

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance

Melbourne – Friday 15 May 2026

MEMBERS

Alison Marchant – Chair

Kim O’Keeffe – Deputy Chair

Roma Britnell

Anthony Cianflone

John Mullahy

Nicole Werner

Dylan Wight

WITNESSES

Professor Sharon Pickering, Vice-Chancellor and President, and

Professor Sarah McDonald, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student Experience, and Senior Vice-President, Monash University.

The CHAIR: Welcome to the public hearings for the Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee's Inquiry into Enhancing Victorian University Governance. All mobile telephones should now be turned to silent.

All evidence given today is being recorded by Hansard and broadcast live on the Parliament's website.

While all evidence taken by the committee is protected by parliamentary privilege, comments repeated outside of this hearing, including on social media, may not be protected by this privilege.

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Thank you so much for being here today to answer some of our questions. In the interests of time, we are going to jump straight into questions, but maybe you could just introduce yourselves and the roles that you play.

Sharon PICKERING: My name is Sharon Pickering. I am the Vice-Chancellor and President of Monash University.

The CHAIR: Thank you.

Sarah McDONALD: My name is Sarah McDonald. I am the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, student experience, and Senior Vice-President at Monash.

The CHAIR: Thank you for joining us. Roma.

Roma BRITNELL: Good afternoon. Thank you for joining us here today for this inquiry. My first question is: can you just give us an overview of the purpose and the mission of Monash University?

Sharon PICKERING: Monash University was founded in 1958 to be the university of social and technological transformation to meet the challenges of the age and to serve the industries and communities around us. I regard that as the greatest university mission in this country and of any university around the world, and it is one that we have remained deeply committed to throughout our entire almost 70-year history.

Roma BRITNELL: So you serve who?

Sharon PICKERING: Our industries and communities that surround us.

Roma BRITNELL: Industries and communities around you.

Sharon PICKERING: That has been our founding mission. That is what has guided all of our development as a university, and I think that it has inflected the nature of our campuses, the breadth of our education, our research work and the deep industry and community connections at our campuses.

Roma BRITNELL: Beautiful. Thank you very much. In the submission there was a line that I was taken by, and it was actually referred to yesterday as well. We have been hearing for a couple of days – there have been a lot of public comments around universities – and one of the things that has been identified is getting an increase in the student voice and academic voice on the council. There is a line in your submission that said you do not believe that increasing the voice of students, I think it was, would increase the diversity. Can you help me understand why you do not think that that would work?

Sharon PICKERING: I think that with the line you are referring to, in essence the intent of it was to say it does not guarantee it. I think the real point there is a point that I think the expert committee also came to. There is no question that the student and staff voice is important, and it is important at a range of levels and in a range of ways, and I think you have heard that as well. It is important at the peak governing body for us, that is our university council, but it cannot just be left there. For example, it is very important at our academic board, which is a subcommittee of council – absolutely core in there. It also needs to be really core in the way it is directed straight through, in essence, to me in my role but also through the broader senior executive as well as through a range of other ways.

The question here is the same question that I think the Expert Council really wrestled with: how do you actually make sure that you get a diversity of voices in all the places that they are needed while balancing all of the other needs of a governing body as well? I think what underpins that is, of course, recognising that it is not just the numbers; it is the culture, it is the level of inclusion, it is the quality of that engagement. For example, for Monash it is ensuring that your student and staff representatives are in the room during the sessions that evaluate my performance. It is ensuring that they are inducted well, they are prepared and they can raise issues well, that they are full and active members of that body. I think that Monash University has been enormously well served by the quality of the student representatives on Council over a number of years. If it is just a question of moving the numbers at that one body, I think we are probably missing the overall opportunity to really think about 'are we substantively engaging?'

I meet with our student president leaders three times a year in a setting where they set the agenda. They can raise absolutely anything. There is nothing off limits. These are the presidents of the Monash Student Association – basically the Clayton campus, –and of the Caulfield campus, Parkville, Peninsula, international students and the residential students association. It is completely up to them what they raise. We report on that up to Council each year. We report not only on what we talked about, but we report on what we do as a result of what was raised. And I can promise you, there are a number of issues that have been raised within that on which the university has been able to take action. In addition to that, students are able to meet with other leaders of the senior executive, whether it be Sarah, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), or the chief operating officer, about campus-related matters.

I do note that, in your discussion so far, parking has not featured. That is usually a very key feature at Monash, a university that sits 23 kilometres – our main campus – from the city centre. We do not have the benefit of a tram or a train line. We have been waiting almost 70 years for that. What this is really about is we have got to make sure that we listen to our students and our staff in a range of ways.

Roma BRITNELL: On that point, we have heard that decisions have been made by Monash that are then published without any consultation with students, like course changes that affect what they enrolled to do and what the professional outcome they were looking for will look like. Is that the culture that you are talking about that you are addressing? And you talked a moment ago about reporting. Is that reporting transparent? Is that able to be accessed by people outside the campus, or is it just internal?

Sharon PICKERING: I will go from the specific to the general. I think I know the situation that you are referring to, in which case that was raised with me through the student representative forum that I just referenced, and we were able to support students and colleagues coming together to resolve that issue. I think it has been solved to everyone's satisfaction. I am very pleased about that. In a way it kind of signals that that system works. We all know not everything will work perfectly all the time. The question is: are you actually able to then intervene and course correct for that? I think the example you are likely referring to is a case in relation to that.

Academic Board has responsibility when you are actually talking about course changes, which is what you are really talking about – the course offerings and so on. That is in the remit of Academic Board. Academic Board has extensive regulations. There are five student members on academic board, two undergraduate, two postgraduate and one from our Malaysian campus. They can have standing items on that agenda, and they can raise anything within what are very broad terms of reference for Academic Board. I present at each Academic Board meeting, and at the end of my presentation, when I update the university on key matters, I am available for Q and A. I answer questions that are well outside Academic Board terms of reference, and I answer all questions that are asked of me and will always do that. We have quite a large academic board of 93 staff and students, and we consider that a really key forum for the kinds of issues that you have raised.

Roma BRITNELL: From what I am hearing, you are saying that all the issues that have been brought to the fore in the public awareness over the last some months, you are aware of and you have addressed. Can you just give me some understanding around how we can cement that in? What legislative changes would Monash like to see to make sure that malaise perhaps, or things that may have existed before these problems, have now been recognised and changed? How do we not slip back into that situation?

Sharon PICKERING: Sure. We do not believe there is a case for legislative change. We do think there is a case to consider where we put our emphasis. So let me unpack that a little bit –

Roma BRITNELL: How would accountability look? How do we not sit back with that malaise that may have existed?

Sharon PICKERING: Sure. I am not necessarily accepting that I would talk about it as a malaise, but let us put that to one side for a moment. The federal government has committed to embedding the Expert Council recommendations and principles into the text of the Threshold Standards. That is the overarching legislative by which universities are regulated and against which we have to apply for our re-accreditation every seven years. As part of that re-accreditation process that we are currently going through we have to undergo a full independent review of our academic governance as well as what they call our 'corporate governance' –

Roma BRITNELL: Which you have always had to do, because the –

Sharon PICKERING: Which we have always had to do. But the Expert Council recommendations have not been within that. That is what the federal government is intending. I think most of the key issues that this committee has been wrestling with are very similar to what the Expert Council did. That is going to be embedded within that legislation – that is law, so –

Roma BRITNELL: So the federal inquiry has got it under control and the state inquiry is a waste of time.

Sharon PICKERING: No. As I mentioned to you, I think there are some things that we can really emphasise, and I will get to that –

Roma BRITNELL: That is what I am wanting. Where do we fit? What are the legislative changes that we can implement as a committee that would assist?

Sharon PICKERING: I do not believe that there needs to be legislative change. I do not think there is a need for that. Keep in mind that universities are currently subject to more than 300 pieces of legislation and regulatory activity. If we are concerned about regulatory burden, then we do have to hold that in our heads. If we really want to consider what we do here, I think there are a few things that we could do. Multiple ministers and senior members of the department meet regularly with vice-chancellors. I think there could be standing items on that agenda which ask universities to speak directly to issues of governance.

Roma BRITNELL: Such as?

Sharon PICKERING: I think if there are concerns of the government, of the Parliament, that need to be raised, that is an ideal forum in which there is a standing governance item in which they can be addressed, and I think that is a really important way to do that.

You will note that our annual reports have just been submitted to the Parliament. There is an opportunity. Should you wish to come and discuss those reports, I think there could be a really important exchange and discussion of the content of those reports. For example, in our annual report this year we have now included a very extensive governance statement that includes one response to many of the recommendations that we have had an opportunity to assess ourselves against and then implement. I think that it would be a really important opportunity for members of the Parliament, members of the government, to sit down with individual universities or a group of university leadership and discuss those pieces. Adding a discussion to that I think would be a really great way to be able to highlight areas of concern to the Parliament, of the government, and actually have a really meaningful discussion without adding to that overall regulatory burden.

If we have got an annual reporting requirement TEQSA legislation, and TEQSA is our overarching regulator, that is, in my view, the appropriate place for it to be. From my best assessment in relation to the *Monash University Act* and other university acts there is a provision to make adjustments within there in terms of things like representation should that be the encouragement of this committee. But I think, from what I can tell, what you are wrestling with is very similar to what the Expert Council wrestled with. How do we make sure that we meet all of those broader governance expectations while also making sure we have got those voices right, recognising that once you get to council, a member of council is there to serve the best interests of the university, not just to represent one group? The understanding there has to be: how do we create that culture where there are multiple points at which staff and student voices can be meaningfully heard? How are they meaningfully heard within a very constructive culture, a culture where people feel that they can raise matters? We will not always agree, unfortunately, but I find often when we are able to do that in a constructive culture

we can usually move the matter forward. Certainly my view at Monash is that we are very fortunate across staff and student bodies, across individuals, that we are always working in good faith.

Roma BRITNELL: Just one last thing – I just want to pick up that you just said, ‘our council’. And I understand the governance around any board is about representing the board, but you just said, ‘looking for the best interests of the university’ – not the community that you serve?

Sharon PICKERING: I regard the university as the community that I serve.

Roma BRITNELL: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Dylan.

Dylan WIGHT: Thank you. Thanks, Vice-Chancellor. I think it is worth just getting some of this on the record, and I do acknowledge that a lot of these instances are from before your appointment as Vice-Chancellor. We have heard, both through submissions and evidence yesterday, pertaining to a large degree to both staff and students, that the opinion of Monash University’s culture did not come through in a glowing light. When we go to it, we have got instances like – which are on the public record – the underpayment instance, which I assume was a systems failure like other universities we have heard from today. We have read through submissions of instances of staff bullying. We have read through and heard evidence of instances of sort of the mistreatment, I guess, of student representatives, which I assume the university will have a differing view. Is there a program of continuous improvement for culture embedded in the university? If not, why? Is there a plan for that going forward? How do you continuously improve your culture, how do you continuously make sure that those relationships with staff and students and the culture at Monash University are as good as they can possibly be?

Sharon PICKERING: Okay. I am going to start by saying a few things. Monash University is a remarkable university. Our people work incredibly hard, and they do an extraordinary job for this state and for this country, both as educators and as researchers. There is no way this university could be where it is if that were not the case. The extraordinary performance of our university does suggest there is a lot that is actually very, very good. The university, the technology precinct of which we are the centre, contributes \$11.5 billion to the Victorian economy. We pay \$100 million in taxes to the state. We employ more than 20,000 people, and we have a little over 90,000 students. We make the kinds of R and D breakthroughs that many other places can only dream of. And along with other universities you have heard from before, we make this the medical research capital of this world. That does not come about if there is a malaise. That comes about because there is a university that is performing extraordinarily well. Is it perfect? No. No organisation, no \$5 billion organisation of that nature, scale and complexity ever is. Are we deeply committed to always getting it right, to fixing when things go wrong, to remedying where we can? Of course we are, and we take that enormously seriously.

But one of the things I would say – you have sat in front of some of the best universities in the world today. We are your largest industry. We are absolutely committed to the future of this state, and we need to work with the Parliament and with the government in how we do that, and that is what we want to be able to do. That means when issues are raised, we want to take them seriously. Many of the submissions that you refer to are indeed historical matters. Any matters that are more recent, I can promise you I stare straight into them and I look to resolve them. Some of those that have been raised with you, I have resolved within my time and we have taken those seriously. I listen very carefully. I have constructive relationships with the union. I have constructive relationships with most of the bodies that we talk about. Our students are outstanding advocates, and that needs to be the case because they do make up I believe the majority of the Victorian Parliament, as graduates. We do incredibly well there, and so I take my responsibility to your side of the table and producing those –

Dylan WIGHT: It is a particular sub-faction of our party, I think.

Sharon PICKERING: I would never venture to suggest that. However, I am always very pleased to host you, your colleagues and of course your opposite number on our campus and campuses whenever we possibly can.

So when things are not right, of course we look to fix them. Do I look to set a culture and a tone which is inclusive, which is serious about these issues, and if things go wrong, we fix it? Of course we do. But I do

believe that Victoria has got an opportunity to be extraordinarily proud of its universities, to work with them when things are not quite right, to make sure that we are not drowned in the regulatory burden which has been the default position of the last few years. Whenever anything has come up about universities, the default position has been to legislate. I want to be able to employ more educators. I want to employ more researchers. And with no disrespect to my great colleagues in the area of governance, I would prefer I am putting those resources into education and research instead of more compliance activity. We want a world-class regulator and we want to meet their expectations, but we want to do that while we are carrying on with the very serious business of education and research.

Dylan WIGHT: Can you just talk me through, then, particularly the beginning of what you said. I agree with all of that, right, and I agree with the really important role that Monash, but all of our universities play in Victoria.

Sharon PICKERING: Absolutely.

Dylan WIGHT: I agree with all of that. To the specific point, though – and you spoke about some instances that you have been able to resolve since becoming vice-chancellor – what is the process of that? You have got legislated industrial mechanisms and levers for the NTEU and your staff to pull, right –

Sharon PICKERING: Absolutely.

Dylan WIGHT: through the union. Students are slightly different. There is a student union, like what is the process from complaint to resolution?

Sharon PICKERING: Oh, okay. The first thing I would say is sometimes it is not a formal complaint. People will raise issues that say, ‘Actually, what’s going on here?’ ‘We’re not quite sure about this,’ ‘Why is this happening?’ ‘We don’t like it’ – whatever the case might be. The question is: how quickly are we smoking those issues out to understand what they are? And then how meaningfully are we responding to that? I made very clear when I became vice-chancellor that I had three priorities, and they went like this: student experience, student experience and student experience. That means one of the things that I have looked to do is to create a culture across the University in which we really do lean into all of those pieces. Our young people, particularly in this state, bore the absolute brunt of the pandemic, and one of the things that we are very serious about at Monash is our overall campus and student experience. Does it mean it is perfect all the time? No, it is not. Does it mean it is outstanding much of the time? Yes, it is. We want to be able to do that.

The kinds of forums that I have talked about are really important, but there are other kinds of specific forums. I am thinking here in relation to Indigenous matters. We have got an incredible institute called the William Cooper Institute that does incredible work with Indigenous students, but we also developed last year the establishment of the Monash Indigenous Congress. What that does is allow Indigenous staff from across the University to come together to themselves discuss whatever it is. It can be anything to do with education, research, the operations, the University, our campuses, anything like that. And they can make recommendations directly to me. They also can make recommendations directly to Council. They also provide an annual report to Council, including what the outcomes of that work have been. That is enormously important to us.

Dylan WIGHT: Cool.

Kim O’KEEFFE: There is no disputing that we do not think that the people that are presenting to us today, probably some better than others, but the majority absolutely are doing what you do because you are there for the right reasons, as we all are. You have also got to understand we have been presented with a lot of information and a lot of stuff that is not great. I am hoping that, yes, it is wonderful to hear those aspirations and the things that you are achieving, and I work very closely with my local universities and GOTAFEs. We want to see regional communities have these opportunities, but I am sitting here thinking, your passion is contagious. However, you also have an opportunity with that enthusiasm to contribute so greatly to this because there are fractures.

We are saying we are in a governance crisis, and if you do not see that as a crisis, maybe you need to tell us why we are being presented with so much evidence of that. And not every university is the same, okay? But what we want to achieve is, yes, if you can tell us that some of your models or some of the things that you are doing are actually addressing some of those issues that you see in the actual inquiry, this is an opportunity for

all of us to work with you, not against you. We want you to actually contribute, and what you are saying – and I feel your honesty and I feel your want and almost desperation – is for us to understand that there are amazing things going on. There are and we get that. I come from a very multicultural community, and I am very concerned about the discrimination and the awful disconnect that is happening across universities at the moment when it comes to our amazing new Australians in many ways. There is a lot of stuff going on, so my ask to you is: yes, I agree and I can see what you are doing, but please tell our inquiry the things that you see. If it is not from your university, if it is from elsewhere, we do not care where that information comes from. We just want expertise and we want opportunity of recommendations that are going to make a meaningful difference, not just the status quo, because there are fractures and we do not want them to remain open.

Sharon PICKERING: Yes. I think there is a range of pieces that you raise there. Let me put them into kind of two buckets, if I may, to try and answer as directly as I can in the time we have. The first are issues that sit squarely in a governance bucket, if you like, and there are issues that are important issues but are less governance issues, if you like. Let me go to the first ones. I think that one of the things that this committee can do is it can really, I think, get behind the work of the ECUG, enthusiastically do that and then embed that within the way in which you engage with universities, okay? I really do think the way that you bring vice-chancellors together and have them as very meaningful forums, not tick-a-box meetings, meaningful forums where you say, ‘These are the issues that are of concern, and we actually have an opportunity to discuss them’, and the government, the Parliament, have an opportunity to have that conversation. I think that is absolutely critical.

I think that there are core parts of the ECUG principles that the government might want to highlight in the way that it engages with universities going forward. Now, I do not believe there needs to be legislative change in there, but I do think that we should really think about what the forums are in which best practice is being shared and that the Parliament be satisfied that we are actually seeing the constant evolution and improvement in those processes. For example, one of the changes that we made – and you have heard everyone talk about the gap analysis and everything else today, so I will not go through that with you – was in relation to our People, Selection and Remuneration Committee of Council. They have direct oversight in their terms of reference around workplace law and people and culture planning. Now, that is really critical. I think that is a really important piece for this committee to put an emphasis on and to say that you will look to follow that carefully.

I think you can look at the way that you engage with universities in what we report on. We report to your Parliament extensively. No-one talks to us about that. We submit it. It gets tabled in Parliament and there is no discussion. Maybe there is an opportunity for discussion. We have included a very extensive governance statement. I have got it in front of me – hang on. let me take my glasses off. I think it runs for around about 25 or so pages. No-one has talked to me about that. You could talk to us about that. I think that is an opportunity to ask questions, to interrogate the things that we are reporting on. I think that is a real opportunity for us going forward.

Some of the other matters that you raise – I think the questions you raise around students from non-traditional backgrounds in university is very important. Our best estimate is around about one in four of Monash students come from non-traditional backgrounds, many from rural and regional locations. It is a bit like I was when I first went to university. When Monash first opened its doors to students in 1961, around about one in 10 of our students came from Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore. So when we talk about things like international students and we talk about multiculturalism, it is literally baked into the Monash DNA. Our Clayton campus, our largest campus, is in Australia’s most ethnically diverse electorate. So this is not kind of something we think about in addition, it is simply who we are. When I think about the 1 million visitors we have to our campuses each year – that is not including staff and students, 1 million visitors to our campuses – many of them come from those surrounding suburbs. About a thousand of our local residents, many of them new migrants, did free swimming lessons on our campus last year. Local schools that cannot actually afford sporting facilities and other facilities use our facilities and come onto campus. We are able to send them a really strong message that Monash is their place, that they belong with us, and that they can develop that affinity with us as a university, not waiting until they are halfway through school or nearly at year 12 but for their whole life.

Kim O’KEEFFE: Okay. Thank you.

Anthony CIANFLONE: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, professors, for appearing as well and for all the work that Monash does generally. And again, just to echo the sentiment that I think Kim relayed, we are all in firm agreement on the tremendous economic, trade and educational learning value that Monash and all the

universities bring. In many ways that is the whole reason why we are here. It is because we want to make that better. We want to make all that better for universities – for staff, for students – and for government and the community. But I am sure you would also have to agree, the whole reason we are here too – and given you are institutions based on evidence and research – is that we have heard so much evidence and research I guess to the contrary when it comes to what is going on around culture and governance across the university sector. So we are very much cognisant of both sides of the argument. Even the simple things of what I am hearing and what is being implied are opportunities for more regular conversations and engagement with government. So just as an example of that, can I ask – notwithstanding we have just had a ministerial reshuffle and the new minister has just come in, so putting that aside for a second – how many times and how often did you meet with the previous minister for tertiary or higher education and TAFE in Victoria?

Sharon PICKERING: I would probably have to check that data.

Anthony CIANFLONE: You can take it on notice.

Sharon PICKERING: I think the minister –

Anthony CIANFLONE: Not often, though, not regularly?

Sharon PICKERING: We have regular Victorian vice-chancellor committee meetings, which the minister does attend – not all of them but does attend some.

Anthony CIANFLONE: But as a one-on-one with Monash and the minister, was there a one-on-one meeting at any stage during the course of that tenure?

Sharon PICKERING: It would be in the low single digits would be my best sense. Look, Minister Brooks, I think, has got a strong sense of the sector, particularly around many of the R and D aspects and has been involved in that regard.

Anthony CIANFLONE: That is fine. I am just trying to get to the mechanics of, I guess, how the relationship works.

Sharon PICKERING: Yes, of course.

Anthony CIANFLONE: The second question: is there a frequent meeting between you and the Secretary of the Department of Education or the relevant senior person in the department that you regularly meet with?

Sharon PICKERING: We do have regular communications and meetings between the department but also a number of other government departments. We regularly also host a range of ministers. Because of the work that the University does, it does not actually sit squarely with one minister. We are actually regularly dealing with probably about three or four ministers.

Anthony CIANFLONE: I guess the lead minister would be the minister for higher ed and TAFE in Victoria. It would be nice, would you agree, to have a regular meeting with the relevant minister?

Sharon PICKERING: Yes, it would. Yes, I think that is right.

Anthony CIANFLONE: Yes. I note as well that your submission does not recommend any legislative change, which I acknowledge, but one potential minor legislative change could be to mandate an annual meeting or a biannual meeting or a quarterly meeting even with relevant ministers. There are precedents, with boards under other acts and institutions that do that. Would you be open to that being legislated?

Sharon PICKERING: I think it is an excellent recommendation. I do not think you need legislation for it, to be honest. I think that we can set expectations, and I think that they would be really welcome. I do want to stress – and I in no way wish to diminish Minister Brooks's portfolio – that I would definitely also like to involve ministers who have responsibilities particularly in relation to medical research as well. I would also like to see those who are looking at the development of new industries as well. There are a range there, so if we are going to craft that recommendation, can I encourage the committee to have more of that to lean in, because it is an opportunity for the state in terms of attracting future investment and growing the state.

Anthony CIANFLONE: Sure, I totally take your point on that. As part of that as well, you made the point earlier that there potentially is too much legislation at the moment already. That is why you are not arguing for further legislation. But in many respects, much of the evidence we have heard possibly shows that there is not enough legislation in place, hence why there have been so many issues of governance and transparency and integrity thus far as well. So if we had to recommend further legislation, what area in particular would you encourage us to focus on?

Sharon PICKERING: With the greatest of respect, we are regulated by TEQSA. That is our fundamental regulator. Putting the Expert Council recommendations to that, led by Melinda Cilento and Sharan Burrow, they have really agonised, and I think they have had the same concerns as you have had – and rightly so. To my mind, I am not disputing that there are matters to contend with, and that is why we very much supported the principles and recommendations of ECUG. That is where the legislative instrument needs to sit. We need clarity. We are a big organisation. I think we have reached the point where we are doing important work, and we want to be able to do it well. That means we need a legislative regime that works. The simpler that can be and the more direct that can be, the better it will be for the sector.

I believe the concerns that you have raised and many concerns within some of the submissions that are raised are exactly what ECUG looked at. I think being able to ensure in Victoria that we do not look to legislate for the sake of putting more legislation in place would be a very prudent approach. I think an even more prudent approach would be to ensure there is a relationship between government, the Parliament and universities that develops a culture of being able to discuss issues as they are raised and contend with issues as they are raised, and if there are burbling issues, that we are not waiting and basically having a long period of time where they are not discussed and then we have an inquiry. We need to have a relationship with the Parliament and the government such that we are able to contend with issues as they, if you like, burble up, not to contain them until we think, ‘Actually, there’s something here that we’re not across.’

There is a great opportunity in the work of the Expert Council. I can see in your deliberations you are wrestling with the same pieces. I look at the work that that Council has done and what Melinda Cilento said in her piece. She said, ‘The answer is not more regulation; it is greater transparency, it is greater culture and it is being able to assure ourselves that we are doing these things,’ and I think we can do those in different ways.

The CHAIR: Thank you. We have run out of time. Thank you so much for coming along today. We really appreciate you answering our questions and the submission, so thank you.

Witnesses withdrew.