

TRANSCRIPT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Inquiry into the Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Bill 2016

Melbourne — 15 November 2016

Members

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Witnesses

Mr Rod Cavanagh, president, and

Mr Tully Williams, vice-president, Australian Utility Stock Dog Society;

Ms Jean Moir, treasurer, Victorian Working Sheep Dog Association; and Australian Federation for Livestock Working Dogs; and

Mr Joe Spicer, Victorian Yard Utility Farm Dog Association; Victorian Cattle Dog Trial Association; and Australian Federation for Livestock Working Dogs.

The CHAIR — I reopen the Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure public hearing. Again, welcome to everyone in the gallery and our witnesses as well. Today the committee is hearing evidence in relation to our inquiry into the Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Bill 2016, and the evidence today is being recorded. For our witnesses' knowledge, all evidence taken today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Therefore you are protected against any action for what you say here today, but if you go outside and repeat the same things, those comments may not be protected by this same privilege.

Welcome to our witnesses. Thank you very much for agreeing to provide evidence to the committee today. I might hand over to you, Mr Williams, in the first instance, and then our other witnesses. Just state your name and your organisation, and then whoever would like to begin making some introductory comments, we will go from there and then follow with some questions from the committee.

Mr WILLIAMS — I am Tully Williams. I am the vice-president, Australian Utility Stock Dog Society.

Mr CAVANAGH — My name is Rod Cavanagh. I am the president, Australian Utility Stock Dog Society.

Ms MOIR — My name is Jean Moir, and I am a councillor and the treasurer of Victorian Working Sheep Dog Association. I am also representing the Federation for Livestock Working Dogs.

Mr SPICER — I am Joe Spicer. I am representing the Victorian Yard Utility Farm Dog Association and the Victorian Cattle Dog Trial Association, and also I am a representative of the Australian Federation for Livestock Working Dogs.

The CHAIR — Who would like to begin with introductory comments?

Mr CAVANAGH — I would.

The CHAIR — Mr Cavanagh, over to you.

Mr CAVANAGH — On behalf of the Australian Utility Stock Dog Society we are pleased to accept this invitation to speak at your inquiry. Thank you very much. I wish to make it clear we acknowledge that any devious business of puppy farms and pet shops needs to be curtailed. The welfare of dogs is so very important. Also, if we look at the bracketed part of this amendment bill — puppy farms and pet shops — this must be the obvious firing line of intention, but all dog breeders have been targeted, not just puppy farms and pet shops. If the existing laws were implemented, we feel there would be no need for this legislation. We consider that this bill shows short-sightedness in the way that it has been introduced and formulated, and what is the public cost?

We are representing the livestock working dogs and all stockmen and women who depend upon these dogs for their tools of trade — for instance, drovers, stock-truck operators, saleyard personnel, dairy farmers, beef and sheep graziers and all of their employees. That amounts to a lot of hardworking people. These dogs are indispensable for the operation of the livestock industry in this country. They also play an important role in the national economy. A study by the University of Sydney found that these dogs contribute approximately \$1 billion per year. Livestock working dogs are as iconic to Australia as the Melbourne Cup and AFL football — and we do feel that — yet these unsung heroes are being strangled with red tape and pounded with undue compliance within Victoria.

There is a direct link from this amendment bill to the 2014 Victorian code of practice for the operation of breeding and rearing businesses, from which much concern stems. There are two terms of reference to this inquiry. On reference (a), regarding existing Victorian dog breeders, we feel there are two important aspects: who it will affect and how it will affect them. First of all, this bill will affect all of the many thousands of Victorian dog breeders, even those who have only one bitch that has a litter of pups in a year. That, in our opinion, is just a joke. It will also indirectly affect those who depend on breeders for their livelihood, those who we represent — as I mentioned before, all those hardworking people. It is our livestock industry. Those who train and rear dogs will also be affected. This bill will directly and indirectly affect tens of thousands of people, most of whom were not intended to be targeted.

Secondly, how will it affect them? Breeders, trainers and rearers, except those who give dogs away, will be forced to register as domestic animal businesses (DABs) and will have to comply to the 2014 code. Local government councils may or may not agree to register every individual DAB; registration fees can be very

expensive, and they vary from municipality to municipality. Some municipalities stipulate compulsory desexing as well, and that could be an obvious problem if some of our breeders are within that municipality.

Also, compliance to the code is extremely onerous, with increased red tape, infrastructure — this is increased infrastructure — veterinary costs and time. Breeders who choose to continue will struggle for viability, and they will struggle with interstate competitiveness as well. A lot of these things we can explain later on. Many people will stop breeding quality dogs as well. Employed stockmen and women will move interstate. They are all feasibilities and very strong possibilities. Breeders will give pups away, and this creates adverse effects in animal welfare. All of these points we are putting forward, we have reasons behind it all.

We feel there is no compassion shown to the many who have been stressed by this outcome of the bill. We consider the welfare of people as being grossly overlooked. We are dealing with the welfare of animals, but the welfare of people just does not seem to be mentioned or considered.

With reference (b), regarding the available of both pet and working dogs in the state of Victoria, we have just a couple of clarifications. There are several types of working dogs, but we are involved specifically with livestock working dogs. These dogs have different requirements to other dog groups. They are unconnected to the breeding of domestic pets. Our greatest concern is that if this amendment bill comes to fruition, the future breeding and availability of livestock working dogs in Victoria could be in jeopardy. It is not so much the number but the quality of replacement dogs that is of concern.

The restriction of 10 female dogs by 2020 for DABs is below the number that is required for seed stock breeders, and that is where we get our quality dogs from. The genetic breeding of livestock working dogs is highly skilled, and irreplaceable bloodlines may vanish. That would be a disaster. Thousands of replacement pups are required each year to maintain the number of working dogs needed. The future availability of high-quality practical working stock dogs in Victoria is not promising if this bill goes through. Many other scenarios exist within this bill. For instance, the applicable organisation status will be lost. Tully and I wish to expand and discuss more fully the concerning implications of this bill as we continue.

Finally, livestock working dogs should be in a separate category to any domestic companion dog legislation. We would like to have a practical and separate national code of practice rather than an overall — one bandaid to fix everything; it does not. We look forward to positive negotiation and outcomes through you, the economy and infrastructure committee, and we hope that your report to the Legislative Council does justice to our requirements. Thank you very much.

The CHAIR — Thank you. Would any of our other witnesses like to make any introductory comments?

Mr SPICER — I have a statement to make if that is all right. Firstly, I would like to thank David Picker of the Victorian Farmers Federation for his time in coming and their support in this. It is obviously very important, and we are very disappointed that we have been mixed up with the companion code.

Thanks for agreeing to meet with us to address this gross confusion that has arisen between respected breeders of livestock working dogs and unregulated puppy farms. Hopefully together we can find a solution that does not destroy this vital sector of our pastoral industry. Why have breeders of livestock working dogs been confused with puppy farms, pet shops or even companion animals, for that matter? Why do those who give pups away not have to provide the same level of care as those that try to recoup the costs of providing the level of care required by this code? There is no danger of puppy farms breeding genuine livestock working dogs, as our dogs only demand \$300 to \$1200 — because we are undermined by farmers who give away substandard pups from accidental litters; we are always battling that — in comparison obviously to designer companion dogs, which retail for between \$1500 and \$3000.

No member of the working kelpie council would ever even contemplate selling their treasured working genetics to a pet shop and would quickly be deregistered by the working kelpie council if they ever did so. Working dog breeds in pet shops do not come from registered livestock working dog breeders; they come from irresponsible pet owners, which this amendment bill does nothing to address. Regardless of whether they are large or small, livestock working studs are not money-grubbing puppy farms, they are caring, conscientious enthusiasts who love their workers with a passion. They strive for genetic gain and they contribute greatly to over 30 000 Victorian farmers' most valuable labour saver.

Livestock working dogs by definition obviously are not companion animals. They are an invaluable asset to our hardworking farmers, saving them over \$1 billion annually in labour costs. To classify them as such is a great insult to the ongoing contribution to our pastoral industries, which our governments should be working hard to enhance, not destroy.

To quote Rob Spence, the CEO of the MAV at the first DAA bill hearing, 'This bill is the worst piece of legislation that I have ever seen in about 50 years of public office'. This bill reflects poorly on those who have written it. They would have been well advised to seek advice from professionals who have experience with genetics, livestock or breeding rather than refusing to work with councils and those that have not been proven to have experience in this area but who were also consulted and understand the 2014 amendment. They have taken the code, which was originally designed to punish those who refused to adhere to their applicable bodies' regulations and have reduced it to a tragically unworkable code that is mandatory for every breeder in this state.

This will have a devastating effect on the mental and physical health and viability of our farmers, the welfare of our livestock and the welfare, availability and quality of livestock working dogs in Victoria by: one, making it against the law to keep and sometimes breed from the number of bitches that larger more successful studs which supply a large proportion of farmers and the smaller studs require in order to maintain the number of quality dam lines, or families if you like, needed to achieve sustained genetic gain; two, by making it financially unviable for smaller legitimate breeders to survive; and three, by encouraging inexperienced, irresponsible breeders to multiply inferior dogs and give them away for cash, if you like, or cull or dump their substandard surplus pups, which defeats the whole purpose of this bill.

Why do livestock working dog studs require more fertile females than breeders of companion animals in order to maintain and improve the quality of their lines? Because genetic gain can only be achieved by outcrossing, which incorporates desired traits not found in your original lines; line breeding, which consolidates your desired traits; and selection through working livestock. In order to properly utilise these tools a minimum of three families are needed, each bringing forward different traits. Each family would therefore consist of at least a dam, her son, her daughter and at least one granddaughter or grandson. This equates to at least three females times three families. Outcross sires also needed to be brought in or employed with at least one son or daughter retained for assessment, so that is at least one female.

The major difference to companion animals is that every son, daughter, sister or brother then has to be assessed first for their phenotype. They need to be trained and then worked to an age of 18 to 30 months old to find out if they are an improvement on the last generation, and if so, then tried in test joining in order to assess their genotype, which means: will they breed better than themselves? With their progeny then having to be assessed again in the field, it means that it takes at least three years before the next generation can replace the last, if at all. Any one of the families may not breed on or may carry a disorder and may need to be sold and then replaced in the breeding program, starting that whole selection process all over again.

Livestock working females are not brood bitches kept in a cage pumping out \$3000 designer pups. They are workers first and foremost, whose work commitments often do not allow them to be bred from as regularly as companion breeds. If utilised properly by experienced stud masters, the larger the genetic base, the greater the gain to the quality and the value of our pastoral industry and the quality of life for stud, work and trial dogs and their progeny. Larger properly managed and financially viable livestock working studs are a must for the continued prosperity of our pastoral industries.

So the answer, you want to know, to how we can fix this. One, a total review of the amendment to the DAA in consultation with those that it affects, those tasked with policing it and those who were involved in the 2014 amendments. Two, all persons that breed a livestock working dog must chip and vaccinate every pup and register as a livestock working breeder — not a business, because a lot of them are actually hobby breeders — with their council and the central register. Three, be a member of the applicable organisation and comply with the code of practice of that organisation plus their council requirements or, alternatively, if they will not comply, with the code of practice for companion animals. Four, any breeder or rearer that nets more than \$14 000, which is obviously the non-taxable threshold, in a financial year from the sale of livestock working dogs must be registered as a DAB, a domestic animal business. Thank you for your consideration.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much. Are there any further introductory comments, or are we happy to move to questions?

Ms MOIR — Just a couple of things I would like to say. I have been speaking to a couple of professional livestock contractors, of which there are about 25 in Victoria, and there are about 100 shearing contractors. That is a guess. I know the number of professional livestock contractors is 25, but the shearing contractors are many, many more, and I am guessing there are about 100. This act could put them out of business.

I put a letter in from Travis Scott today. He takes 18 dogs to work with him every day and a couple of men. These people are dipping sheep, jetting sheep, delousing sheep, marking lambs and doing all those sorts of things. He only likes to work about four dogs for an hour at a time. Then they are put away — they have done their day's work — and the next lot come out. That is going to put him out of business. This act will put him and the 25 others and the 100 shearing contractors out of business. Farmers have gotten older, so many, many more people are getting these contractors in to do the mustering, drafting, drenching and that sort of thing for them. Is that animal welfare? Who is going to look after these animals that these contractors and things come in and do so much for?

The other thing I would like to say is that in 2010 we had some consultation. This time we have had no consultation whatsoever. The other thing is that one shire, I believe, is making the DAB an annual fee of \$3000, plus you have got to have \$10 million public liability cover to get one. I think the government should look at that and put a set fee for all councils. Okay; thank you very much.

The CHAIR — I was hoping just to go back to something you, Mr Spicer, mentioned in terms of the number of dogs that you need to keep, I am assuming, the appropriate bloodlines and the appropriate traits that you would need in working dogs. You are saying at least three females from three different families, so is that the minimum required to do this type of work?

Mr SPICER — Yes, definitely. I would look at running around 15 females, and quite often a lot of them are not being bred from. They are entire but they are being assessed, or they are older girls that may get a litter once every two or three years. While we are not breeding from every bitch there, we quite often have younger bitches being trained up and assessed and older bitches that are ready to be what we call farmed out or found another home for. They are retired out if you like, but may still have a litter now and again.

The CHAIR — Obviously the government wishes to impose what appears to be this entirely arbitrary number of 10 breeding females. Obviously you can put this in your own words, but is that going to destroy the opportunity for working dogs to be bred to the best of their ability?

Mr SPICER — Yes, definitely.

The CHAIR — Along with that, you talked about the \$1 billion of labour costs that are saved through the work of working dogs in Victoria. I am wondering, if this legislation were to be passed, what impact would that have on the capacity of those dogs to do that work and save those hardworking farmers that money on labour costs?

Mr SPICER — Basically this legislation would greatly reduce the quality of the dogs available, which would mean that a lot of farmers would not be able to use them. The better the quality, the easier they are to work and the better job they do, and the kinder, if you like, they are to the stock. Yes, we have all heard the saying that 'a good dog is worth two men', and that is the case. Yes, as you will see in Nancy's report from the federation for livestock working dogs, a lot of farmers just would not be able to do their work and then they would call on the contract stockmen that Jean talked about and they would not have the dogs to do it either. We would just not be able to manage our livestock, which again is a welfare issue.

Ms MOIR — This would have a huge effect on the agriculture industry; it really would.

Mr LEANE — Thank you so much for helping our committee today. I am upper house member and represent the Eastern Metropolitan Region, so I have learnt more about working dogs and how they are made available to farmers than I have at least in the time I have been a member of Parliament. I am going to ask you a dumb question, so forgive me because I have a metropolitan background. Was there a period of time where there was a shift? You talked about individual farmers and the availability of working dogs for their needs and about farmers getting older and their need for access to working dogs. Was there a period of time when the individual farms took responsibilities for breeding their own working dogs and that has shifted over the years?

Mr SPICER — Look, it has always happened. There has always been a combination of farmers breeding their own dogs and a lot of smaller breeders just breeding a litter once every two or three years. Then we have got upper levels of breeders, which there are probably only two or three of the big breeders in the state.

Mr LEANE — I would imagine farming methods have evolved over time anyway, so it would not be unique that this situation — —

Ms MOIR — We need that top gene pool to go to for kelpies, border collies or Smithfields or whatever you like. With the farm dogs they just run them out. Keep breeding them and they run out of genes. That is why we need people like Joe that breed top-notch dogs that have this good gene pool.

Mr SPICER — What I have seen in my 25 years in the industry is that the education of stockmen on how to manage stock in a low-stress manner with working dogs has greatly improved, as has the standard of working dogs themselves. The outcome is more efficient, calmer, easier livestock movement and management.

Mr LEANE — One last question: you mentioned in your submission the 2014 code. Has that been difficult to adhere to?

Mr SPICER — Again, if I may, impossible. We have not had to adhere to it because we are able to register either with our council and go under their code of practice or with DOGS Victoria. As I said, when we were involved with the 2014 code, it was designed as a whacking stick to deter anyone from breeding — to make it hard for breeding if you did not comply with the codes. Now it is becoming the code of practice. There is no way I could survive as a breeder complying with the code. It is just not viable.

Mr BOURMAN — Thanks for your presentation. Roughly, how many legitimate working dog breeders would there be that you know of?

Ms MOIR — We have got about 200 members in our association. In 2013 we had 44 litters of pups registered. They must notify a litter because the pups might go to farmers and they might never be registered, but they must notify the association of the sire and dam. This year we had six. That is what effect the code has had on the breeders.

Mr BOURMAN — That is amazing.

Mr WILLIAMS — I think one estimation is that there are about 550 breeders in Victoria across all the associations. That does not take into account the farmers and that sort of thing who are breeding as well. I think one of the things that this code will do is not just affect the tens of thousands of breeders that there might be, but it also draws in anyone who trains a single dog and wants to sell that dog at some point down the track. They have to become a domestic animal business also. So you get many farmers who may train up a dog that does not quite suit their operation and they want to sell it down the track. They will now have to become a domestic animal business also. If we talk the numbers, if you want to bring in every person who ever trains a single dog and wants to sell it, anyone who rears a dog and wants to sell it, they are now classed as a breeder and have to comply. I think the numbers are going to be a lot higher than 10 000. There are going to be an awful lot that come under that code.

Mr BOURMAN — This is to anyone: is a working bitch not having litters because they are working a common thing? Are they normally working dogs or are they kept separately?

Ms MOIR — No, they are working dogs. Absolutely working dogs. You can work a bitch up until probably a month before she has the pups, and a month after she is back at work.

Mr SPICER — Yes, as Jean said, they are first and foremost workers.

Ms MOIR — You would not breed from a bitch if you did not know what its working ability was.

Mr SPICER — Exactly. They need to be tested.

Mr BOURMAN — So with some of the compliance things in this bill that is coming up, I can see that it would actually be a little bit confusing, because you have got a dog whose job is not to sit there and just produce

puppies; its job is to go out there and do things. Do you keep it in a cage when it comes back, or in an enclosure — I should not say a cage — like the normal sort of breeding females they are thinking of?

Ms MOIR — Yes, ours have to be 2½ square metres.

Mr SPICER — Exactly. In the code it specifies a fertile female as being 12 months old. We usually do not breed from them until they are 17 to 24 months old, and then, as I said, we wait and see what they have produced and how good their progeny are before we breed from them again. Quite often their work commitments come before breeding. So they are not bred from on a regular basis; hence we need more.

Mr BOURMAN — I would imagine that if the supply dries up of good bloodlines, it is just going to make it harder on farmers in general. They are having it hard enough as it is. It is just another thing they do not need.

Mr SPICER — Exactly. They will obviously source dogs from interstate, but they will not get to do what they do now, and that is come and have a look at the parents and pick out a puppy. One of the services that I give is that you can get the pup between 8 and 12 weeks old, have a look at its working ability and choose it for yourself. Now they will not have that option.

Ms MOIR — They will not — definitely not.

Mr BOURMAN — I have one last thing. We see a lot of working dogs in suburbia these days. It is a current trendy companion dog. You made mention of that being a result, I think it was, of unethical breeders or something like that. Can you expand on that for me?

Ms MOIR — What was that about?

Mr SPICER — I will get it. Yes, look, basically the dogs that the better breeders produce do not go into Melbourne and get bred from. Basically we give a satisfaction guarantee on every dog we sell, so if you are not satisfied with it, it comes back to us and we retrain it and rehome it. So there is no excuse to dump a dog or ill-treat it. Any of the dogs you are seeing in suburbia — and I have sold the occasional one there, but they are obviously used for agility or other purposes — come mostly from backyard breeders. The conscientious breeders just do not want to see them go to Melbourne.

Mr BOURMAN — So it would be fair to say that were this bill to go through it would not affect the supply of substandard dogs, for want of a better term, to suburbia?

Mr SPICER — No, it is going to increase them greatly, because there is going to be a black market where if you give away your dogs, which they will obviously be selling for cash, you do not have to comply with the code. It is crazy. There is just going to be a surge of substandard dogs that are going to flood that Melbourne market.

Mr WILLIAMS — It is interesting, because the RSPCA were talking about having a code that sort of affects everyone across the board without exceptions, but the big exceptions in this are those who can give pups away —

Mr SPICER — It is crazy.

Mr WILLIAMS — for cash under the table. So we see the legitimate breeders being affected again, and yet the backyard breeders who give pups away will flourish.

Mr SPICER — It is exactly what the cat people were saying about Gumtree kittens.

Mr BOURMAN — Where there is a will there is a way. Thank you.

Ms HARTLAND — I have got a couple of questions, and you might need to take them on notice again. I am totally a suburban MP, so I watch the dog trials on the television, which I always think are just amazing, but did I get the figure right that there are 560 breeders in Victoria, or is that nationwide?

Mr SPICER — No, that is Victoria, and that is outlined in Nancy's address to you from the Australian Federation for Livestock Working Dogs.

Ms HARTLAND — How many dogs would each of those breeders have on average, do you think?

Mr SPICER — On average probably two or three — only a small amount. It is only a few breeders that have the larger amount of dogs, but they are the ones that are providing the seed stock — all the top level dogs that then filter on through down to the smaller breeders.

Ms HARTLAND — What is the average cost that a dog is sold for?

Mr SPICER — The average cost would probably be around \$700. My pups range between \$800 and \$1200, but I am at the top of the tree.

Ms MOIR — And then there are border collies, which are cheaper — about 4 to 5 wouldn't they be?

Mr SPICER — Yes, it is not a great deal. For that reason it is a lot better to a breed fluffy little dog for \$3000 than a mad, excitable, full-on working dog for \$600 or \$700.

Ms HARTLAND — And what breeds are we talking about?

Ms MOIR — Kelpies, collies, Smithfields —

Mr SPICER — Huntaways, coolies —

Ms MOIR — Huntaways, coolies, yes.

Mr SPICER — would be the main breeds.

Ms HARTLAND — So it is a fairly limited group of animals?

Mr SPICER — It is a very limited group, and I would say kelpies — —

Ms MOIR — I do not know whether you would include the maremmas in it — the livestock guard dogs. What amazing dogs they are.

Mr SPICER — They are. Again we have got a definition of a livestock working dog which you could use, and it encompasses the guardian dogs as well.

Ms HARTLAND — Jean, you were talking about shearing contractors that bring their own dogs. How many dogs would a contractor have?

Ms MOIR — Well, it depends on the number of sheep. I think they would only be going to fairly large places. I think they would need a minimum of a dozen dogs. I ran a 900-acre very steep property, and I had five or six dogs and after three days of shearing they were had it. So you really need a few more than I had.

Ms HARTLAND — And you were talking about a council that was asking for a \$3000 fee and \$10 million in insurance.

Ms MOIR — I think it is Ballarat, but do not quote me; I am not sure.

Ms HARTLAND — Yes. I just wanted to be able to check. That is all right. I found your presentation really helpful, but I think there may be other questions, especially once we have spoken to the minister, that we may want to come back to you with. Will that be all right?

Mr SPICER — We would really appreciate being involved, yes. We would love to be involved.

Ms MOIR — Thank you for the opportunity.

The CHAIR — We have still got Mr Finn. You cannot forget Mr Finn.

Mr FINN — He always leaves the best till last. Thank you for coming in, folks. As somebody who, whilst I represent the western suburbs now, grew up on a farm and grew up with working dogs, I am absolutely astounded to hear of the impact that this bill will have on working dogs and those who rely on working dogs. I am just wondering how your dogs, working dogs, got caught up in this legislation at all.

Ms MOIR — So do we wonder.

Mr FINN — Yes, and I suppose that might have something to do with the fact that you were not consulted.

Mr WILLIAMS — Yes, we certainly were not consulted at all this time around, and the VFF was not consulted, so nobody was really consulted about anything this time.

Mr FINN — That is extraordinary. When you discovered the impact that this bill would have on you, did you make a beeline for the government?

Mr WILLIAMS — Yes, we have definitely spoken to a lot of ministers, a lot of MPs. We have hopefully got in the pipeline a chance to speak to the agriculture minister.

Mr FINN — She has not spoken to you yet?

Mr WILLIAMS — We have not spoken to her yet, no, and hopefully the department, which we have not had a meeting with either.

Mr FINN — I would have thought, given her responsibilities, that you would be the first people she would speak to.

Mr WILLIAMS — We would have thought so.

Mr SPICER — You would hope so.

Mr FINN — Excuse me while I scratch my head. Apart from the fact that the minister has not deigned to give you an audience as yet, what sort of reaction have you had from the government generally? Have you had a bit of sympathy there?

Ms MOIR — Yes, I have, from my local member.

Mr SPICER — Yes, they are.

Mr WILLIAMS — I think many members of ours are quite shocked at the effect it is going to have. There is pretty wide support.

Mr SPICER — Yes, we have had a lot of support from them.

Mr FINN — Thank you. I wish you well. I thank you particularly for coming in this afternoon, because you have put a new light on this bill that I think we probably had not considered before.

Mr SPICER — No problem; thank you for your time.

The CHAIR — Any final questions from the committee? If not, once again thank you all for your attendance today. You will receive a transcript of evidence for proofreading in coming weeks, and that will make its way onto the committee's website. Once again, thank you for your evidence today.

Witnesses withdrew.