three officers, and an information campaign to help employers and outworkers understand their rights and obligations under the legislation.

The second piece of legislation is the federal award uniform system or FAUS bill. I am pleased to say that both employers and unions agree that we have the balance right with this legislation. It has now passed through both houses of Parliament. It will do away with the previous two-tiered system of employment here in Victoria — one system for the ‘haves’ and one for the ‘have-nots’. If you were in the land of the ‘haves’ you were covered by the federal award system, with 20 allowable matters; if you were in the land of the ‘have-nots’, there were five pretty ordinary conditions.

In February this year I met with Tony Abbott about whether or not he was prepared to accept a reference in relation to the FAUS bill, and he gave in-principle approval. Then two weeks ago he wrote to me confirming his in-principle support, but with what I believe to be an unacceptable qualification, and that is that he wants an amendment to the FAUS bill so that the outworkers bill will then become ineffective. I have said, ‘That is just not good enough. We made a commitment in relation to outworkers and we will follow through on that’.

Obviously we will not let the federal government dictate to us what our state agenda will be, so my department has now entered into what I call the last phase of discussions with Tony Abbott over this matter, to try and get him to see reason. If he fails to accept the reference, the second part of the bill will come into force and those awards will be administered by VCAT. Having met with employers, I know they have made it clear that they do not want that to occur. They would far prefer a truly unitary system of industrial relations, and from the state government’s point of view we have advocated a truly unitary system, but we cannot accept unacceptable conditions, obviously. The clock is ticking in that regard.

The final bill is the child employment bill which will help ensure that kids in Victoria who work are appropriately protected, and their work experience is both positive and beneficial. It will also eliminate child exploitation. That is what that output measure is.

Mr DONNELLAN — Just a quick supplementary question for clarification, when you said that the federal minister requested amendment to our outworkers bill, what was the — —

Mr HULLS — He was actually requesting an amendment to the FAUS bill.

Mr FORWOOD — To take out the amendment that we put in.

Mr HULLS — Yes. Under our FAUS bill, he accepts the reference and as a result those 350 000 schedule 1A workers will come under the federal arrangements, and they will have the 20 allowable matters.

We have also introduced an outworkers bill which says that they are entitled to the 20 allowable matters; but in addition we have ensured that outworkers can enforce their conditions by searching up the supply chain in relation to who their real employer is. Therefore we have a deeming provision in the bill where certain people up the supply chain are deemed to be the employer, and outworkers are deemed to be the employee. What Mr Abbott is saying is that he will only accept the reference as long as the FAUS bill does not relate to outworkers and those deeming provisions, which will basically make our outworker bill unworkable. It is fairly complicated, but we have said, ‘No way. Accept the reference holus bolus or we will go down the VCAT line’.

Mr CLARK — In your strategic initiatives for 2003–04, in one of the slides you listed one of the objectives as developing strategies for longer-term public sector wage negotiations. Can you tell the committee whether you are confident that public sector wages growth can be kept within budget sector estimates over the forward estimates period? And, if so, how do you propose to achieve that?

Mr HULLS — It is a good question. Am I confident? I am always confident, but in our first term public sector agencies were faced with a pretty difficult industrial relations environment in key sectors; and these included public servants, nurses, police and teachers. We needed to manage demands that built up under the previous government, while continuing to be fiscally responsible, and the wages departmental funding policy that will be applied in 2003–04 — and you have know doubt had the Treasurer before you talking on this matter — is based on the maintenance of real wages with direct productivity returns and/or tangible service delivery improvements required to fund increases above inflation; but I am sure the Treasurer has already told you that.

We have set up a structure within government that obviously involves Industrial Relations Victoria and myself as industrial relations minister and a number of other key ministers and departments to get involved in the negotiations, but from my point of view the trick or the most responsible way to enter into negotiations is to do it early. What has happened in the past is that there were enormous expectations built up. The public sector — nurses, police and teachers — were of the view that when we came to government morale had to be restored and there was a fair amount of making up to do, so they were difficult negotiations, but the next round can be conducted on the basis of good faith. The objectives are certainly achievable, but you have to start these negotiations early. I have stressed with all departments that there has to be open and frank negotiations in relation to these matters at the earliest possible opportunity.

Mr MERLINO — I refer you to page 189 of budget paper 3 and the provision of policy and advice by IRV. How will the recently announced labour hire parliamentary inquiry contribute to policy development in this performance measure?

Mr HULLS — In relation to labour hire we would all understand that it has grown fairly rapidly over the last 10 years. We are constantly being told, and I certainly am as IR minister, that the nature of working is changing, and labour hire is certainly part of that phenomenon. I believe this inquiry is very important. It will provide a snapshot of the industry. It will be the first detailed survey of labour hire ever conducted in Victoria, and with the current debate — and this gets back to Glenyys's question earlier — of getting work-life balance right, we are all concerned about whether labour hire employment arrangements affect the ability of employees to get that balance right. This inquiry will provide very important, valuable information on the working arrangements in the labour hire industry.

It is also a health check on the industry to ensure that occupational health and safety and industrial relations legislation have kept up with the use of labour hire. I have spoken already with a number of substantial labour hire companies and they welcome the review and believe the review provides an opportunity to showcase the impressive growth of their industry; but they also believe the review may identify practices of a small minority that bring the industry into disrepute. The review will certainly see if there are cowboys out there who are using labour hire to actually undermine employment conditions and occupational health and safety standards, so we think it is a pretty important review and, as I said, it has been welcomed by certainly some of the labour hire firms.

Mr FORWOOD — On page 8 of the department's response, it talks about the Victorian workplace survey on high performance practices in key industries. It says that ASSIRT has been in the marketplace doing 800 surveys in workplaces and households and that three reports have been completed. I wondered what is the cost of this project? I presume it is also tied in with the regional high performance networks seminars that were held. I wonder if you could tell us how much money has been spent on this program, how much will be spent on it, are the reports now available, and what is the aim of the exercise?

Mr HULLS — In relation to the survey, the first stage of the project, which was data collection and initial reports, has been completed, and the surveys identify working conditions, wages, human resource management philosophies and practices, organisational effectiveness and performance of Victorian workplaces. The data will be used in the future, I guess, to promote cooperative high performance workplaces. The data is still being evaluated. The results are being incorporated in the development of a number of key policies in areas such as work and family policy, low-paid work force in Victoria, and ways to improve the operation of the Workplace Relations Act, job insecurity, and also improving industrial relations in key industries, promoting innovative and cooperative workplace practices in IR, and also young people at work. I can certainly give you some material in relation to key findings of the report. I do not know if you want me to go through them now.

Mr FORWOOD — No.

Mr HULLS — But I am happy to give you that.

Mr FORWOOD — That would be great.

Mr HULLS — In relation to the actual cost of the report, I am told that the full cost — just bear with me as I do not want to get this wrong, and I will confirm this later — of the consultancy involved was \$221 812 and that \$21 812 of that was during 2002–03, but I will ensure that figure that I have just been advised about is right, and I will also get to you some of the findings of the report as well.

Mr FORWOOD — Thank you.

The CHAIR — Minister, I refer you to BP3, page 189, in relation to policy advice provided by IRV. What initiatives has the government taken in relation to development of a national approach to long service leave?

Mr HULLS — This was one of our commitments. Long service leave is an entitlement that is enjoyed by most Australian workers. Victorian private sector employees are generally entitled to 13 weeks leave, I think, after 15 years continuous service with one employer. Each state and territory has different arrangements for long service leave and, as I have said earlier, Victoria does support a unitary industrial relations system, and consistent with this we believe there are advantages in having a uniform, national long service leave standard.

Currently Victorian employees, along with those in Western Australia, have an entitlement to long service leave that is actually inferior to other states, and the current Victorian Long Service Leave Act is, some would say, not clearly framed and does cause some confusion for both employers and employees — for example, the entitlements of seasonal and casual employees are not clearly spelt out in the legislation, so at the last Workplace Relations Ministers Council, which was held on 28 March in Adelaide, Victoria undertook to develop a paper regarding possible national minimum long service leave standards for further consideration. I understand since that meeting there has been a meeting of state and territory departmental officers and consultation is continuing at a departmental level. So we are more than happy to take a lead on a national agenda in relation to this matter, and work is currently been done and, as I said, it was a commitment we gave to have a look at national consistency on long service.

Mr CLARK — You have a budget performance measure at page 188 of BP3 of client satisfaction. You have set for both of those client satisfaction measures a target of 90 per cent for the forthcoming year with no past measures. First of all, can you provide to the committee past measures that are marked as ‘nm’ in the budget papers and, secondly, given the number of industrial relations issues that have flared in Victoria in recent times, and I cite by way of example Saizeriya and the admission by the government that there had been inappropriate conduct in relation to Saizeriya, and of course the involvement of Mr Pallas as the Premier’s chief of staff in that, what arrangements have you put in place to ensure that there is not a repeat of experiences such as what happened at Saizeriya?

Mr HULLS — Firstly, in relation to the measure that you spoke about, that measure is a new output measure. The department has reviewed all of its outputs and found that some of the measures were not effective and they have been modified to emphasise results instead of just measuring activity. As to why I believe the new output measures more accurately reflect what IRV delivers and what its clients expect of it, can I say that the service measures seem to provide accessible and meaningful information and advice and also assistance to all relevant stakeholders.

You also mentioned Saizeriya. Can I simply say in general terms that as a government we will continue to support investment in this state — there is no question or doubt about that — and we have continually supported Saizeriya’s investment in its food processing plant at Melton and, as you would know, a range of factors have contributed to the delay in relation to this project. Can I say that despite accusations to the contrary, I have been advised that no financial assistance has been given to Saizeriya. Any payment is strictly conditional on the company meeting investment and employment measures. Now there have been allegations made in the past that the government has paid substantial amounts. I am advised quite clearly that no financial assistance has been given by the government to Saizeriya and any payment is obviously strictly conditional.

I repeat that in relation to industrial relations it is crucial that there be cooperation and collaboration rather than confrontation, but as a government we will continue to provide the best possible advice in relation to attracting investment in this state.

Mr CLARK — I think the guts of my question was that even the government has agreed that Saizeriya has not been a shining example of good IR practice. What measures have you put in place to ensure that things are handled better in future?

Mr HULLS — I have made it clear that as Minister for Industrial Relations I will work towards and intend to ensure that Industrial Relations Victoria works towards cooperative and collaborative industrial relations in Victoria. You are probably aware that a review has been conducted in relation to IRV to ensure that there is the required expertise, particularly for the new era now that the federal awards (uniform system) and outworkers (improved protection) bills have been passed. The 10-point plan having been delivered, I want to ensure that IRV has the appropriate expertise to deliver on our industrial relations agenda. That review has been completed. I suspect there will be some decisions made in relation to that in the not-too-distant future to ensure that IRV continues to have a very important role to play in industrial relations in this state.

Mr FORWOOD — Spoken just like Monica Gould!

The CHAIR — Thank you, Minister. That concludes the section on your industrial relations portfolio. I thank all witnesses.

Witnesses withdrew.