

# Technology and the Law Subcommittee

## Inquiry Into Technology And The Law

Minutes of evidence

Melbourne – 1 December 1997

Members Present: Mr Victor Perton (Chairman), Mr Carlo Furletti, Mr Neil Cole

Staff Present: Ms Padma Raman (Research Officer), Ms Angelica Vergara (Office Manager)

Witness: Ms A. Wallace, Deputy Director, Australian Institute of Judicial Administration.

**The CHAIRMAN** – I formally open the first hearing of the inquiry into technology and the law. I welcome Ms Anne Wallace from the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration (AIJA). Because this is the committee's first formal discussion on the subject with any outside party, it will be conducted formally as a hearing. Ms Wallace, I invite you to introduce yourself.

**Ms WALLACE** – I am Deputy Director of the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration, which is at 103 Barry Street, Carlton South.

**The CHAIRMAN** – How have you become involved in technology and the law?

**Ms WALLACE** – The AIJA is putting together a review of court technology in Australia, which it hopes to present to a conference it is organising in Melbourne for March next year. My immediate involvement is that I am a member of the secretariat running with that committee. It is an area in which I have had an ongoing interest since I was involved with the LOIS project of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department in 1991-92. That was the first hands-on computer system that the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department brought in for its staff. At a personal level it is something in which I have been involved in practice, and through the AIJA I have extended that involvement to looking at court technology in a broader sense.

**The CHAIRMAN** – What was LOIS?

**Ms WALLACE** – The legal office information system, or LOIS, is an integrated practice management and legal information system which most large law firms now have. Commonwealth agencies started moving toward

that in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department was part of that.

**The CHAIRMAN** – The AIJA's draft conference agenda seems to be fairly broad. What is the vision for that conference?

**Ms WALLACE** – I suppose at the conclusion of every session we would like the people who attend to go away with a blueprint of how they might apply that technology in their court or justice systems. That may come down to two or three points and it may come down to looking at what we hope will be ways of integrating that technology with the other organisations they work for. We are aiming for a system which will not just work for, say, the New South Wales District Court but which will enable the New South Wales Director of Public Prosecutions to prepare cases electronically for presentation in courts in that state, or indeed in any other state, using whatever technology the courts have in an integrated way, so that it might even end up in an appeal in the High Court. The idea is that the technology will interface seamlessly – that is the word the experts use – so people do not have to go back and forth and translate things into different media.

One of the biggest difficulties we see with the technology area as it has developed in the courts is that although a lot of people are doing really good things there is not much emphasis on common standards and practice. A system may be developed to work beautifully in a particular court, but if you are the Commonwealth DPP, for example, you cannot necessarily translate all your material and take it over to do a trial interstate. If you are running a court in one state and collecting management information it may not be collected in the same way in another state. It is therefore particularly difficult for governments to make comparisons because the information is not collected or even measured in the same way. There are similar problems with managing cases in electronic courts. In part we are looking at communication and standards. We do not necessarily want to tell people how they should do it, but we want to say what are the important things people need to think about when they do it.

**The CHAIRMAN** – It seems to me from my early glance at the way new technologies are entering the law that it is remarkably haphazard. There does not seem to be a common national or even state vision for the way these technologies are to be used. Is that right, and is anyone undertaking any effort to deal with that issue?

**Ms WALLACE** – I think that is right. Around the country it has generally depended on initiatives taken in the courts by either individual court administrators or individual judges: A few things have happened in courts about technology – perhaps a few judges have been given laptop computers or the registry has brought in a computerised spreadsheet system to manage cases – and someone down the track has suggested the establishment of a

court technology committee to examine ways of managing this stuff. The places where that seem to be getting the best integration are states like South Australia, where there is a single court authority and in some senses planning is easier because you will not have each court reinventing the wheel, as it were, on case management systems – one computer department services the whole four or five major courts there. It is also easier in a smaller jurisdiction. The development is haphazard. People are starting to realise the importance of planning and integration, which is probably why many people are looking at this area at present. Even in the Commonwealth court system there is no national view.

**The CHAIRMAN** – Has there been any attempt by the AIJA or by the Commonwealth High Court Chief Justice to talk to the Attorney-General about developing some common vision?

**Ms WALLACE** – The report we commissioned in 1992 – the Greenleaf and Mowbray report – on the use of technology in complex trials recommended that a mechanism be established through a body like the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General to examine coordinating some sort of national approach. The recommendation went to SCAG. I am not sure what happened with it after that, but I think it may have been referred to what is now the Australian Court Administrators Group – ACAG – which is a loosely-based body of heads of court administrator jurisdictions. I think there was general agreement that it was a good idea, but I do not know whether anything has been actioned. We have tried to keep it on the agenda with this conference but we have not been given a specific brief by the government.

**The CHAIRMAN** – I suppose the subcommittee should just communicate with the Victorian Attorney-General and Daryl Williams to follow up what has happened on that front. Would that be the most appropriate way for us to go?

**Ms WALLACE** – Yes. We received Commonwealth funding for the conference we are organising in March, and part of the rationale was that we would promote the concept of standards and uniformity; so some consideration has been given to it in that way.

**The CHAIRMAN** – What has been your contact with the Victorian court authorities, and who is doing the work on this front?

**Ms WALLACE** – Jeff Leeuwenburg would be a good person for the committee to talk to because he spent quite some time with the Justice people on what is happening with technology in the courts. There are areas where innovative things are happening in Victoria. We are showcasing the Victorian video-conferencing system at our conference because we believe – and this is not false praise – it is working extremely well. We have examined the way video is being used overseas and we believe what is being practised in

Victoria is one of the best examples. We do not need to go to the United States of America or to bring someone to Australia to display it because that is happening in Victoria.

It is an example of a very practical initiative that occurred basically because a lot of people started talking; the first suggestion was that rather than bringing in all the people from remand every morning it would be cheaper in the long run to set up a camera in the remand centre and do the remand cases that way; the County Court is now using it to take evidence when it is on circuit, so instead of flying in medical witnesses from elsewhere, it can be done by video conferencing. That is now starting to be used for court management meetings as well. It is an example of a technology that has had a bit of snowball effect.

The impression I get from my experience is that either the residential or the building tribunal here has a nice case management system, which we are looking at as an example of a system for a small organisation. At the other end of the scale, probably in the highest courts in Victoria, apart from the technological courtrooms, there does not seem to be much in the way of technology being used in the day-to-day business of the higher courts. That is my impression anyway. I do not know enough about it – that is not atypical of higher courts in other jurisdictions either – but my impression is that there is probably room for a lot of things to be done in that area.

In regard to Victoria, I refer to the points I made about South Australia. All courts in this day and age are aware of the fact that they have to attract resources from governments. When they do that they need to look at efficiencies. It is much easier to demonstrate efficiencies when you have an integrated management system like the one in South Australia, or even in New South Wales where there seems to be a far more structured management system. My impression in Victoria, notwithstanding that it has a separate department, is that there tend to be more divisions of responsibility when you get to some levels. That may just be an historical thing.

**Mr FURLETTI** – You talked about court technology committees. In your view, does it work better at that level or should there be an overall judicial system technology committee?

**Ms WALLACE** – In a larger jurisdiction I think you need to have separate committees. A lot of what makes technology work in courts is the commitment of the individuals using it. There is a better chance of success where they have their own committee and a chance to have a say and give some input. In many of the higher courts individual judges have taken the initiative, saying they have cases to run and they will do it on computer, or perhaps requesting the purchase of a laptop to go on circuit. They have tended to start these committees and think about ways of using technology, but it needs to be done in some overall terms of reference and planning

framework. I do not think that is there in many places at present. A committee might come up with some good ideas, but if there is no framework or if the committee is doing things that are already being done in other states, there is no consistency or coordination.

**The CHAIRMAN** – Do you think that causes a lot of duplication of effort?

**Ms WALLACE** – It can. One thing we try to encourage in the conferences and other events we organise is getting information transferred between courts about what is happening in this area as well as many others. Recently a judge hearing a case in Western Australia had developed a system of downloading transcript from the Bunbury courthouse. It was an innovative system. It just so happened that someone in Queensland was looking at developing a system for doing the same thing. Because we knew about it, we told the Queensland people about the Western Australian judge who was already doing it.

The Western Australian technical person was able to be linked to Queensland and it happened very quickly. However, if you do not know about it, the Queensland people could have spent a few tens of thousands of dollars reinventing the system. The mechanism for that coordination really is not there, apart from us – and that is a bit haphazard because we do not have the brief and it depends on whom we are talking to on any particular day. I suppose at one level people working in the area tend to know what is happening.

**The CHAIRMAN** – There are many people working on this around the world. We have some specific briefs. For example, electronic commerce is a whole other area. I do not want this committee duplicating the work that is going on elsewhere. I want it to specialise in doing things that will add value and perspective. One of the areas it has already taken a lead in is in getting law reform onto the web, and we have recently received a request for help from the Fijians.

I want the committee to have some good results in this area. Perhaps, in conjunction with the AIJA, we could have a joint web page with information on who is doing what at the moment. Would that be a feasible thing to get up in the next couple of weeks? Could we attach to your conference papers on the web? It could be a page that gives information on teleconferencing in Australia and lists the people who are doing things in that area. In terms of court transcripts, it could list the people who are doing things there. Perhaps we could set up a very easy clearing house of information.

**Ms WALLACE** – We would be more than interested. We are encouraging people to attach anything to our Web site that is related to the conference. That is definitely something that is relevant to what we are doing. Jeff would probably have a lot of information to assist on putting that together.

**The CHAIRMAN** – Who runs your Web site?

**Ms WALLACE** – At the moment we have attached it to AustLII and we are paying it a site licence for the duration of the conference. So we have set it up as part of the conference listing, and Jeff Leeuwenburg is maintaining it.

**The CHAIRMAN** – Jeff works in-house for you?

**Ms WALLACE** – He is a consultant with the ASC three days a week and he works on our conference two days a week.

**The CHAIRMAN** – Perhaps we can come to an arrangement: we will put the page up and if you can get approval it will be jointly badged to say 'Victorian Law Reform Committee and AIJA clearing house' with information on projects.

**Mr FURLETTI** – Encouraging others who have projects to list.

**The CHAIRMAN** – To let us know, yes.

**Mr COLE** – In contrast to the questions from the chairman, which related to specific matters, my question is general. You referred to South Australia. Although it is a small state, maybe we could use it as a model to look at a vision for technology. Is the vision just to have video conferencing in every court, or is there something beyond that that somebody is trying to predict? I would like the committee to look at that possibility and make recommendations on it. We all know about uniformity, and the lack of it, between the states, but nobody has come up with a model and said, 'This is what we have to do'. Do you have any ideas on how we would go about that, or do you have your own model?

**Ms WALLACE** – The Singapore subordinate courts are probably the most advanced in the region.

**Mr COLE** – It is good to hear they have something that is advanced.

**The CHAIRMAN** – There is the quick processing of prisoners – arrest the guilty and imprison them quickly!

**Ms WALLACE** – At a conference we held in Sydney, a judge from Singapore presented a vision of a virtual court where the judge, the parties and even the legal representatives would not be physically present in the courtroom. The entire proceedings would be conducted through an integrated web of video conferences.

**Mr FURLETTI** – There would be a lie detector built into that.

**Ms WALLACE** — The virtual court is talked about in terms of taking technology to the nth degree. If you were to take technology as far as it could go, it is possible you would do away with the physical courtroom altogether. There are many issues involved with that. I could feel the hackles of all the barristers in the audience rising as this concept was being explained. That may be the extreme and we may decide we do not want to take it that far. In Singapore, for example, they are already using a remote traffic kiosk. A person can go and key into this electronic kiosk, plead guilty to a traffic fine and pay the fine on the spot. Queensland already has a kiosk that gives basic legal information to a legal aid client about his or her case and when it will be heard. So there may be aspects of that technology we would want to use — but not perhaps for murder trials.

**Mr COLE** — I was talking about a vision, not an extreme example. Is it possible to work out where it should be in 20 years time and what we should be aiming at with this technology?

**Ms WALLACE** — I do not know that anybody has that integrated vision because the technology is and has been changing quickly. When you talk to people about planning, one of the strong things that seems to be coming through is access. Many technological developments so far have been in-house. What we are seeing now includes things like the Queensland example, where there is more information available to lawyers, law firms and the public about what the courts do and how they do it, and about their specific cases. It is a more open system in some ways than it was in the physical courthouse, where one had to go along and queue up at the counter and ask somebody a question. Maybe that is one aspect of a vision.

**Mr FURLETTI** — Is that so different from what existed 5 or 10 years ago, when somebody who was a reading buff could go to the library or to a school and access that information? What I am getting at is whether we are just talking about the same thing on a different plane. If we are, do we still not end up with the same problem for those who do not have the ability or the notion to go there?

**Ms WALLACE** — One interesting thing about the Queensland initiative is that legal aid has decided to make the information available to litigants who do not have PCs at home whereby they can tune into the Web. They can now go to a legal aid office and access that technology. There are real issues about access to technology.

**Mr FURLETTI** — I am thinking more along the lines of those who have the mental capacity and the intelligence to do it compared with those who may not be able to access it because of their backgrounds. It may be available, but they just cannot access it.

**The CHAIRMAN** – This is an informal hearing so let's tease that through. I was disappointed with the Queensland legal aid project in that they failed to integrate it with their Web site. They have stand-alone kiosks that have stand-alone Web sites. They ignored the fact there are other states in which there is family law and so forth and so failed to share the tasks. What was apparent to me in Queensland was that at the deputy director level there was very little idea of the technology. A grant was given to install a kiosk: the attitude was, 'Let's do a kiosk'. I found that disappointing. It is different from what was around 10 years ago, because for the first time you can create predictive systems. You can also create systems in which the law is remarkably accessible.

Take, for instance, the Crimes Act. There is no problem now in having section 400 immediately hot-linked to the best commentary on what the statute means – and then having that hot-linked to the most recent case.

For the intelligent legal practitioner everything is easier. For the reasonably intelligent person it is there at his or her fingertips. For those at the lower level of normal intelligence, it means for the people to whom they go for advice, whether it is a community advice centre or the Springvale Legal Service, the efficiencies in giving them that advice change dramatically. The World Wide Web and the way in which you can cross-link information are the things that are different from 10 years ago.

**Mr COLE** – A pilot project could be undertaken, for example – not necessarily by us, but perhaps we could recommend it – with access to justice using high technology, at a legal service for instance, to see what applications are available to people. I have worked in a legal service. We did not have anything in those days, not even a typewriter, just the Fitzroy Legal Service handbook, and there would be such a variation of requests. It seems to me if you had on-line access you would need fewer staff in the place to provide legal advice, lawyers and also other staff, but the advice would be more standard – it would be better.

**The CHAIRMAN** – To continue with that point – you could actually have a database containing frequently asked questions. A person who has been picked up by a red light camera may want to know whether there is a defence. The information would be there and be able to be accessed quite easily.

**Mr FURLETTI** – I return to my earlier question about the kiosk. If you like, the kiosk is the library, and you can then diverge into any number of areas of speciality. If we are considering the gathering of information and the correlation of the interrelationship between the various decisions and particular sections, indeed factual circumstances, surely that is where we are going. My query was more specifically related to the hands-on situation for

the ordinary person and the cost of justice and all those other issues I presume we will be touching on somewhere along the line.

**Ms WALLACE** – Access to technology at that level is an issue everywhere. I have a four-year-old niece already finding her way around a computer keyboard with an ease that amazes me. Her family can afford a computer, but I suspect in schools, community centres and libraries a good deal of technology is available to children and they are a lot more familiar with it. In 20 years time we will be using computers the way we drive cars – it is something people will do. The question is not whether you use it, but how you use it.

**Mr COLE** – It can be structured to cover that problem too. Despite what the Chairman said, I saw the Queensland operation. The good point about it was the video screen and an American voice from Oregon – –

**The CHAIRMAN** – No, it was narrated by a woman from their internal office.

**Mr COLE** – I saw the demo before you and I thought it was quite good. It was a system that explained what divorce was and that sort of thing. Have you looked at all those things, particularly the possibility of the police force using these sorts of computerised systems?

**Ms WALLACE** – Jeff has been talking to some of the prosecution agencies but mainly at the Commonwealth level. We have not had a lot of input from the police forces into the project we are doing. We have written asking for input and not had a lot in the way of response.

**Mr COLE** – They are hopeless; they still think a computer is an abacus. It is very disappointing because that area is a major area that needs change.

**Ms WALLACE** – We began to look at this from the beginning, when the case is first put together to give to the prosecutor. We asked whether the information should be put on computer at that stage, and if it does what goes on and how; what information do people get at police stations? We have not been able to get any dialogue going with the police at that level at all. We have had some discussions with the Australian Federal Police about its investigation system.

**Mr FURLETTI** – Which case in Victoria has made the greatest use of technology?

**Ms WALLACE** – The Estate Mortgage case. It has received the most publicity, but it was the biggest. It was not the first time the technology was used in a court case, but it was the most extensive special technology court that has been set up here and a very good example of what you can do with a

higher tech court. It was as good as the technology used in the Wood royal commission inquiry. The transcript particularly was very good. We are using those local examples for our conference. We will be talking about the American court 21, but a lot of the overseas high-tech courts are still more or less experimental.

There have been some good examples of people in Australia using the technology quite well. Estate Mortgage was very good. It was a temporary courtroom established for a temporary purpose. Then you face the problem of what to do next time a case comes along that requires that level of technology. Is it more cost effective to set up an infrastructure and try to build the expense into the cost of the case? Some of the parties in the Estate Mortgage case bore some of the costs for that technology. Is that an issue in a criminal trial, for example? There are various ways you can look at how to structure the cost, but it is a big factor in those sorts of trials.

I went to the presentation by the court in the Estate Mortgage case before the equipment was dismantled and I was interested in what the judge and barristers in particular had to say about the way the technology had changed the way they did their work. It particularly compelled the barristers to be somewhat better prepared, which I found interesting. Obviously, there were changes in work practices that people are still working through with high-tech courts.

**The CHAIRMAN** – I return to video conferencing and where the Victorian courts are at; I understand in Mildura they have used video conferencing of medical witnesses from Sydney. Your impression is that that is working well?

**Ms WALLACE** – Jeff would have more detail on it than I do, but my impression after talking to a couple of judges who were involved is they have been singing its praises.

**The CHAIRMAN** – Has there been any discussion among those groups as to the cost of video conferencing at this point?

**Ms WALLACE** – I do not have figures at all on the costs. From the discussions I have had, to set up video links is not cheap and the question is whether the cost is equivalent to the cost of bringing the witness from interstate – and that is something that really needs to be looked at on an individual basis. Video conferencing would probably be a cheaper method of taking evidence in a two or three-day trial that involved four medical witnesses from Sydney. If it is one witness it may not be cheaper, so it is a question of how you make those decisions about using the technology in the first place and which technology you use.

The AAT now takes a lot of its medical evidence by telephone. It takes the view that the credibility of medical witnesses is usually not an issue so you do

not need their faces to cross-examine them, which is the argument about why you need to have face-to-face contact. It does not use video conferencing, which is more expensive: it uses telephone conferencing where appropriate. Again, how you make those decisions and what guidelines you use probably needs to be thought through in each jurisdiction.

**The CHAIRMAN** – Increasingly, it will be delivered on the Internet, will it not? Medical witnesses will probably have an interest in having the video on their desktops, will they not?

**Ms WALLACE** – Absolutely, and they are already demanding it. The attitude is, ‘I will not move out of my office when I can do this sitting at my desk with my computer’.

**The CHAIRMAN** – Are there any leaders among expert witnesses in this field?

**Ms WALLACE** – I do not have names but I know there are some. Jeff would probably again have details of this. The other person, Philip Argy from Mallesons in Sydney, has done a lot of work in this area. Every time we have a link-up steering committee for court technology he sits at his desk in Sydney and shows us the view out of his office at the same time. It is interesting. A barrister could cross-examine by video link as well.

**Mr COLE** – I have seen expert witnesses and I do not understand why you cannot have other witnesses done that way, too, because if you could it would certainly be a major shift. For example, we would not need to have regional courts in places like Ballarat. Is there any argument against doing that?

**Ms WALLACE** – Technically it is possible. The argument I foresee the legal profession raising is that to have proper cross-examination you have to do it one on one where the barrister and the judge have the opportunity to listen to the witness and assess his or her credibility.

**Mr COLE** – What about the jury?

**Ms WALLACE** – With the jury case in particular the argument would be that the jury has the opportunity to observe the person and make a judgment about the person’s demeanour. The demeanour argument is the argument usually put forward as to why you cannot do it that way. There is a fair bit of research to suggest that a lot of things we assume concerning body language are not always particularly accurate, but it is the argument that the profession puts forward.

**Mr COLE** – It could go either way.

**Ms WALLACE** – We now know that in certain cultures averting your eyes is a sign of respect rather than a sign that you are being shifty. A lot depends on the value judgment of the person making the assessment.

**Mr COLE** – Is there a general problem with technology of people not being able to accept that times have changed and we now do things differently? Is that one of the major barriers – is it only when it becomes so overwhelming that they have to?

**Ms WALLACE** – There is a real difference as far as I can see between the use of technology in what I would call commercial cases and its use in other areas of the law. Although Estate Mortgage was not a commercial case as such, it was a good example of people involved in that area who were familiar with the benefits of technology really driving the case. Clients in big commercial cases familiar with the use of technology are going to insist on it being used in the courtroom, and they will drag the court along with them, more or less. At the other end of the scale with criminal or smaller civil claims you have court staff, judges, magistrates, and practitioners in particular who are not familiar with technology, and we do have that issue you are talking about.

**Mr COLE** – There is also the volume aspect, too. If it is one case you are just doing it, but if it is all these others, which is the point I was going to raise – I think we have put too much emphasis on the big trials. Have we done much at the Magistrates Court level concerning technology? I know we have put in some computer systems .

**Ms WALLACE** – There was quite a bit done earlier on with the sentencing information for magistrates on their laptop computers. I know magistrates who use that and it is quite innovative, but I would agree with you in general terms: the resources go to the big cases because they are the ones that get the headlines as creating the problems. The sorts of resources that perhaps in the longer term need to be put into training in particular tend not to be there in the less glamorous areas, if you like. It is a general problem, not just with technology.

The other thing is the cost-effectiveness of it. In my experience judges and magistrates tend to form into two camps: either really obsessive about the technology and when they adopt it they go for it hell for leather and will do everything; or totally the other extreme. There would be a percentage in the middle as well. You really need to think about whether it is effective. You would not necessarily want a completely computerised courthouse in a small country town where the volume of cases may not be terribly great. On the other hand, if you have a judge or magistrate regularly on circuit who can do research by plugging into a computer back in court, it probably is effective to invest resources in training the judges and giving them good laptop computers. It is thinking about how you use it effectively.

An extreme example that occurred recently, but not in Australia, was a proposal for Ausaid to fund exporting a South Australian case management system to the courts in Papua New Guinea. There are courts in Papua New Guinea that do not yet have systems in place to keep proper written records of cases. There is no evidence that they have a problem with delay, so you are really looking at getting a proper written system in order before you start thinking about an elaborate computer system that may not fit the needs of that jurisdiction.

**Mr COLE** – Conversely, I used to have friends who worked up there in Papua New Guinea, and they used to fly out to the tribal highlands, put on their wigs and gowns and sit under a green hut and dispense justice before a magistrate, who was also an Australian. I should have thought this was an example where it would be better to do the whole lot by videoconferencing witnesses rather than having people tripping up to participate in what for the native tribal people is a fairly obnoxious system.

**Ms WALLACE** – One of our judges sits on the court of appeal in Vanuatu and it is insisted that they sit at certain times of the year regarding the caseload because it is very important for the local people to see the outside court coming in as a court of appeal. There is a cultural aspect that comes into that and the political consideration of seeing that justice is done and available, but I understand what you are saying.

**Mr COLE** – That may not apply to the court at Rochester, if it is still there – it has probably been closed. We could do a lot of things by conferencing that we don't, so we would not need to have country courts. We would not need to have magistrates on circuit, particularly for a lot of offences where a person is not going to go to gaol anyway.

**Ms WALLACE** – And things like directions hearings where you are doing organisational arrangements for cases. There are a lot of interlocutory things that could be done electronically.

**The CHAIRMAN** – It is clear that we have to work very closely with the – AIJA, particularly in the lead-up to the conference. One would see that joint web pages to do a stocktake of who is doing what will be very important in conjunction with the AIJA.

**Mr COLE** – Are we doing anything at that conference?

**The CHAIRMAN** – Yes, we will give a jointly authored paper in the last session. We are an all-party committee and clearly the greatest benefits to the community from us operating are that sometimes we can spur action from the political authorities. The second thing we can do is get bipartisan or tripartisan support.

Ms Wallace, you might be able to take this on notice – are there any areas in which it occurs to you we should take the lead or focus on more than others?

**Ms WALLACE** – I will take it on notice but the immediate thing that does occur to me is the need for this issue to be addressed in a long-term strategic way. We all get lots of good brownie points on the board when you see something like a high-tech court which works very well, but the real problems that are starting to come now in the technology area are caused because there has been no long-term process of planning, and courts, like everywhere else, have to account for funding these days, and it is a lot easier to do that when you are working to some sort of plan.

**Mr COLE** – That is the thing that we have been saying, too. So, you think we have a role to try to develop a plan for the future?

**Ms WALLACE** – I think the planning of it is critical.

**Mr COLE** – How far is the South Australian model advanced on any other – is it worth our going to see it?

**Ms WALLACE** – The case management in South Australia is without doubt the most sophisticated in the country and a very integrated system. Their legal court information system, which is the information system for judges and magistrates, is also a very sophisticated one and quite integrated.

**Mr COLE** – How long would it take us to look at all that – a couple of days?

**Ms WALLACE** – Yes, probably, if you wanted to talk to people who use it as well as see a demonstration, and I suggest that you do both.

**Mr COLE** – We would like to.

**Ms WALLACE** – They are always very pleased to show it off, so I do not think we will have any difficulty arranging it.

**The CHAIRMAN** – Thank you very much for coming in; we will be in very close contact all the way.

**Ms WALLACE** – I spoke to Jeff Leeuwenburg this morning and it was just too short notice last week, but I will certainly provide his contact details.

**The CHAIRMAN** – Thank you very much.

**Committee adjourned.**