

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the State Education System in Victoria

Melbourne – Wednesday 12 June 2024

MEMBERS

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Ryan Batchelor – Deputy Chair

Michael Galea

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Lee Tarlamis

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

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David Ettershank

Wendy Lovell

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WITNESSES

Gail McHardy, Chief Executive Officer, Parents Victoria; and

Andrew Campbell, President, Brighton Primary School Council.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Welcome back to the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee inquiry into the state education system. Welcome to Gail McHardy from Parents Victoria and Andrew Campbell from the Brighton Primary School Council. Welcome to you both. I will just read out the preliminaries.

All evidence we take is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the *Constitution Act 1975* and the provisions of the Legislative Council standing orders. Therefore the information that you provide to us today during the hearing is protected by law. You are protected against any action for what you say during this hearing, but if you go elsewhere and repeat the same things, those comments may not be protected by this privilege. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered a contempt of Parliament.

All evidence is being recorded. You will be provided with a proof version of the transcript following the hearings, and transcripts will ultimately be made public and posted on the committee's website.

Welcome. My name is Ryan Batchelor. I am the Acting Chair of the committee today and a Member for the Southern Metropolitan Region. Joining us we have got Michael Galea from South-Eastern Metropolitan, Melina Bath from Eastern Victoria, Joe McCracken from Western Victoria, Rachel Payne from South-Eastern Metropolitan, Richard Welch from North-Eastern Metropolitan, Aiv Puglielli also from North-Eastern Metropolitan and, on Zoom, Moira Deeming from Western Metropolitan.

Gail and Andrew, I invite you to make an opening statement, and then we will ask you a set of questions. If there is something you want to say off the top, I will hand over to you. If you can keep it short – we do not have a lot of time.

Gail McHARDY: Per the instructions, we do have a statement, but we are not going to read it. We want to give time for the conversation because there are two of us.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Okay. Great.

Gail McHARDY: I am Gail McHardy, and I am the CEO of Parents Victoria, representing Victorian parents in government schools. I look forward to the discussion.

Andrew CAMPBELL: Andrew Campbell, School Council President of Brighton Primary School, and I am equally looking forward to a discussion and an opportunity to share our school council committee's views.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Thanks very much. I might kick off if I can. Gail, what do you think the top priorities are for the state education system, particularly for parents in the state education system, in 2024?

Gail McHARDY: Well, the first thing I have to say, Ryan, is it is most important that we say straight off the bat that it is 100 per cent funding for public schools to their SRS. If we do not have that, our schools cannot deliver what you are expecting them to deliver, be it at a state level or a federal level, because there are impositions that are put on our school system to deliver a quality education, and to do that they need to be funded adequately. That is priority one.

Secondly, the wellbeing of our children so they are well to learn and they can learn to be well. The other part of that too is also the quality of relationships between parents and schools.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: On that last note in particular we have had a few different witnesses give us some evidence about how parents engage with schools and school communities and how responsive schoolteachers are to parent issues and concerns – some mixed evidence. From the perspective of Parents Victoria, how do you think, in general terms, schools are and teachers are with respect to responsiveness to parent need?

Gail McHARDY: Over the last number of years there has been a rise in difficulties and challenges in the parent community and in the school community. I have been listening to the previous witnesses through the hearings – not all of them. Obviously it is fantastic we can access the transcripts because they can inform our thinking and learning going forward as well. Our organisation is very much about working together is better. From a number of the stakeholders that have presented here, even today, I was very pleased to hear those things they were honest and transparent about their experiences, and we would mirror and confirm those things that were shared with you.

Most importantly for us, our key objective post pandemic has been the quality of relationships. We started this journey pre the COVID pandemic – we actually kicked it off in 2017 – and you will see from our submission we have really highlighted the fact that the key thing is about having quality relationships. The principals were very clear about the labour intensity of our community engagement and meeting parental expectations and community expectations, but I would add to that list government expectations as well. Also we have then, running parallel to that, the media and how things are reported out to the community, be it false or correct. Sometimes that can be destructive and not constructive, and that is not to be anti-media, because we have to work with the media every day. We take pleasure, and my understanding is we have got a good reputation with the media, in being honest in our responses.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: I will just quickly, Andrew, if I can, go to you. As a Member for Southern Metro, I have visited Brighton Primary. What are the challenges your school is facing?

Andrew CAMPBELL: We were happy to receive you – a couple of months ago, I think it might have been.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Something like that, yes.

Andrew CAMPBELL: A little while further than that.

Challenges and opportunities abound. We are very lucky to have an excellent leadership team – great leadership from the principal and deputy principal – and a wonderful teaching staff. The NAPLAN results have been great over the last couple of years, and it is a testament to a lot of hard work on their front. From our perspective one of the big challenges that we have is around the quality of the facilities. As a former Premier of this state – our most recent one – said, you cannot have a first-rate education in second-rate facilities.

Of the 560-odd students we have at Brighton Primary School, two-thirds of them are educated in very small portables, most of them 50, 60 years old, some perhaps older – difficult to carbon date them. Half of them are smaller than the minimum standard of 50 square metres. Some of them, we understand, have asbestos in the roof. And some of them are positioned within metres of the Sandringham train line, which makes life difficult for the fact that we also have 20 students in our hearing unit – one of only four in the metropolitan Melbourne area, and I think we are certainly the only one in our little patch of the south-east. It does make for a challenging environment; it makes it difficult to teach and instruct. It is certainly not the quality of facility that matches the pedagogy and quality of teaching that is going on in our schools, and it is certainly not enabling student outcomes as much as we would like.

The only other thing probably worth pointing out is that I am regularly collared in the playground and on the street by parents who say, ‘Well, to the north, to the east and to the south we’re seeing lots of investment made in primary schools.’ Whether it is Hampton, Moorabbin or East Sandringham – lots of communities around us – we have not been able to attract the kind of capital investment which would make a difference to our ageing portables.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: I might leave it there. Ms Bath.

Melina BATH: Thank you. Thank you very much, and I can sympathise with you because there are number of schools in Gippsland too, in Eastern Vic Region, that are working out of portables. One, San Remo Primary School, is portable city.

I have just done a little triangle here: the Department of Education, the principal/leadership and school councils. When they all communicate and work effectively there is a lot of synergy and positivity. We have heard in this inquiry that sometimes school councils – and they are made up of parents, the school community – feel that they are shut out of decisions or are not being well represented. Or if, in the worst case scenario, there is a

principal that is not well liked or appreciated or not doing, from the school council's view, their job, then they do not have a leg to stand on to reshape that. I just want your comments about the role of school councils and the importance of the communication between principals and the department.

Gail McHARDY: Okay. From Parents Victoria's perspective, if people have looked up the history of our organisation, we predominantly represent parents, parent associations and individual parents. That used to be and continues to be the recruitment ground for school council members in the parent category. In the time I have been involved in the organisation and back in history the autonomy of parent associations has gone up and then it has gone down, and the same is what we have seen with school councils. Even though school councils are legislated as a governing body, we feel strongly that the department does have a division that supports the school councils through its governance, but parents will say to us frequently that they feel that they can come to Parents Victoria particularly around parent club matters and also school council matters. But we are not the dedicated organisation representing school council issues; we have inherited that. There were two organisations in the past that did that; they did unify. Unfortunately, over time trying to attract volunteers to run these not-for-profit organisations does prove to be a challenge, but we have probably taken on that baton to continue the support for parents that put their hand up to be involved in good governance. But we would say that apart from the training that the department provides for school councillors, a lot of that now is online. You can do face-to-face by booking in, but in our experience this is voluntary, it is not compulsory. The government cannot mandate training for people in those roles, and sometimes the lines become blurred between operational matters, strategic planning and what school councils want to do going forward. In Andrew's situation, as far as having to be the spokesperson in relation to facilities matters, this is a huge load on particular people in particular communities. They rely on the people who have the capacity, like probably Mr Campbell here, which is terrific, but we also need to make sure our communities have diverse representation for all our community members that are attached to that local school, including the staff, because we would also need to say –

Melina BATH: Feel part of the school community.

Gail McHARDY: Yes, correct. And we also need to have a student voice as well as a parent voice in that space to be amplified. There are certain things now in the governance training modules that we get an opportunity to review and to contribute to, which is fantastic, but we would say there are areas for improvement to ensure good governance.

Melina BATH: My time has run out, but I guess what I am seeking from you is: what are those areas for improvement? Could you please put them on notice or respond to us in writing? That would be lovely.

Gail McHARDY: Yes, certainly can. Happy to.

Melina BATH: Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Mr Puglielli.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you. Good afternoon. I will try and be quite quick with time. In terms of your contribution, Gail, just earlier you mentioned how priority one is reaching 100 per cent of the school resource standard – thrilled to hear it. In terms of that top priority, you might have caught in the last session that 4 per cent of that gets used as a bit of a loophole to cover things like capital depreciation, non-school costs, in reaching that priority of 100 per cent. Does Parents Victoria have a view as to whether or not that 4 per cent should be included in that figure, or should that be an additional allocation?

Gail McHARDY: Straight answer: that should be additional. It cannot be included. It is not fair to our public school system and the fact that the federal capital expenditure has been zilch in recent years compared to our other sectors. It is really important that public schools are prioritised. We would say 'Public first with the public purse' – that is our motto. They are really important, those things, those considerations, because included in that 4 per cent we say there are 'funding tricks' – that is what we refer to them as in layman's terms – because the community are not aware of some of those other costing arrangements. I am happy for it to be on the public record that we have raised this with state government and through our national organisation and in our funding campaign. It is all on our website if you wish to have a look at the funding facts. We have been working with a former Productivity Commission economist Trevor Cobbold, who has been fantastic. He has been able to share and explain those facts. Because people in the community are not very clear about that stuff,

we need that transparency. It is not that we want to take money from them, ideally. Politically it is not going to happen because obviously it should be 100 per cent to public schools first – but the overfunding is abhorrent.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: That is overfunding of private –

Gail McHARDY: The private sector.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Yes, okay – just to clarify. Would you support this committee making a recommendation to write to federal counterparts on that arrangement change?

Gail McHARDY: Most definitely.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you.

Andrew CAMPBELL: I would only add that the pressure on the school community is significant, particularly on school councils. We all know that they are selling lamingtons and chooks and all that sort of stuff in raffles, but half of the upkeep of the maintenance of our school falls on the shoulders of parent volunteers and our fundraising efforts, which is difficult.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you. To stay with you, Andrew: with regard to your school's need for upgrades, which you have spoken about in your remarks, what reasons have you been given as to why those funds have not been provided?

Andrew CAMPBELL: I do not think there has been a terrible amount of transparency. I think that is the challenge. Only to say that we of course accept that there is a lot of growth going on, especially in the north-western corridor, and the VSBA has a very big program of building ahead of it – completely understand that. Nevertheless what we are keen for, if not an investment, is just some transparency as to how we can improve things and turn things around for our students. My kids will not be beneficiaries of that, but I am hoping the tens of thousands of other kids that come through our school over the next 10, 15, 20 years will benefit.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Thanks, Mr Puglielli. Mr McCracken.

Joe McCracken: Thank you both for your submissions and what you have put forward. I guess, Gail, if I go to you first, I know that you have this idea of having a family engagement officer. I am in two schools of mind about that idea. I guess in one instance it can really facilitate and fill a gap, but in the other frame of mind it might also add another layer or a complication to a system. Why have you put it forward as the solution to fill that particular gap? What problem is it seeking to really –

Gail McHARDY: To resolve?

Joe McCracken: to resolve?

Gail McHARDY: What is actually happening in our schools, and I think you have heard it through other witnesses, are the time pressures, the labour intensity and trying to retain our workforce, all those things – and I am well aware of the review into the administrative burden et cetera and that sort of thing. We will certainly be approaching government to put a view about what we think could help there. By having family engagement officers, they act as a conduit between school and home, because some families for whatever reason have a reluctance and apprehension to approach the principal. That is nothing against the principal. That is just about parents being able to have the confidence to have those conversations, and they are incredibly busy people, as you know. You know there is a proportion of the community that have an expectation. They want an audience with the principal. You heard the principals say that that is not necessarily the case in other workplaces, where you can walk into the CEO's office et cetera to have those conversations. So having the right people doing the right roles into supporting that connection between home and school can only be a positive. There are schools that have done these types of roles. We gave them the family engagement officers – acronym FEOs. We do not care what they are called as long as there is a conduit between home and family to have those conversations that sometimes families are not confident doing with a teacher or with a leader of a school. That is, again, not attributing anything to the person individually; that is just about the person themselves who may need to have that liaison.

We are not expecting these people to be untrained. We would like to think that they are community-type people. Back in the 80s they did have support centre networks and things in schools. They had community liaison officers. They were very successful. Again, like with governments, things change – the direction of things. But when things work, why change them? We would just say that that would be certainly, in our view, a positive step in supporting certain school communities or all school communities, and if they had to be shared amongst a couple of schools, so be it.

Joe McCracken: Yes, okay. Thanks. Now to you, Andrew, as well. I thought your submission was quite interesting as well. Much like parts of my electorate, there are some areas that get a lot of attention and some areas that do not get a lot of attention. We hear a lot of talk from the government about investing in schools, but the remaining schools that still exist are tired and run down and probably lacking a lot of facilities, like you have described. You suggested that there is not a lot of transparency about the reason why. What is your gut feeling about the reason why?

Andrew Campbell: Look, it is difficult to speculate, isn't it? You assume that it is a lack of attention on some areas for political reasons, but who knows. I am not here to –

Joe McCracken: Yes. I know you said in your submission that Brighton Primary School is in a Liberal electorate. Do you think that might be part of it?

Andrew Campbell: Well, I will let the panel be the judge there. I am not qualified to speak to that.

Joe McCracken: Yes, okay.

The Deputy Chair: Thanks, Mr McCracken. Mr Galea.

Michael Galea: Thank you, Deputy Chair. Thank you both for joining us. I am pleased the other schools that Mr Campbell mentioned are also in Liberal electorates and are getting funded as well, Mr McCracken, but let us not go into petty little arguments between ourselves as committee members.

I would like to start perhaps if I can with you, Ms McHardy. You have spoken about your campaign for more equitable schools funding, especially for public schools. We have also heard today and in other hearings as well about the national schools agreement and the ongoing discussions between the states and the Commonwealth. What difference would it make if the Commonwealth were to chip in that extra 5 per cent that is being called for? What difference would that make in our public schools?

Gail McHardy: A huge difference. Our understanding from our principal colleagues is they would say that the amount of money that they need additional for each student would then remove the pressure on them from their budgets to be calling on families and transferring those costs to other people – i.e. the families – to contribute, just having to prioritise certain programs and so forth and having to do that juggle struggle with the budget. Each community has a slightly different context about what they are delivering and the needs of the school, be it capacity of mental health programs et cetera. I hope that has answered your question.

Michael Galea: It has, thank you. Mr Campbell, as an experienced school council representative, with that additional funding in state schools, would you see the benefit coming through for students at your school?

Andrew Campbell: Yes, it would make a big difference for the students. It would make a big difference for the teaching staff as well. It would make their life a heck of a lot easier, particularly those who are teaching in really small rooms that are noisy and poorly insulated. They do the best that they can. We have them looking as good as they can be, but they are not up to scratch.

Michael Galea: They are doing their best. You both touched on teachers there as well. The workload on teachers again has been a big topic for today and previous hearings as well but also retention. Can I ask both of you your perspective on how we can retain our best teachers?

Gail McHardy: I would like to kick that off, because it is not just about attracting them – as you say, it is to retain them. It seems to be that the government, to give them credit, have actually given a whole lot of initiatives to try to attract. Our understanding from the conversations we have had with government is that Victoria is attracting, and the lion's share of that recruitment is bigger than any other state or territory. That is a good thing to hear. But of course all these things take time to attract and to transition into so schools actually

are receiving these teachers on the ground. We understand there are pockets around the community, and I am sure in regional communities they are still having struggles in particular areas. But we would say that the most important thing is how we can support our teachers, particularly around the relationship between students and themselves, with their parents, with their leadership and also to build their capacity. We would use the term 'will, skill and capacity' and how we best do that. Obviously educational training and all those sorts of things need really priority investment and investing in the right quality programs to give them the appropriate skills in their backpack to present in front of the classroom.

Michael GALEA: Thank you. I did want us to ask another question, but we are literally out of time now. Thank you both.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Ms Payne.

Rachel PAYNE: Thank you, Deputy Chair. Thank you, Gail, and thank you, Andrew, for presenting for us today. Gail, I might start with you. You did touch on this earlier in reference to the pandemic, post pandemic and pre pandemic, and some of the feedback that we have received throughout this inquiry process has been around the need for flexible working arrangements and revisiting that. I do note in your submission you do touch on school refusal and the issue around school refusal. Would you like to extend on that a little bit further and if that is something that is considered by parents as an option as well as working with teachers in a more flexible arrangement?

Gail McHARDY: You are all well aware that in our legislation, under the education Act, school is compulsory to the age of 17. Obviously we know that we are already getting a strong sense about what employees are expressing they want for the future in their work arrangements, and young people are expressing they want flexible learning arrangements too. Because we had that window during the pandemic they have an expectation now, so it is how as a community and a government we respond to those expectations and how we manage it best. I do not want to repeat what other people have repeated in these hearings, but in answer to your question I think there has to come a time where we have to look at every potential opportunity and explore those things. Obviously we have to be practical about those applications. They have to be well planned and thought through, because there can be unintended consequences sometimes with those types of things, because some families are not equipped to do the supervision that is required of them if their child is learning from home. But we do have a significant number of children that are presenting with difficulties and challenges, and I know that people do not want to spotlight that, because that might create, again, another trend. But from our perspective you cannot ignore the reality of what is happening in any household, and I would like to think that we are all responsive, that we have a very good care intention. This is why the relationship matters bit is so important, because if families and schools can trust each other to work together better going forward, maybe those solutions will be brokered at a local level. Some schools do that really, really well, and I commend those schools that do that. Some do not have as much flexibility for whatever reason, and I think they are the sorts of things where people need to rise to the occasion and where governance comes back in too to be able to have those conversations.

Rachel PAYNE: Yes, definitely. I might just pivot. We are also hearing there is a reported reliance on relief teachers; you were talking about developing that relationship. How much does that impede that relationship between a teacher and parent when there is a general reliance on casual or relief staff?

Gail McHARDY: It depends on the model that the school is using. With relief teaching, they could have what they call their school bank of staff that they regularly use, so the students are known to those particular relief teachers. Some use agencies. Again, the schools are pretty quick to pick up the relief teachers that they have that work well and have a good relationship with the students. Again, that relies on good induction by the school and how the other teacher peers and colleagues support those CRTs in that role, but in my experience as a parent – even though my children are now adult age, but I have grandchildren now going through the system – it is really quite interesting that there is potential and opportunities for how that can be done in a very effective way.

Rachel PAYNE: Yes, okay. Thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Mr Welch.

Richard WELCH: Thank you, Deputy Chair. Andrew, I have heard also from other principals that the grant and funding procedure is opaque and you do not get feedback. Do you think there is an over-reliance on basically the grant-writing skills of principals to getting their fair share of infrastructure spending?

Andrew CAMPBELL: Yes. Look, I have got an imperfect view, but that is probably my observation. In saying that, the criteria I am sure are very sensible and I am sure the calculus makes loads of sense. But we are not privy to it, and it does make it really difficult to advocate for your school.

Richard WELCH: Would you recommend that there is a better way of funding than schools themselves applying and that objective measurements of infrastructure should apply, or something like that?

Andrew CAMPBELL: I think it depends on what you are funding. There are lots of grant schemes out there for small amounts of remedial funding for particular things. We have succeeded in shade sails here and there – 20 grand here or whatnot – which is wonderful and fantastic, and we are grateful for it. But when you are talking about larger works, ‘opaque’ is the word I would use to describe it.

Richard WELCH: And it is the SBS, isn’t it – the building works fund?

Gail McHARDY: VSBA.

Richard WELCH: The SBA, yes. Do you find them a net benefit or a net impediment to getting works done?

Andrew CAMPBELL: I think we have not had an awful lot of experience with them, lamentably.

Gail McHARDY: I am happy to add something there.

Richard WELCH: Yes, please.

Gail McHARDY: I think from a community perspective there is an expectation that all Victorian government schools will be treated equally and that any maintenance or capital works will be done in order of priority, and I think that is quite a reasonable expectation. So there should be no political influence or impact in that regard. All communities have the equal right. This is where it comes into the equity debate.

Richard WELCH: Well, it is a social contract, in my view.

Gail McHARDY: Correct. And the thing is now, because of designated zone policies and so forth – and I argue about parental choice; I do not really want to get into a big discussion about that – for parents that are trying to go to their local neighbourhood school, if their school is really run down and has not been kept up to measure, they are going to look at the ones with the bricks and mortar that are shiny. But from our perspective you have got to look beyond that. It is what is within a school – the quality of staff, the relationships with the other parents et cetera.

Richard WELCH: For us as a committee, though, you would suggest things like the SBA are part of the solution, could be part of the solution or are not part of the solution?

Gail McHARDY: I think where their remit is involved, they have to facilitate those works and that is their job. But as far as who gets up on that list or who gets the funding at any particular time, that needs to be very carefully done in a way that is fair and equitable to all and where no-one is jumping the queue, so to speak.

Richard WELCH: And in your view is it being done fairly and equitably at the moment?

Gail McHARDY: I think from what Andrew is sharing – and we have seen this in other electorates as well – some schools do question why they miss out and others get it, the timing et cetera. The other thing I would add, as far as maintenance, is that we want our teachers and children to work and learn in safe places, and I am sure the government would say that is happening. But we also hear stories about where things are falling apart and they need urgent, priority attention, and that should be done.

Richard WELCH: Thank you.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Mrs Deeming.

Moira DEEMING: Thank you, Deputy Chair. I was just wondering if you could expand a little bit on any experience you have had with, since they have been implemented, the school community safety orders. I know that you have published a view as an organisation. I was wondering if you could just expand a little bit on how you have seen them operate and how they might interplay with your suggestion for family engagement officers.

Gail McHARDY: Thanks for the question. It is a really complex question, and I will answer it as best I can. Our organisation is on the public record raising concerns about the unintended consequences of the scheme. All the information is on our website, to save time rattling off that. The scheme has now been implemented, and in the first year there were a couple of orders that were given to parents, but in our experience there are parents that have approached us seeking assistance about how to navigate this scheme, because they are actually horrified about what has happened and what they have done. The government had to take a stance because the wellbeing of our workforce is critically important. Our organisation is very clear: we do not want anyone to be harmed at any time, anywhere by anyone, so it is important that families and schools understand. The best way we could describe this is that when you enrol into a state government school – and these are the words of someone else within the department – you are signing a social contract, so it is really important that all parties are respectful to one another.

As you can understand, and I think the principals touched on this, communication and the relationships are imperative in this piece. What we find in the experiences when we have had people come forward – and we are very fortunate; we talk to schools and parents around this work – is it is definitely a struggle in the sense of the timing of communication. Because the workforce are so overwhelmed with workload, they probably are not necessarily responding at their best. We want everyone to perform at their best when they are communicating with people, and we also want the families to be at their best. But when something has happened with their child or a situation has occurred, it can be highly emotive for both parties.

This is why our work with relationship-based education is critically important. No-one is born knowing how to have a quality relationship, so the work we are doing at Parents Victoria – and we are hoping to lead this to impress upon people, not just for schools, as in the staff, but also for parents and for children – is that we all have a responsibility as to how we behave in that space, so we would not even have to have the scheme implemented. Then when conflict arises, Moira, they know how to manage that conflict better and not end up in harm. No-one should be doing harm to anyone, and I do not think anyone here would agree that we have a licence to harm. I hope that has answered your question. But the scheme is problematic in the sense that it may sort out a situation for a short term, but how do you reset those relationships going forward beyond the order? Obviously we will continue to speak to the department and the government about this work, always trying to contribute the learnings from our experiences, and we hope that the principals will do so too.

Moira DEEMING: Fantastic. No further questions. Thank you so much.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Thank you. Gail and Andrew, thanks so much for coming in today and giving us your evidence. We really appreciate your perspectives given to the committee. It is very important that we hear parent and school council perspectives as part of this inquiry process. You will be given a transcript of the evidence today for review shortly. With that we will take a short break.

Witnesses withdrew.