



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Proof Committee Hansard

SENATE

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS REFERENCES
COMMITTEE

International child abduction to and from Australia

(Public)

THURSDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2011

CANBERRA

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SENATE
LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS REFERENCES COMMITTEE
Thursday, 22 September 2011

Senators in attendance: Senators Crossin, Furner, Humphries, Pratt and Wright.

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

The incidence of international child abduction to and from Australia, including:

- (a) the costs, terms and conditions of legal and departmental assistance for parents whose child has been abducted overseas;
- (b) the effectiveness of the Hague Convention in returning children who were wrongly removed or retained, to their country of habitual residence;
- (c) the roles of various Commonwealth departments involved in returning children who were wrongly removed or retained, to their country of habitual residence;
- (d) policies, practices and strategies that could be introduced to streamline the return of abducted children; and
- (e) any other related matters.

WITNESSES

**FURZE, Ms Jennifer, Acting Senior Legal Officer, International Family Law Section,
Attorney-General's Department..... 1**

**GLANVILLE, Ms Louise, First Assistant Secretary, Access to Justice Division, Attorney-General's
Department..... 1**

HANSEN, Mr Paul, Director, International Family Law Section, Attorney-General's Department 1

FURZE, Ms Jennifer, Acting Senior Legal Officer, International Family Law Section, Attorney-General's Department

GLANVILLE, Ms Louise, First Assistant Secretary, Access to Justice Division, Attorney-General's Department

HANSEN, Mr Paul, Director, International Family Law Section, Attorney-General's Department

Committee met at 16:02

CHAIR (Senator Humphries): I declare open this public hearing of the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee. The committee is inquiring into international child abduction to and from Australia. The inquiry was referred to the committee by the Senate on 11 May to report by 31 October. The full terms of reference for the inquiry are on the committee's website. The committee has received 41 submissions to the inquiry. The public versions of the submissions have been authorised for publication and have been made available on the committee's website.

I remind all witnesses that, in giving evidence to the committee, they are protected by parliamentary privilege. It is unlawful for anyone to threaten or disadvantage a witness on account of evidence given to a committee, and such action may be treated by the Senate as a contempt. It is also an offence to give false or misleading evidence to a committee. The committee prefers all evidence to be given in public, but, under the Senate's resolutions, witnesses have the right to request to be heard in private session. It is important for witnesses to ask the committee if they intend to ask for the right to give evidence in camera. If a witness objects to answering a question, the witness should state the ground upon which the objection is taken and the committee will determine whether it will insist on an answer, having regard to the ground claimed. If the committee determines to insist on an answer, a witness may request that the answer be given in camera. Such requests may, of course, also be made at any other time. I ask people in the committee room to ensure that their mobile phones are either turned off or switched to silent. I ask witnesses to remain behind for a few minutes at the conclusion of the evidence in case the Hansard staff need to clarify any terms.

Having got all the formalities out of the way I welcome representatives of the Attorney-General's Department. You have previously lodged submission number 32 with the committee. Thank you for that. I would just remind senators that the Senate has resolved that an officer of a department of the Commonwealth or of a state shall not be asked to give opinions on matters of policy and should be given reasonable opportunity to refer questions asked of the officer to superior officers or to a minister. This resolution prohibits only question is asking for opinions on matters of policy and does not preclude questions asking for explanations of policies or factual questions about when and how policies were adopted. Officers of the department are also reminded that any claim that it would be contrary to the public interest to answer a question must be made by a minister and should be accompanied by a statement setting out the basis for the claim.

We have asked the department to come back before the committee because of an announcement that has been made about some developments in the area of the government's intention to legislate with respect to crimes relating to international child abduction. The committee is obviously interested in hearing about that, as it is directly relevant to the issues in our inquiry. It might be appropriate if an opening statement were made in which members of the department could enlighten us about what the government is doing in this area.

Ms Glanville: Perhaps the easiest thing to do is to summarise what the government has announced and then we are happy to take any questions that you might have or requests for points of clarification. Essentially, the government has announced a series of measures to deal with international child abduction. These measures include strengthening criminal offences by creating an offence which relates to the wrongful retention of a child overseas. The coverage of offences in relation to abduction will be extended to those instances where a parent attends or has been invited to attend family dispute resolution.

There is also an amendment which relates to providing the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions with the ability to give an undertaking that a prosecution will not be pursued if a child is returned to Australia. There are further amendments providing that the family law courts will be given the power to suspend the requirement for child support in particular circumstances and/or maintenance to be paid by left-behind parents and, finally, increasing the information gathering powers of Australian authorities to locate children who are wrongfully removed from or retained outside Australia. These reforms that the government has announced are based on advice it has received from the Family Law Council. There were two separate pieces of advice. I am advised they are both now on the website of the Family Law Council. The government has indicated that its department is currently working on these reforms with a view to introducing legislation in the first half of 2012.

CHAIR: You said this is essentially summarised in the media release that ministers McClelland and Macklin put out on 19 September.

Ms Glanville: Yes, that is correct.

CHAIR: I will kick off with a question about criminalising wrongful retention of a child overseas. I assume this makes clear that there is an offence in relation to abducting a child—taking a child overseas without the permission of the other custodial parent.

Ms Glanville: Yes.

CHAIR: You would be aware of the comments of other witnesses to the inquiry about the undesirability of criminalising these offences. Can you offer any comment, given that the government has now decided to go down the path of criminalising some of this behaviour, as to why it has done that over the advice of other stakeholders who have previously given submissions to this inquiry?

Ms Glanville: The government has considered very carefully the advices from the Family Law Council. The Family Law Council, in its first advice to the government, suggested that there was a hole in the legislation which related to the illegal retention of children overseas. This would occur, for example, in an instance where parents have agreed that a child is to travel to some other country with one parent and to be returned to Australia, to their state or territory, at a particular day, at a particular point in time, and that does not occur and that child is retained in whatever jurisdiction they are in overseas. The Family Law Council pointed out that it felt that this was something that could be addressed within the criminal legislative framework. I note that it made comments that it thought the civil legislative framework was very good in the way it was, but it believed that the criminal legislative framework had a gap relating to the retention of a child overseas. Importantly, the Family Law Council also indicated in its report that it did not favour an approach which criminalised child abduction per se. In doing so, it made a case for why the civil approach that is currently in use here is the appropriate one. Of course, the government has implicitly accepted that because it has announced the reforms that it is intending to make, which is simply to criminalise the aspect of retention. That aspect, it is intended, would be used as a further means to encourage the taking parent to bring the child back to the country, which remains the core of the government's interest—that is, it is in the best interests of the child to be brought back to their home jurisdiction and, if there are issues to be determined, for the courts in that jurisdiction to determine those issues.

CHAIR: A number of the witnesses to the inquiry testified about parties, particularly women, taking children away because of a perception of violence or harm to those children. These witnesses argued that making any of those offences criminal offences would have an implication for people who felt that they could not obtain a just outcome and protection of their children through the Family Court process in particular. Does the government have a view about that in the way in which it has put forward these amendments?

Ms Glanville: The Family Law Council also recommended that there be a series of defences to the offence that is being created. There are a range of them, but one of them is taking account of situations of violence—that a taking parent may be fleeing from a violent situation with their child. Certainly those defences will be replicated in the government's final policy.

Senator WRIGHT: I will follow up on that. I am looking at the nine or so defences that the Family Law Council recommended. Are you saying that your understanding is that the government will institute all of those?

Ms Glanville: The government is looking at all of those. The policy process is developing as we move forward for the rest of this year, so we are looking at all of those. My issue was directed explicitly to the point about family violence, and that is certainly something that is committed to. There is recognition that sometimes the fleeing is in fact in response to situations of violence.

Senator WRIGHT: I understand that, and that is a commonly cited concern, but there are others there. There is mistake of fact, for instance, or sudden or extraordinary emergency. There is quite a wide gamut of potential defences there.

Mr Hansen: Those defences are defences within the criminal code and they will apply to the new offences.

Senator PRATT: I have a question in relation to the offences. It is stated that the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions has the capacity to drop prosecution and provide an assurance if a commitment is made that a child will be returned. However, there was some evidence before the committee that seems to imply that the mere existence of the offence might be enough in some jurisdictions to prevent the return of a child. I wonder if you have had advice to that effect at all. I would like some reassurance that the withdrawal of prosecution is enough to ensure the safe return.

Mr Hansen: What you are talking about there is that, under article 13(b) of the child abduction convention, there is an exception to return, which is if it places the child in an intolerable situation. A large number of overseas courts have determined that, if the child's primary carer is to face prosecution, that could place a child in an intolerable situation. The measure that the government announced is specifically to allow the Director of Public Prosecutions to give an undertaking that prosecutions will not happen where the central authority in Australia has received a request from an overseas authority—and that will be either a central authority or an overseas court—for such an undertaking to be given. That is specifically to give an assurance to that court that they can order the return of the child and be assured that the prosecution will not happen.

Senator PRATT: So the mere existence of the offence is not enough for it to cause problems?

Mr Hansen: No, normally where it specifically raises a concern before the court, the court will request an undertaking to be given.

Senator PRATT: Okay.

CHAIR: Are there other questions about the offences being created relating to retaining a child overseas?

Senator FURNER: Going to the Family Law Council submission, you indicated in your opening statement that you have picked up recommendation 1 of their submission?

Ms Glanville: Yes. The Family Law Council provides advices. There is a reference given and they provide advices to the Attorney and to the government on particular areas that the government is interested in looking at and then those recommendations are considered by government in determining its response.

Senator CROSSIN: Is their recommendation 1 the only one you picked up?

Ms Glanville: We would have to go through and check that but I think there are others. I will ask Jennifer to do that while we move on to some of the questions and then we can answer that, if that is okay.

CHAIR: Okay. Could you clarify how the offences are being extended to cover a parent 'attending or invited to attend family dispute resolution'. What do you mean by that?

Mr Hansen: If you look at the current offences under 65Y and 65Z, you will see that 65Z in particular has an offence relating to when proceedings commence. Basically the policy intent is to extend that out—

CHAIR: Sorry, what is the offence?

Mr Hansen: Under 65Z a parent commits an offence if they remove a child from Australia while family law proceedings are 'pending'. The intent of the policy announcement, as well as extending the offences to include retention not just wrongful removal, is also to extend it out so that family law proceedings commence in terms of the offence when a parent attends or has been invited to attend family dispute resolution. So it brings forward the element of the offence specifically to cover those parents, in line with the government's wider policy stance to keep families out of court where possible.

CHAIR: I do not understand how people in that category would not already be caught by the provisions you are talking about to criminalise a person who has taken a child and retains them, wrongly, overseas or who removes them from the jurisdiction wrongly. Both of those actions under the government's proposals would be criminal offences. Wouldn't that cover everybody who was involved in a family dispute resolution process?

Mr Hansen: Not in the terms of the current legislation.

CHAIR: But once you have amended it with respect to those two other criminal offences you are talking about creating, why do you need to have a separate category? What sort of people would not be included in those first two categories of retaining a child wrongfully overseas or removing a child wrongfully from the jurisdiction? Who would not be covered by that that you need to cover by this reference to people involved in family dispute resolution?

Mr Hansen: Both those categories of persons will be covered. The intention is to extend the time at which that coverage commences. Currently, the existing offences only commence once a matter is filed in court. The intention is to bring forward that commencement of the offences applying to where a party is involved in or invited to attend FTR. It is basically to cover the situation as soon as a parent is advised that there is a dispute in relation to children, so the offences then operate from that point in time.

Ms Glanville: To continue that, page 6 of the Family Law Council's 14 March advice takes the point that you are raising and talks about the rationale for so doing and the verifiable date and indicates how there is a specific representation of a stage at which parents will have considered the need to adhere to legislative requirements being that point at which they begin to engage in FDR. It is, I think, quite a neat explanation at the bottom of page 6 around the policy rationale for considering this type of expansion.

Senator WRIGHT: An issue was raised by the submission from Women's Legal Services Australia and also concerns me because I have had experience in the family dispute resolution process. I have seen situations where invitations to attend, which are really just in the form of a letter, have gone astray and not been received. There is not a particularly formal process—there is no service as such—so I think the concern is around proving that someone has in fact received an invitation to attend or establishing the parameters of the offence. What comments would you make about that?

Ms Glanville: Matters around ensuring that there is consistency and logic in the development of policy underpinning this legislation are all matters that are considered in the period before a bill is available. So the practical out-workings of it are currently occurring within the department.

Senator WRIGHT: The other point raised in their submission was the suggestion that there could be a deliberate abuse of process in family dispute resolution where there have already been preparations for a party to take children overseas, for instance. Again, what would you say about that?

Ms Glanville: The same, really. In terms of operationalising this policy, clearly one of the things that the department does very carefully is engage with stakeholders who have an interest, in particular the courts' view about what is being proposed. Issues such as those you raise and others will be part of the consultative process around getting this legislation right.

Senator WRIGHT: Mr Hansen, you said earlier that, because the defence is a part of the Criminal Code and these offences will be incorporated into the Criminal Code, if I understand you correctly, those defences that were referred to earlier would also cover—

Mr Hansen: There are a core group of defences that exist within the Criminal Code that will also apply to these new offences, yes.

CHAIR: We will turn to arrangements with respect to child support payments. I am trying to recall what evidence was given to the committee before about this, but wasn't it already possible for the Family Court to suspend payments of child support to a party that had fled with a child overseas?

Mr Hansen: Not that we are aware of, no.

CHAIR: This is a power that is being added to the court for the first time?

Mr Hansen: Yes.

CHAIR: Did the Child Support Agency have the power to do that previously?

Mr Hansen: The advice we received from them, and it was considered by the Family Law Council, who also looked at this issue, was that, regardless of whether a parent had wrongfully removed children or whether they were in Australia or overseas, they still had the right to apply and be assessed for child support.

CHAIR: But the Child Support Agency had or has at the moment the power to discontinue that in certain circumstances such as where a child has been taken away and they do not know where the child is?

Mr Hansen: No. We were advised that, regardless of whether a child or parent is in Australia or overseas, a parent still has a right to apply to the Child Support Agency for assessment and, if it is assessed and falls under their legislation, they are required to obtain payment from the other parent.

Senator PRATT: In the circumstances where a child may be abducted but court later finds that a parent does have the right to relocate in the best interests of the child, I would assume that the legislation provides for child support to be paid in those circumstances?

Mr Hansen: What was announced is that where a court has removed the obligation for child support and maintenance, that can be reinstated upon agreement between the parties, by the return of the child to Australia or by declaration of the courts and application by either party. In those circumstances, where the court has found a child to have been wrongfully removed and one parent returns to get relocation orders, we would anticipate that the parent would also apply to the court to have that child support reinstated within the same proceedings.

Senator PRATT: I am not sure that you will be able to answer this, because I suppose it is a question for the Child Support Agency. Clearly, wrongful removal is something that happens internally in Australia as well, and there are still limited rights for parents not to pay. Does the same obligation to pay child support exist, as previously outlined? I am interested in that comparison.

Ms Glanville: Certainly this focuses on international child abduction, and I suppose, without commenting specifically on your point, people within Australia who have experienced this sad event would be able to access courts within Australia more immediately for those purposes.

Senator PRATT: That is probably worth having on the record to highlight that we are not pretending that there is some kind of discrepancy or unfairness there. So thank you.

Senator WRIGHT: I have some follow-up questions. I did not want to hog all the questions, but there are a few other questions I have about this aspect, given that it is novel. Where the overseas location of the child is known and the taking parent is accessing child support payments from overseas, how would the new powers ensure that the child would continue to receive the financial support he or she needs in those circumstances? We will leave the circumstances of the taking aside, because they may be wanting to make an assertion that there was a need, such as fleeing from violence or some other reason, so they may be relying on those financial payments. How would the new powers ensure that the child continued to receive the financial support that he or she needed?

Ms Glanville: This will be a matter for the family law courts. Appropriately, the family law courts have discretion to determine what is in the best interests of children. I would imagine that the court will apply its collective mind to those sorts of issues in determining whether in fact the suspension of child support payments or maintenance is in the best interests of the child. Essentially the independent court will make that determination.

Senator WRIGHT: The other question I have is: given that that may be essentially a sub-hearing or inquiry outside the substantive legal action, is there a risk that substantive findings on these matters in child support proceedings could cause prejudice to subsequent convention or parenting proceedings?

Mr Hansen: I do not think so, Senator, and that is certainly not the intention. In terms of how this is supposed to operate, the intention is that it will be a two-stage process. The court will firstly look at the issue of whether or not there has been a wrongful removal or retention. In considering that, it will look at a range of issues such as whether or not there was fleeing from violence, whether the child objects to returning, or whether the person applying to the court is actually exercising their rights of custody under Australian law. There would be a range of issues that the court will consider in determining whether or not there was a wrongful removal or retention. And then, as a second point, it will consider whether or not child support should be suspended, taking into consideration that generally the best interests of children are served by having issues of long-term care and protection determined in their country of habitual residence.

Senator WRIGHT: So you do not envisage that in some cases the child support issue could be determined before the aspects of the taking and whether it has been a wrongful abduction or retention.

Mr Hansen: If it was then that finding of the court in terms of wrongful removal or detention would operate similarly to an article 15 declaration under the Hague child abduction convention and it could be utilised in terms of evidence to support the return of the child to Australia. The court already has the power under the child abduction regulations to make those determinations for Hague convention matters. The intention of this policy announcement is for that to apply to both Hague and non-Hague countries.

Senator PRATT: I want to ask a question about the transfer of unaccessed child support funds to consolidated revenue. It would seem to be peculiar. I can understand that there might be circumstances under which money that never reaches a family ends up in consolidated revenue if that family has been accessing welfare payments instead, but if a child is overseas it would seem to me a stretch for that ever to be the case—that that money should end up in consolidated revenue.

Mr Hansen: That is probably a question that is best addressed to the Child Support Agency.

Senator PRATT: Fair enough.

CHAIR: Let us turn to the provisions dealing with the greater powers of the court to require individuals or entities to provide information to the Commonwealth central authority to assist in locating children wrongfully removed. There has been evidence before the committee that very often the police will decline to assist in tracing the flight movements of a child because of the lack of there being an offence committed by the child being removed. Will those sorts of situations be affected by the greater powers that are referred to in that part of the announcement?

Mr Hansen: The thing to remember here is that the central authority for the Hague convention is a civil focused unit and it focuses primarily on the civil aspects of child abduction. That is basically its main focus. It is not a law enforcement unit—that is still the prevail of the Federal Police in particular.

This is meant to allow the central authority to apply to the court to seek additional information from both individuals and entities in relation to the location of the child. That may be things like telephone companies, banks, airlines and a range of companies that would have information relating to where the child may be located. That is primarily to help the central authority to find out that location and know which the appropriate jurisdiction is then to engage in in terms of particularly the Hague convention.

CHAIR: So it would be up to the central authority to apply to the court to get orders for certain information to be obtained from telephone companies and so on. Some of the witnesses would say that that process is a bit cumbersome and slow when they are aware that a child is on a flight to Singapore and they need to know urgently what their connecting flight at Singapore is in order not to lose track of the child. Is that to be dealt with only by way of urgent applications to the court by the central authority or is the position of the police essentially unchanged with respect to their powers to investigate these things?

Mr Hansen: Not being able to speak on behalf of the AFP, I can say that those powers when they are going to be exercised by the central authority would be where we have received an application under the Hague convention and we are seeking to locate where the child is to identify the appropriate jurisdiction.

CHAIR: That is not going to be a speedy process, is it? It is going to be a matter of days or weeks, not hours, in terms of getting urgently required information, isn't it?

Mr Hansen: Normally when we get an application the child has not been in Australia for some time.

CHAIR: Yes, but there are other cases where the child is in the process of being abducted. Those situations also arise, don't they? We had evidence before the committee about people needing to get urgent information not being able to receive cooperation from agencies such as the Federal Police because the offences were not categorised as crimes.

Ms Glanville: Essentially they are matters for the AFP. I think that, as Mr Hansen said, the regime in relation to abduction of children is essentially a civil regime, and on that basis it operates according to the Hague convention. The trigger for a central authority—such as the AGD in this instance—is the receipt of the application that indicates that a child has been unlawfully taken from the country—from Australia in that instance. So, in that instance, clearly that is the trigger for us. Really I think these information-gathering powers are more directed to instances where it is unclear where children are and being able to access records of movement, use of utilities or accessing of finances may help pinpoint more accurately where a child is—which particular country they are in. So that really is the intention of those amendments.

Senator PRATT: But couldn't these offences be used in the same way as if you have a criminal abduction of a child by a nonparent—say, by a stranger? Clearly the system is capable of moving quite quickly to identify that child. Is this an offence that enables the system to take action—clearly not in quite the same hysterical way given the fact that a child has been taken by another parent? Because there is an offence that has been committed, can that kind of preventative action kick in?

Ms Glanville: Clearly a criminal abduction of a child is a criminal offence, and that exists outside this and will continue to exist. The taking of a child by a parent is currently dealt with under the civil regime, and that is because—

Senator PRATT: But it is no longer dealt with under the civil regime, by virtue of these legal changes. So does that mean that that access to prevent an offence occurring—

Ms Glanville: The civil regime is still the primary operating paradigm for the return of children, and that is because it is seen as being in the best interests of the child for children to be returned under that type of regime. So that is clearly the orientation. These amendments enhance that, certainly, but essentially the core remains compliance with the Hague convention and the central authority's obligation to ensure that the Hague convention conditions are complied with before it takes any action.

Senator PRATT: So we are not going to see people being prevented from leaving the country because it is suspected that they might be committing this offence?

Mr Hansen: It certainly does extend that, potentially. That is certainly something that we are working with the AFP on, particularly in relation to the operation of the watch list. The key issue in the way the watch list operates now is that there has to be a nexus with a potential criminal offence for the AFP to prevent children from leaving the country. That operates under the existing offences of sections 65Y and 65Z. Obviously, when these offences extend those provisions, that will potentially allow more children to be prevented from leaving Australia.

Senator PRATT: Thank you. Thank you, Chair, for letting me jump in there.

CHAIR: That is all right. Let us jump generally to other areas

Senator WRIGHT: Can I just ask something.

CHAIR: In this area? Yes, sure. Please go ahead.

Senator WRIGHT: I just wanted to ask about proposals to change the telecommunications interception powers exercisable by the AFP. Are you aware of any proposals, and what would they be?

Mr Hansen: No, I do not think we are aware of any.

Ms Glanville: No, we are not aware of any proposals.

Senator WRIGHT: Thank you.

CHAIR: Are there general other questions about the announcement that the government has made?

Senator PRATT: I do not have any further questions.

Senator CROSSIN: No, I do not think so. I am just interested to know which recommendations you have picked up on.

Ms Glanville: Yes, I have that information if it is convenient to provide that now.

Senator CROSSIN: Great.

Ms Glanville: In the first brief, which is the 14 March 2011 advice, there were six—

CHAIR: This is from the Family Law Council?

Ms Glanville: From the Family Law Council. There were six recommendations made, and the government accepted all of those recommendations, four of them in full and two of them in part. The two that were accepted in part are recommendation 4 and recommendation 6. In the second advice, which is dated 5 August 2011—

Senator CROSSIN: Could we have a copy of that.

Ms Glanville: They are actually on the website of the Family Law Council. Both their advices are on the website of the Family Law Council, but we have a spare copy here if that would be—

Senator CROSSIN: I only have the 14 March one. So the next advice was—

Ms Glanville: In the second report there were three recommendations and all those were accepted.

Senator CROSSIN: What date was that, if I am looking for it?

Ms Glanville: It was 5 August.

Senator CROSSIN: So there were three recommendations and they were all accepted.

Ms Glanville: Yes.

Senator FURNER: Recommendation 4 was accepted in part. What part was that? There are three dot points there.

Ms Glanville: Recommendation 4 relates to information-gathering powers. It also covered issues to do with mediation and publicity about the convention. So the part that has been announced is information-gathering powers.

Senator CROSSIN: So you are now drafting that legislation?

Ms Glanville: We are working on the policy that underpins that legislation, yes. That includes drafting instructions.

Senator WRIGHT: I may have missed this—you may have already answered this question—but, in terms of those parts of recommendations 4 and 6 that have not been taken up yet, is there a possibility that they will still be taken up?

Ms Glanville: I cannot make any comment on that. It is a matter for government.

Senator WRIGHT: So they just were not the subject of the recent announcements.

Ms Glanville: That is right.

Senator WRIGHT: That is all you can say. Okay, thanks.

CHAIR: I think we have exhausted our questions. If we have any other things that spring to mind before we bring the report down, we may write to the Attorney and ask for more information. Thank you for your evidence today and for coming before us and being able to give us a briefing on this information. It is much appreciated.

Committee adjourned at 16:41