ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Improving Access to Victorian Public Sector Information and Data

Melbourne — 27 November 2008

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Ms Y. Thompson, Manager, Strategic Data Development, Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority.

The CHAIR — Welcome to the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee, which is doing an Inquiry into Improving Access to Victorian Public Sector Information and Data. Could you please tell us your full name, whether you are appearing in a professional or a personal capacity, and if you are appearing in a professional capacity, your position within the organisation and the address.

Ms THOMPSON — My name is Yvonne Thompson. I am appearing on behalf of ESTA — that is the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority, Victoria — in my capacity as Manager, Strategic Data Development for ESTA. I have been in that position for three years. The address of ESTA is level 6, 215 Spring Street, Melbourne. Thank you.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much. We will be providing you with copies of the Hansard transcript in about a fortnight, and whilst you are here you are on the record. You have roughly 45 minutes for whatever you wish to say plus questions.

Ms THOMPSON — All right. I have distributed copies of — I am sorry to say — a fairly rapidly thrown together dossier. It is a bit of a dog's dinner, but it reflects in essence eight years of frustration in terms of access to information on behalf of the emergency services in various roles that I have had over that period, first with the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner in the Department of Justice, starting in 2000. I was there for a number of years, which included a secondment to DSE in the spatial information infrastructure area, and then I came to ESTA. Over that eight-year period I have felt like it is groundhog day in terms of the work that I have been doing and been involved in around access, most particularly to spatial data.

The difference now, and I think it is a difference, is that on the issues around spatial data I have a very clear platform from which to operate within ESTA, and that is because of ESTA's statutory obligations for emergency call taking and dispatch, which are very clearly defined, as is our primary responsibility, which is to the public. I have outlined ESTA's role in the document and some of the information about our creation as a statutory authority, which I think was a very important move by the Victorian Government, as it gives us huge potential to actually advocate on behalf of the entire emergency management sector where special information data is concerned. The reason for that is that we are rather unusual at ESTA, in a worldwide context, in that we are a multiservice call-taking and dispatch organisation that covers a large geographic area, a large population and a large number of emergency services, all with different operational requirements, and that is indeed a challenge.

Not only that, but we are held to fairly extraordinary standards, in world terms, for the time we are allowed to take in processing a call. One might question why, but the standards vary slightly depending on the individual emergency service because they set their requirement, but in essence a call for the most part has to be picked up in 5 seconds and we have to assign a dispatch — meaning identify the appropriate emergency service in the appropriate location and essentially push the button that tells them to hit the road — normally within anywhere from 1 minute to 2 minutes. That would be a long time in reality, because many of those we process far more quickly. Many of them are 45 or 50 seconds. That is because we have this computer-aided dispatch system. So when I use the term CAD, it is not to be confused with computer-aided design, which is the other acronym.

The computer-aided dispatch system, as we are probably all aware, is a legacy system that ESTA as a statutory authority has inherited from the old Intergraph days and then its next iteration as ECV, Emergency Communications Victoria. There is a major review, and development is under way in terms of the next generation of the technology.

The technology itself for call taking and dispatch for Intergraph software has one very critical element, and that is address. The entire system is underpinned by spatial information, and that information is linked to a number of pieces of data, the most important of which is address. Address is made up of very fundamental components: a street number and/or unit; a street name; a street type; a locality, which must be a bounded locality, not a vanity locality; a state; and obviously a country. If all those things work well, our CAD system and our call taker and our caller have a very gratifying experience, in the sense that everything goes quickly, it is not stressful, a button gets pushed and they can be reassured that a response is on the way.

When an address does not verify immediately, the caller may have given the address verbally, they may have given an intersection, it may have come through in the IPND, which is the integrated public number database maintained by Telstra — which is not maintained to Victorian address standards, I might add. When that address comes

through, if it does not match the data that is in our system, inevitably the call processing time will blow out, which means you have to start asking additional questions.

The questions take place anyway, to validate. The difference is that we have already hit the button for the dispatch. But the call taker will continue to do additional verification. If we have not been able to complete verification, these calls can take a long time and clearly that impacts on the response time of an emergency service. This is of issue to ESTA, and it is of issue to our clients, our customers, our friends and our colleagues, but mostly to the general population.

As a point of principle, one of the issues we have had with the legacy system is that a lot of data was maintained in house or fixed in house. We have worked closely with DSE and the spatial information infrastructure group to completely revisit principles and policy. We have done that through alignment with various versions of the VSIS (Victorian Spatial Information Strategy). The current version has just been released. We have also done it by aligning all the standards that we wish to impose on those under the direction being set in that round which is DSE because they engage nationally and otherwise on global standards around exchange of GIS data and so forth. So rather than reinventing the wheel, we have picked the agency that we feel is most fit to lead in that area.

We receive all our data from a product called Vicmap. Vicmap is owned by DSE, although 'owned' is perhaps not the right word. It is maintained by DSE, with various subcontractors who do the work. The key layers for us, as I mentioned, are address, but also transport, the road data that sits within the transport layer. These are individual GIS layers. The transport layer must match the address layer. If the address, which is a point layer, when overlaid in the GIS-type system against the transport layer does not have a spatial match, a reasonable proximity, that is an address failure that could get thrown out by the system. Meaning that that address may not get an emergency response by the automated system; it might take a long time.

These automated processes around data verification, we have been introducing more of them and we have to, because it is the only way that we can update and refresh the data often enough to keep pace with the changes that are taking place across Victoria. New roads, new alignments, changes of addresses, locality boundary movements — all those things require that the data be refreshed. Previously it would take six months to build the map base and often the data was three months or eight months old. Sometimes it could be a year between refreshes on a map data, which meant technically if a council had put through an address it might be a year before it showed up in the CAD. Clearly that was not good enough, but we cannot have it all. Hence we had to put in automated processes. The downside of those is that you cannot do manual fixes. That means that you have to fix the underlying processes in terms of the quality that goes into the core product, which is Vicmap, and that is what we have been busy trying to do for the past few years.

The Country Fire Authority also works with us quite a lot. They have overlapping interest because of the CFA map books. There has been a lot of publicity around things to do with road naming and a lot of work has been going on at DSE and been thrown at fixing that. There are issues around many, many roads in Victoria that are not named or recognised by council because they are on private property. So they are not addressed to a standard that can be used in CAD. They are of particular concern because often they are things like aged-care developments that in fact have a higher risk profile and yet those addresses are not done to standard.

The key behind all this is that we attempt to work very collaboratively with DSE through all the existing processes. With PIP, the property information program, we go on road shows with that; and with Vicnames, which is the gazettal process for features, we attempt to get that process more integrated with the mapping. In essence the view of the mapping part of the component is: we have no legislation or control over what councils give us; we have to map what they give us. The register of geographic names does have some legislation but it is not bound to good standards. It has the word 'guidelines' but nonetheless a lot falls through and does not go through that process. As an example, if you go to Vicnames for jetties, you will find most of them are missing; most of the shopping centres are not gazetted; and most private roads are not gazetted or addressed. We have worked with DSE. We realise a lot of the issues and some of the issues are very political. They relate to councils and councils' relationship to state government.

The CHAIR — It is all comparative. It is very political if you do not arrive on time.

Ms THOMPSON — Yes, I know. It is also uneven. Some councils are very good and they work with us one on one, and any time we raise an issue they look at their processes and they work with us. With other councils,

you spend a lot of time writing up explanations about the cause of the problem and the response is 'We're not responsible for addressing. It's cost shifting by government'. It is the usual 'There's no legislation that says we have to do it; therefore we won't do it'. When we hit that, we are essentially against a brick wall, other than hoping a letter to the CEO instils some sense of public duty or otherwise. Frequently the obstacle probably is not at the CEO level; it is probably at the officer level, in planning departments. In large part there is a key awareness issue as well that drives a lot of this, but it is hard yards.

We have had some success. I think there is a very successful and healthy area of activity that has been taking place over the past eight years, in terms of the spatial sector, through seeking to really quantify what makes a good dataset and what are the components. I think we have that, frankly, very well nutted out in Victoria. Now we are at the stage where the problem really is how do we turn that into action. Some other states have had action, but maybe they did not quite have the processes as well nutted out as we did, so they perhaps have some action but not as high quality data or maybe not as sustainable processes. In Victoria I think we really understand our issues very well and are ready to act. The things that are missing are, quite frankly — and this has come up over and over again over the past eight years; every time you are at a forum, it is what is missing — high-level political championship in Victoria. There is no political champion.

Ms THOMSON — What do you mean by that?

Ms THOMPSON — What they tend to mean is a minister somewhere in Victoria who believes in it and understands it. We had a bit of mileage some years back with the appointment of the Chief Information Officer, Patrick Hannan. We got a bit of a run-up on a geospatial emergency information network proposal to address this, but he resigned and that all fell apart. Perhaps that is for the best, because perhaps now we have moved on and we have even more sorted. I do not know.

We have also done, I think, a fair amount — and people from other states tend to wonder how we do so much with so little — through cooperation and collaboration. We form user networks in sectors such as the Department of Transport, which has the community practice to bring together the players, for example VicRoads and others, across the whole portfolio so you have a central point of contact. Always one of the issues is who do you go to. DHS has headed down the path. The Department of Justice, I am sorry to say, is not looking so good at the moment. Clearly there are areas in which there has been leadership shown and the path is well laid out for those who are ready to follow.

I will just reiterate from ESTA's point of view that our CEO is very aware of the risks. We are at the pointy end. We are kind of the coalface, because we get 1.8 million calls a year from the public, and the first thing we ask is, 'Where is your emergency?'. That means every one of those calls has an assigned risk in terms of an outcome. What we really do not want to see is a delay that could be attributed just to something as basic and simple as a poor-quality address or a missing road centre-line, because that really should be easy to fix. We do not want to see solving those problems get bogged down in politics of ownership. This is where most of the people I work with think we have hit a brick wall, and we just do not know where to go anymore.

When I was at OEC and doing risk management and risk assessment for fire there was great difficulty even assessing valuation data, which is the value of property and an integral part of doing any sort of risk assignment. That was my first experience. I came from the United States and Canada and I was accustomed to a very open and available approach to information — national TIGER files were available for research; I was a researcher in crime mapping.

It was a bit of a shock to come here and to find the state of play, and a real concern to see the kinds of decisions that were being made in government without good information. I still cannot fathom how we are doing that. In the US they would call them the billion-dollar bonehead decisions. The focus here, I think, overlooks the power of really good, solid analytic research with a spatial component.

There is a skills issue in this area as well, because there is a shortage of people with those skills and that knowledge in spatial. Most IT people do not understand spatial information. Most IT people control the large portion of budgets, so until spatial becomes an integral part of information management and part of IT within organisations, we will continue to have something that operates in a sort of specialist silo.

The analogy I would draw is what if I hired an information specialist at ESTA whose only role was to use Excel and he was the only person who was skilled in Excel, and we could only afford one copy of the software and

anytime anybody in the whole organisation needed a column of numbers added up or sorted, they had to get access to that person. That is where we are with spatial. It does not need to be that way, because the technically skilled people should be applying their skills to developing web-based spatial applications.

The web-mapping applications can be served up — DSE has already demonstrated it with the notification edit service project. If you have got NES serving up all of the state's framework data, you have already got the tools built into the NES delivery. You could eliminate thousands of underutilised GIS software licences. When I did a review in Department of Justice I could not even track down all the licences because no-one was using them, and those who were, were only using them for visualisation or an occasional cartographic map production, not for analysis. That is pretty typical, except in power research roles like perhaps in parts of DSE around environment. Most of what is needed for analytic purposes are very simple tools. You need some click-and-point functionality to aggregate this. The Australian Bureau of Statistics is a terrific example of an organisation that has gone down that path. If you as a member of the public go to its website, the power to obtain very localised, very specific data is really at your fingertips with a very simple learning curve. We need to get that happening in and across government, because until spatial is being used in an everyday sense by other kinds of analysts — business analysts and elsewhere — and made easy and we break down that wall and this notion that spatial is somehow special, I think we will not unleash the real power that sits behind there.

I have a self-interest in that component because the more widely spatial is recognised and valued across government, the better the quality is going to be. At the moment ESTA pays $470 000 or so a year for a Vicmap licence, and each of the emergency services pays for Vicmap licences. I am not really currently quibbling with that for the simple reason that I know if we pulled that money, the data could not be maintained, but it should not have to be dependent on a small number of organisations.

There is still a constant tension about whose needs get attention in Vicmap because it is sitting in DSE. DSE try very hard — SII — to work with emergency services and to recognise our needs as they can, but they are also subject to internal demands within the organisation with decisions that are made about where improvement will take place in these products. We do a lot of QA internally for that reason. We have a large number of people whose time is spent fixing and providing quality assured corrections back to DSE. We have also spent a couple of hundred thousand — —

The CHAIR — Do you charge them for that?

Ms THOMPSON — Yes, you can go down that path, and it has been argued by many emergency services over the years who are furious, and have been for years, with this model. They make the argument based on the money. I think that is a more complicated issue, because if the data is really important to you, I think paying for it is not an unreasonable thing to do to some extent — contributing towards its maintenance.

I also recognise that the data must have a secure and central source of funding for the long haul. I fear what would happen if there was a shift in budget priorities or something else, because if the quality and the data cannot be maintained, there are an awful lot of organisations dependent on it and under the current structure we still really depend in large part on goodwill and on very good relationships with the director at SII, who I have a great deal of time for. I see him as one of the leaders in our industry nationally, and so do many others. We work through it in a collaborative way. There is a bit of give and take, because we have to recognise budget limitations. They are also not an organisation that is really a truly commercial organisation in the sense that you can identify a priority and they can scale up — even if you provide additional funding, they cannot scale up often to take on the work.

We have a bit of a hybrid at the moment that I do not think is working very well. Things are changing so dramatically in the external environment with commercial datasets, the use of GIS in GPS devices, the creation of huge features datasets in a commercial environment. Aside from Vicmap Address, Vicmap Transport, the other key thing for us is features. There is a features product called Vicmap Features but there is not much in it. It may be really high quality but there is not much there.

The CHAIR — How do you define features?

Ms THOMPSON — A feature is often called a CPN — a common place name. It might be called a point of interest. It is an all-encompassing term. Most of the categories are identified under Australasian geographic names categories already. What we have started to do is work with the Office of Geographic Names. They have many of them. They have large numbers of them that have been logged by whoever the responsible authority is.

For example, schools are responsible for gazetting school names, but many others fall through the cracks. As I have said before, with shopping centres, there might be three shopping centres in that dataset, for example, so it is not a substitutable dataset for what we have at the moment, which is a legacy dataset that might have 100 000-or-so entities in it, but who knows how long they have been there or where they came from? Our main concern is the long-term sustainability of Vicmap and data supply to support a CAD system.

The CHAIR — Thank you. You have distributed to us a document which I read as a submission. Do you wish this to go on the internet as part of your appearance here today?

Ms THOMPSON — Yes.

The CHAIR — I do not quite know where to start, other than to thank you for what you do in the face of all the obstacles. I had a recent experience where I saw a family violence event occurring on the Western Highway at night. I had no idea where I was. I distributed roughly what I could see in the dark. The dispatcher at the other end said to me, 'Have you just passed a such-and-such service station? Was that lit up?'. I said, 'Yes, I have just passed a service station', and they were able to have police there as we waited to try and make sure things did not get out of hand. I was blown away by the efficiency. I know you are very frustrated, but as someone who thought you would have no hope of identifying where I was, they probably also had access to where my mobile was calling from.

Ms THOMPSON — No.

The CHAIR — I guessed that. You did a brilliant job without being able to have a mobile identification.

Ms THOMPSON — I might not be able to take credit for that, because it is possible you were in Ambulance Victoria territory if you were in a rural area. It depends who you asked for.

The CHAIR — I rang 000, and it was not far out of Caroline Springs, on the way to Melton.

Ms THOMPSON — Yes, that would be us.

The CHAIR — It does not matter. I am giving you credit. I hope that goes rightly!

Ms THOMPSON — We will take it! They have map books. We load into the system the map books and so forth as well, so they have got additional sources of information for reference if they need it.

The CHAIR — If you were writing our report, would we support your eight final dot points as flags for what we should be addressing in our report?

Ms THOMPSON — Yes.

The CHAIR — Or is there something else that you would particularly highlight as must-do non-negotiables?

Ms THOMPSON — I am sorry that I did not even get to put this all in order, because I put this whole thing together yesterday.

The CHAIR — You are free to put a further submission in for us.

Ms THOMPSON — Essentially where I inserted a reference to one of the questions that are in the previous ones, like Q3, 'What can the VPS do to provide increased access to PSI …?', there are bullet points there. And Q10, 'How should governments ensure transparency and fairness in their pricing policies?'. In some ways I prefer to steer away from specifically identifying the solutions to some extent, other than by presenting our experience on what has not worked. Some of the complexities around commercialisation of data and the role of VARs and so forth I think have to be nutted out. What I have stated here is that, in working those things through, please keep a clear view that there is minimum public safety requirement for access to this data to a prescribed quality. Commercial datasets are not necessarily substitutable. There are key issues for the entire emergency service sector in terms of the interoperability of our systems that are built to Vicmap data. That applies when we want to interchange information or build interoperable mapping systems with other states too.

The CHAIR — I go to a very specific example, the building industry. It is one of the most dangerous, with new housing estates, new industrial estates. I own up to a vested interest in this as one of my family members works in the building industry. There may be an accident on a worksite in a new housing or industrial development. What information is required to be provided to you and to other areas of government prior to the subdivision taking place?

Ms THOMPSON — Our main concern is — and it is really a common-sense viewpoint — at what point are there people on the site who might need an emergency service response, no. 1?

The CHAIR — I would say that is from the very beginning. It could be the surveyors, it could be the road workers, it could be the utility workers.

Ms THOMPSON — Correct. At that point what we really need to have, in the computer-aided map system, is the proposed road, the proposed road name and the proposed numbering along the street.

The CHAIR — But whose responsibility is it to give that?

Ms THOMPSON — Currently there is no-one — and this is where the argument lies — who takes individual responsibility for doing that.

The CHAIR — If you were making a recommendation, where should that information go as a first step, and where should it be distributed to thereafter?

Ms THOMPSON — We have processes for all of our other data where the road is public, around addressing against road that is public, and I think the exact same principles should apply regardless of whether the property is privately owned or not; ergo the council should be creating the address, naming the road. Why should there be two standards in Victoria: one standard for addressing a piece of land that is privately owned but has residences and people and a different standard for roads that are deemed, due to some artificial, administrative construct?

The CHAIR — I have no argument with you on that. If it goes to council you are saying council then may or may not distribute this information, so who should?

Ms THOMPSON — The mechanisms are in place for them to name the road normally in their naming process; assign an address. Normally, that would be in their rates department, although it does vary; every council does it slightly differently. On the address assignment and the road assignment, the road would go to the office of geographic names for gazettal. The road is named and then gazetted, and there are things in between to cover off interims, so they actually do not need to finalise the name. It can go back and be gazetted later. They can get it into the Vicmap. They can do that through the PIP (Property Improvement Program) process which is in place for providing the road centre line and the addresses through to DSE SII; they can go back and gazette formally afterwards if necessary.

There is some flexibility in the state government's approach to this but there has to be a willingness to assign the addresses based on the Australian standard for redressing, which is 4819, and to assign those addresses to the same standard as public roads. The 4819, which we had been doing some work on recently, should be clearly linked to the guidelines for geographic names. Where this falls over, and it works fairly well considering the entire thing hangs on voluntary agreement, but the devil tends to be in the detail, and it tends to fall over when you are dealing with legacy issues.

The CHAIR — Like what? Can you explain that?

Ms THOMPSON — Properties that got numbered or addressed, or roads that got named prior to guidelines being in place. Some councils are very nervous and fearful about meddling with people's addresses. The rural addressing program has been a huge bonus.

Mr CRISP — Rural renumbering?

Ms THOMPSON — Rural numbering, and actually the 4819 is technically called a rural numbering standard, but what we are trying to do is expand that into a full-blown standard.

The CHAIR — To cut you off, if you do not mind, what we are trying to do in our report is to come up with recommendations that might address issues that have been around for a significant time. This is an opportunity for you to say what might be a clear way forward if you would like to do it today.

Ms THOMPSON — Go through all the legislation that is antiquated, because most of it predates spatial information systems, and produce an overarching spatial information management regime of some sort.

The CHAIR — One piece of legislation?

Ms THOMPSON — One piece of legislation.

Ms THOMSON — It will be interesting to see how long that exercise is going to take. My question is around one of the points that you have put in on page 17 of your document in relation to the need to coordinate spatial information across government with the necessary discipline to ensure that government data remains accessible and suitable for commercial applications of benefit to the state. This will go to some of the things that you have said as well. You said you do not mind paying for the information because — —

Ms THOMPSON — I probably should not say that in my CEO's hearing. Of course we mind, but we recognise it has value.

Ms THOMSON — But the notion is that if we are going to keep the Vicmap system operating to its peak performance and capacity to provide the information, it needs an investment to continually do that.

Ms THOMPSON — It does.

Ms THOMSON — The issue for me is all the additional information that needs to go in and supply Vicmap. Is that an issue? I will ask my questions, so you can try to remember them. But the issue is: is what Vicmap is getting access to easy and smooth enough? Is there an ability to update quickly enough? Are you finding that you are going to too many other sources for information beyond Vicmap? Then I will ask the question about where Vicmap sits within the commercial providers that are out there now and the sophistication of some of the work that is being done in that area? Where do you see Vicmap's future? Where are the commercial opportunities, if not within making our own agencies pay for service?

Ms THOMPSON — Vicmap is fundamental data, and I think it is framework fundamental data at its most basic level. The data standards, the metadata, the requirements for data remain very firmly focused on something that meets a broad range of requirements across government and the commercial sector — for example, we have a need for aliases for localities because we might get a lot of calls and they might get the locality wrong. I do not see it as Vicmap's role to meet every one of my needs. We have data systems and programs. We can create joining tables. So Vicmap is intended to drive down the middle with that base line level of information but retain opportunities or retain, in a sense, the responsibilities as well within organisations to maintain other data that is very specific to their own needs.

The issue still then is that what you come back to is other sources — this custodianship issue — and custodian is a key platform of the spatial information strategy, or has been and, as I have pointed out in here, it has not being working. I do not say that it cannot be made to work, but to date it has been a policy largely in name, and Vicmap Address and Vicmap Transport are very good as they are. Then we get to the value adding. I saw the submission from VicRoads, and if you look at the type of data that sits within VicRoads that is not in Vicmap but which would allow you to use the Vicmap data as a routable road centre line system, for example, that gives you further information on speed and capacity. That is value adding.

Ms THOMSON — I guess what I am trying to understand is where does the problem lie? Does Vicmap not want to get into that area, or is it VicRoads providing the information at a level and consistency for Vicmap to be confident that it has this information?

Ms THOMPSON — There are several things. Vicmap is the key linkage that I look at. Every feature in Vicmap, every road entity or road segment has a persistent feature identifier in data terms, meaning that is a unique number that follows that little entity through the entirety of its life. Even if it gets removed, it is a ghost memory. What that means is you can do an incremental map update and you have ongoing assurance that this product is always going to meet your needs. Any value-adding product that does not link back to those PFIs in Vicmap is of

very limited value. I can go to a commercial provider and, yes, they can sell me you-beaut networkable road centreline data, but I cannot use it with Vicmap because their data centrelines come from a different source. They would not match up. I would have to spend a great deal of time trying to rejig the entire dataset to marry it. So you are talking about saying you have one thing that is the standard. You frame it in a very focused way, and you get the value-adders — government and elsewhere — just to ensure that their data is aligned to that standard. It is very easy. It becomes easy then because essentially you have building blocks that can be used in a variety of ways.

Ms THOMSON — Do you get access to VicRoads data on traffic movements?

Ms THOMPSON — No, we do not, and we have not requested it because we do not request more data than we can actually cope with in our system.

Ms THOMSON — Okay.

Ms THOMPSON — But there is a future out there, yes. And who is going to be the logical source of that data? I do not know if it is going to be VicRoads. It depends on whether or not we achieve what I would like to see happen, which is an alignment between the government dataset and the commercial sector. As a nation we cannot afford this divergence of datasets, because somebody is going to lose big time. The commercial datasets are currently being driven hard and fast with the kinds of money going in that we cannot match. It is obviously coming out of the telco sector and mobile applications for schoolkids and so forth who want to find their local cafe, and all those little mobile phone interactions that are going to provide huge revenue — and Google Earth as well. But none of that development or that money, is currently something that we would be able to use in any of our legacy systems at any rate, unless there is a complete rethink of all of our technology and systems across government into some new regime of open source. I do not really see that happening in the short term.

I think the future is more in webmap services to reduce the amount of data that you have to maintain and to serve up core data. Can government achieve that partnership with the commercial sector? The questions around that are, 'Can government move fast enough?'. That sector does not sit and wait around. They cannot wait; they have a business imperative. Right now there is a race on to see who is going to win with all these features datasets as an example. I am not going to buy one. I do not know who is going to win. I have a TomTom which uses census data. I know that is not a winner. I think the winner should be Vicmap with value-adding by some of these big companies, but the question is which ones are going to be there in a few years. That is not for me to say. That is for the people with expertise in the industry to identify and negotiate.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much. We appreciate your time here this afternoon. In about a fortnight you will be provided with a copy of the transcript. You are free to correct the typographical errors — —

Ms THOMPSON — And acronyms.

The CHAIR — You cannot change matters of substance. Thank you, and good afternoon. Good luck with your navigating of a very complex and important field.

Committee adjourned.