

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the CFA training college at Fiskville

Melbourne — 27 January 2016

Members

Ms Bronwyn Halfpenny — Chair

Mr Tim McCurdy — Deputy Chair

Mr Simon Ramsay

Mr Tim Richardson

Mr Bill Tilley

Ms Vicki Ward

Mr Daniel Young

Staff

Executive officer: Mr Keir Delaney

Research officer: Mr Patrick O'Brien

Witness

Mr M. Glover, operations manager, Country Fire Authority.

The CHAIR — Thank you, everybody. Sorry for the delay in starting. It was out of our control, but everything is up and working now. Welcome to everyone in the gallery, and a special welcome to Mr Glover. Thank you for coming in to talk to us today.

There are just a few formalities that I need to go through before we go to the questions. As outlined in the guide provided to you by the secretariat, all evidence at this hearing is taken by the committee under the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003 and other relevant legislation and attracts parliamentary privilege. Any comments you make outside the hearing will not attract parliamentary privilege. It is an act of contempt of Parliament to provide false or misleading evidence to the inquiry, and the committee may ask witnesses to return at a later date to give further evidence if that is required. All evidence today is now being recorded, but you will get a copy of the proofs prior to them being made public just to check for accuracy and to make sure that they are right.

First off we will move into our questions, and I will begin, Mr Glover, by confirming a few things in terms of your position and history with the CFA. As the committee understands it, you are currently operations manager with the CFA?

Mr GLOVER — I am, yes.

The CHAIR — And you were the officer in charge at Fiskville from October 2001 until June 2004?

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

The CHAIR — And prior to that you were an instructor at Fiskville for five years between 1989 and 1995?

Mr GLOVER — That is correct.

The CHAIR — And you also lived at Fiskville at that time?

Mr GLOVER — I did.

The CHAIR — You were also a guest instructor for six weeks in mid-1984.

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

The CHAIR — Okay. So you are in a pretty good provision, well placed, to tell us a little bit about what was going on at Fiskville at the time and the training operations there. I guess the first thing we would like to ask you or have a bit of an understanding of is: when you were working at Fiskville as the officer in charge, what were your responsibilities and what did you do from day to day?

Mr GLOVER — My responsibility as officer in charge was to basically run Fiskville. So anything to do with Fiskville essentially came through me in regards to, say, budgets and all that kind of stuff, I had to handle.

The CHAIR — Day-to-day operations in terms of what was going on at the PAD, who was there for training, what training was being conducted?

Mr GLOVER — In terms of responsibility for training, the PAD was handled by Turk — sorry, John Myers — who I think you have got here today, or this afternoon. As far as training was concerned, I actually determined whether or not training would go ahead, and that was based on the fact of whether we had enough instructors or not.

The CHAIR — So you were responsible for overseeing the budget — so the money was spent wisely, that you had enough people to do the training, that there were no reports in terms of what was going on in terms of training, what was happening on the PAD, if there were any problems — —

Mr GLOVER — If there were problems, then Turk or whatever would talk to me about problems and we would try and solve the problems.

The CHAIR — And in terms of health and safety at the Fiskville training centre, were you responsible for that? How much authority and responsibility did you have in terms of overseeing it as well as determining what the policy would be?

Mr GLOVER — I was the chairman of the health and safety — or I was involved with the health and safety committee — and we had a health and safety committee meeting about every two months.

The CHAIR — And if there were any things that you saw were a problem, is that where you would report them?

Mr GLOVER — Yes, and also any of those people, like the kitchen or the catering staff or whatever, they and Turk would come to me beforehand — sorry, in other times — and say, ‘Look we’ve got this problem’, and we would solve it there and then.

The CHAIR — So who did you report to then? Did you then report to others?

Mr GLOVER — Yes, I reported to Graham Fountain, who was the executive manager, I think, at that stage and ended up being a deputy chief officer of the CFA.

The CHAIR — So if there were any health and safety problems or money needed to be spent to make things safe, was that — —

Mr GLOVER — Yes, if it was not in my budget, then I would take it up to Spout to get it fixed.

The CHAIR — And what was the budget amount that you had? Did you have a limit?

Mr GLOVER — The budget that we had at Fiskville was about \$4 million or \$5 million. It was a pretty big budget, but in relation to what I could spend, I think I could spend up to about \$100 000 without any issues.

The CHAIR — About \$100 000?

Mr GLOVER — About that, yes.

The CHAIR — Because we have heard evidence that there was about a \$20 000 — —

Mr GLOVER — That may have changed in the future, but I am pretty sure at that stage — and I would have to go back to the old CFA stuff — but yes, about \$100 000 I was to spend without any issues.

The CHAIR — Then in terms of it being a big facility with a lot of things happening, did you get support? If there were human resource issues, safety issues, was there any support that you received from head office?

Mr GLOVER — Yes, absolutely. Whenever I went to Spout — or Graham Fountain in those days — then he would come back and we would have a talk about the issues and then we would generally try and fix the problems. I had immense support from Spout.

The CHAIR — So if you were not sure about something?

Mr GLOVER — I would ask Spout.

The CHAIR — And was there any information coming back from head office about the sort of things you were required to do or was it you talking to them only or did they — —

Mr GLOVER — No, if there was some information that required me to act on, then Spout would talk to me.

The CHAIR — So if laws changed or if requirements were different — —

Mr GLOVER — That is correct. If anything changed, then Spout would say, ‘Okay, we need to do this or we need to do that’, and then we would do it.

The CHAIR — So when you say Spout, what about Mr Jeff Green, who was the health and safety manager for all of the CFA? Did you have anything to do with him?

Mr GLOVER — Not a lot to do with Jeff Green — that will come up later on — but I did not have a lot to do with Jeff Green. I generally reported to Spout, and Spout would take any issues that I had to other people in the CFA.

The CHAIR — So if Mr Green was the health and safety manager, and he had all the information and knowledge, say, about health and safety, how did that get to you?

Mr GLOVER — If necessary, we had our own health and safety committee, obviously, so we would abide by what then was the law, and then if I had issues, I would take them up through the chain of command, so we would always operate through the chain of command. I would take it up with Spout, and Spout would talk to whoever he would talk to and then the issue would come back down through the chain of command. Sometimes they would talk to me direct, but no issue.

The CHAIR — But how did you know that you were abiding by the law? How would you know that?

Mr GLOVER — We basically knew what the law was in relation to health and safety and a whole lot of other bits and pieces — —

The CHAIR — Because someone had told you?

Mr GLOVER — No. As part of an operation manager's role in the old days — I am not talking about the new days — we were quizzed for two weeks by senior officers in relation to our job, like what we would like it to be in the future. So we were quizzed for two weeks. So I actually did what they call a grade 3 assessment. That was a two-week exam, and then you could go on and do what they call a grade 4 or 5 assessment, which was another 2-week exam. So we actually did that as well, but that eventually died out. So that facility allowed us to have a really good idea about what we needed to do as officers in charge.

Ms WARD — Good to have you here today with the wealth of experience that you have had at Fiskville. That is really handy; thank you. Given that you did spend so much time at Fiskville can you talk us through — we have had a couple of different accounts of how the dams at Fiskville were created and how they eventuated. Could you also give us how you saw the dams unfolding?

Mr GLOVER — Yes. When I was at Fiskville there was the main dam, which I will call — —

Ms WARD — Dam 1?

Mr GLOVER — We actually called it a pit. There was about 240 000 litres of water in the pit, and then we used the water from the pit. That would go through the triple interceptors, or the interceptors, then it would go to dam 1 and then dam 1 would flow on to dam 2. And that is all we had.

Ms WARD — When was dam 2 built?

Mr GLOVER — Dam 2 was built before my time — so various officers in charge. Between 1995 and 2001 dam 2 was built. Then dam 2 eventually leaked its way around the PAD to the Fiskville lake. What we would generally do, because there was a really small main coming from the Ballan township, so we had one hydrant to do all the water. If we were going to use mains water it just could not work. So what would happen is water would flow into pit 1. They would use the water. It would flow into the triple interceptors. It would go to dam 1. Dam 1 would be cleansed. There was a pump operating all the time.

Ms WARD — How was it cleansed?

Mr GLOVER — It was cleansed by the fact that it was continually aerated. There was a continual aeration of the dam all the time — 24 hours a day.

Ms WARD — Sorry, because I am not a chemist — —

Mr GLOVER — No, neither am I, so that makes two of us.

Ms WARD — We will muddle through this. When it is aerated — do you have an understanding of how that cleanses the water or how that gets rid of the pollution that is in the water?

Mr GLOVER — I do not think it gets rid of all the pollution that is in the water, because the heavy materials sink, which is why we did not use dam 1. But all the stuff — the surfactants, if you like, that go in the water, if you aerated the water, we were told, then that water was not safe to use. But when it was 'cleansed' —

and I will use the term in inverted commas — that went on to dam 2, which we could actually use. Dam 2 was tested on a regular basis, so we could actually use that water.

Ms WARD — That is helpful, thanks. Can you provide the committee with an overview of how the dams were managed during your time at Fiskville? You have given us an explanation of how the process works, but how were they maintained; how were they managed?

Mr GLOVER — The pit is the main thingo — so all water from the mains came into the pit. That was cleaned every year. When Fiskville shut down — —

Ms WARD — When you say ‘cleaned’, what do you mean?

Mr GLOVER — Emptied of water and cleaned.

Ms WARD — Where did the emptied water go?

Mr GLOVER — We used it for firefighting, because that is what we would generally use.

Ms WARD — Used it for firefighting?

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Ms WARD — What do you mean?

Mr GLOVER — The pit is not dam 1.

Ms WARD — Yes.

Mr GLOVER — The mains water came into the pit.

Ms WARD — The pit was cleaned, not dam 1?

Mr GLOVER — Yes, exactly. The pit was cleaned. That was emptied out of water. We cleaned the pit.

Ms WARD — How did you clean it?

Mr GLOVER — I think they used pressure sprays and a whole lot of pressure. It was all relatively clean. That was tested every couple of months.

Ms WARD — Is this the pit where sludge was then taken out and put — —

Mr GLOVER — No.

Ms WARD — No, that is a different one?

Mr GLOVER — All the mains water came into the pit. When we used the water it went through the triple interceptors, and then that went into dam 1. So there was the pit, dam 1 and then dam 2.

Ms WARD — So the pit was cleaned; dam 1 was never cleaned.

Mr GLOVER — Yes, that is correct.

Mr RAMSAY — The pit is concrete lined, I assume; is it?

Mr GLOVER — Yes, it is made out of brick — I think it was concrete. So, yes, it was not just concrete lined; I think it was made out of concrete. It has been there since Fiskville was built, basically.

Mr RAMSAY — When you say ‘clean’ — just for the record — it is actually totally clean. There is no sediment sludge at the bottom.

Mr GLOVER — No, no sediment sludge, no nothing. Every year it was emptied and cleaned out. Then that water would go to dam 1. Dam 1 was never cleaned, although when I got there in 2001 that dam was empty.

The reason why it was empty was because we were in the middle of a drought, so that dam was actually quite empty, and then we used the water out of dam 2. In those days of course there was no dam 3 and 4.

Ms WARD — There has been some confusion from our end because in your submission you talk about dam 1 being cleaned on a yearly basis. Hence my questioning.

Mr GLOVER — Yes, and that is my fault. There are a couple of fixes to make in relation to the submission. That is fine.

Ms WARD — With regard to the advice around planning the pit and aerating the dam, where did that advice come from in terms of how you could keep the dam and the water as clean as possible?

Mr GLOVER — I actually do not know where it came from. It was something that happened when I was in charge of Fiskville. Turk will be able to answer that question.

Ms WARD — Were there any procedures or manuals that talked about management of the dams and how the process was understood to work?

Mr GLOVER — No, there were no manuals at all — as far as I am aware, and you can confirm this this afternoon with Turk — we were operating on advice from the water supply companies.

Ms WARD — From the water suppliers?

Mr GLOVER — I would assume the water supply companies, yes.

Ms WARD — What type of water testing regime was in place during your time at Fiskville?

Mr GLOVER — Every two months the water was tested. The pit, dam 1, dam 2 were tested, and every two months it was sent away. Turk would get the results back. If there were no issues, then we would continue to use the water.

Ms WARD — So who interpreted the results?

Mr GLOVER — The results were interpreted by, I think, Turk and also the water companies. So the water company would tell us, 'Here's the results. It is a bit high in this area here. You need to do something about it'.

Ms WARD — Have you any idea of what had to be done about it — how the water was managed? Did you have to put in extra chemicals.

Mr GLOVER — No, there was no chemicals at all used in the pit, or the dam for that matter, or any of the dams. There were no chemicals at all used.

Ms WARD — Do you know: how was it remediated, then? If there were high levels of something in the water, how was that adjusted — how was that fixed?

Mr GLOVER — The answer to the question is I do not know, personally, so I am not going to try to answer the question.

Ms WARD — That is fine. Did you ever see the results of water testing?

Mr GLOVER — Yes, I did.

Ms WARD — Okay, and you understood how to process that — how to read them?

Mr GLOVER — With my basic chemical knowledge, yes. I looked at the results, and there was no line to say, 'This is over range', no problems at all. I basically left that up to Turk, and Turk would come and see me if there were any problems.

Ms WARD — So that was the only time, then, that you saw the readings — when there was a problem?

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Ms WARD — And how often do you recall there being issues with the water?

Mr GLOVER — We had our occupational health and safety meetings about every two months, and Turk would bring the results along or talk to me when he got the results — so no issue.

Mr McCURDY — Mr Glover, I want to talk a little bit about your submission that refers to some drums being discovered.

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Mr McCURDY — Can you take us through the day they were discovered or even back before that? Who decided to plant trees where and why?

Mr GLOVER — I did.

Mr McCURDY — Okay. Take us through that day.

Mr GLOVER — The planting of the trees was an endeavour by me to actually get more money for Fiskville. So it was a long-term vision. I know that is really novel in the CFA — a long-term vision! The idea was to plant some trees, and after about 20 years we would cut those trees down and get money for the trees.

Mr McCURDY — For the timber?

Mr GLOVER — Yes. That is why we planted blue gums.

The CHAIR — A smart move.

Mr GLOVER — Yes, well, it kind of was. So the tractor driver was going along with his one claw, and he was going along from the south of the airport, and then he could hear the drum.

Mr McCURDY — With a single ripper in the ground?

Mr GLOVER — Yes, a single ripper in the ground. That is how they plant them — a single ripper in the ground. He ran over a drum, went back, got a bit woozy and got out of his — and this is where it is a little different in my statement, so I have made changes. He got out of the tractor, and he went and told Mick Smith. Mick Smith was the instructor there. Mick Smith told Turk, and Turk rang me. So that is a little bit different to what is in the statement. So I closed off that area there. Basically I shut the gate. No-one was allowed around the airport. The bloke on the tractor felt a little bit faint, but he came good and, would you believe, got back on the tractor and finished off the job? Anyway, he did. Turk actually arranged for his tractor to be washed in that area there. We washed it with four loads of water, and then the bloke went home.

On the Monday I contacted WorkCover and EPA, which did not attend the site at all, in any way, shape or form. They just said, 'Okay. Well, you need to rip up the dirt and get rid of the drums', which we took to Tullamarine — sorry, arranged for a contractor to take to Tullamarine. It cost us about \$80 000. The dirt was put on site, so we could reclaim the dirt. That dirt was filled up again with other dirt, and then we planted trees. No other drums were found at Fiskville.

Mr McCURDY — Just the one or just —

Mr GLOVER — No, there were about 80 drums.

Mr McCURDY — that group?

Mr GLOVER — Yes, just that group of drums.

Mr McCURDY — Do you think it is odd that WorkSafe did not come to an incident like that?

Mr GLOVER — I was kind of glad they did not. But, yes, I did. I thought it was a little odd that WorkSafe or EPA did not come to the site and investigate.

Ms WARD — Why were you glad that they did not?

Mr GLOVER — It allowed us to get on with the job of fixing up the thingo. In other words the stuff was not hanging around in the air for all that long, so we could actually do something about getting the job fixed.

Ms WARD — So WorkSafe or the EPA could be more of a hindrance than a help?

Mr GLOVER — Sometimes, yes. And, look, we are running a business, so the fact of the matter is that they told us what to do, and that is what we did.

Mr McCURDY — Then the driver was not treated. He got back on the tractor and finished the job. He did not go to hospital.

Mr GLOVER — Yes. And do not get me wrong — the driver was offered some help, and the driver actually said, ‘No, I’ll finish the job and go’. He did, and we paid him and planted trees. By the way, those trees are growing very nicely, thank you.

Mr McCURDY — You thought that was in around 2001, but the Joy report states that in 2002 a bulldozer driver hit some drums. Do you think that is the same incident?

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Mr McCURDY — Was it a tractor, or was it a bulldozer?

Mr GLOVER — No, no. It was a tractor.

Mr McCURDY — It was a tractor.

Mr GLOVER — Yes. I can tell you right now it was a tractor, because it had one claw on it.

Mr McCURDY — So do you think there was another incident —

Mr GLOVER — No.

Mr McCURDY — later on with a bulldozer?

Mr GLOVER — With all due respect, the Joy report did not ask me at all — at all — which I was quite shocked by, but anyway.

Mr McCURDY — Again I will refer to the Joy report, and I will quote here:

The fact that the areas was ripped for a blue gum plantation appears to point to a loss of knowledge and a lack of a systematic approach to managing environmental and safety issues at Fiskville.

Would you agree with that?

Mr GLOVER — Totally and utterly disagree.

Mr McCURDY — Totally disagree?

Mr GLOVER — Yes. We had complete knowledge of what was going on. We knew the problem. The problem was the drums. We got rid of the drums and the dirt, and we replaced the dirt and planted the blue gums.

Mr McCURDY — But did you know they were there before you started ripping?

Mr GLOVER — No.

Mr McCURDY — Right. And I think that is what the Joy report is referring to.

Mr GLOVER — Okay. Well, if that is what the Joy report is — when I was at Fiskville from 1989 to 2005 there were reports that there were drums buried somewhere on the site. Little did I know that eventually I would find them.

Mr RAMSAY — Thank you for your time this morning, Mr Glover. I have two issues. I just want to go back to the issues around water, if I may briefly, carrying on from Ms Ward's questioning and so I am clear in my mind. My understanding is that the interceptors, as you call them, in relation to dams 1 and 2 and then the lake is very similar to what the dairy industry use for their effluent. They have a number of dams that they put their effluent into to use as a filtering system. So the 'pit', as you call it, is sort of a concrete-lined facility that holds water from the fire PAD —

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — and it is cleansed regularly?

Mr GLOVER — Every 12 months, yes.

Mr RAMSAY — That goes into dam 1.

Mr GLOVER — Yes. After the water has been used for firefighting.

Mr RAMSAY — Yes. Dam 1 is used as a holding dam to collect sediment, heavy metals and other things that the first interceptor would do.

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — And it is tested on a regular basis?

Mr GLOVER — Yes. All dams are tested, yes.

Mr RAMSAY — And it is aerated on an ongoing basis —

Mr GLOVER — Yes, 24 hours a day.

Mr RAMSAY — to help with E. coli and other potential bacteria. Dam 2, again, takes some of that water from dam 1, as the second interceptor. It is tested regularly, and some of that water is used to fill up with mains for firefighting purposes.

Mr GLOVER — Yes. We used that facility when we ran out of water in dam 1, which was not often, but we did occasionally run out of water in dam 1. We would use dam 2 water. We never, ever used dam 1 water.

Mr RAMSAY — Yes, I understand that. And then consequently, in later life, there are dam 3 and dam 4 as ongoing interceptors.

Mr GLOVER — And the Fiskville lake.

Mr RAMSAY — Okay. But the testing regime is regular on dam 1 and dam 2, and the pit.

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — The first port of call for that water off the PAD is cleansed on a regular basis?

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — In relation to drums and a suggestion about the ripper on the tractor, was the tractor a cabin?

Mr GLOVER — Yes, it was.

Mr RAMSAY — It had air conditioning in the cabin?

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Mr GLOVER — So it actually had filters within the cabin —

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — to protect the driver?

Mr GLOVER — Which is what I think he did.

Mr RAMSAY — If he was feeling faint from the effects of ripping up some drums of chemicals, then the air must have been very heavily polluted if he was in an air-conditioned cab that was — —

Mr GLOVER — I would not say it would be heavily polluted. When he ripped open that drum, the chemicals came out of the drum — whatever those chemicals were — but local effects obviously affected him. He went away with the tractor, felt good. When he went back he put his air conditioners on, and he finished the job.

Mr RAMSAY — I can only conclude from that then that the drums that were buried were fairly shallow.

Mr GLOVER — Yes. The whole of Fiskville is shallow. You have been there before, but the whole of Fiskville is built on a solid lump of rock. That is why they have the towers there for the transmission towers. It was originally a transmitting station in the old days when we bought it from the OTC. When they would do transmission — and a reminder that all cricket matches were done from Fiskville — the transmission would go down, hit the rock and then bounce back up into the air and be received around the world. That is how it worked. That is why Fiskville was built the way it was. In reality that probably saved us in the long term because any contamination that came out of all those rocks and all that kind of stuff did not go below 2 or 3 metres because of that rock, and that rock went about 20 or 30 metres down.

Mr RAMSAY — To confirm again, with Mr McCurdy's questions, is that we know AWA, the previous owner or user of the site, had also buried a whole lot of bits and pieces from their operation within the 300 acres of the facility. We have identified some drums south-west of the hangar, but there seems to be no environmental mapping of any other potential sites where chemicals were buried. We have heard plenty of evidence to say that there was a lot of burying of chemicals going back in the 70s, but no mapping of where they were put. So just perchance, because you decided to put some trees in, you found one site. We have no idea if there are other sites across the facility. Up to this point are you aware of any other potential sites or burying of chemicals?

Mr GLOVER — No. I was aware of the burying of the chemicals. Do not get me wrong: I was well aware of the burying of the chemicals. I did not know where they were until we dug them up. I am pretty sure that when we found those chemicals we did a survey, and by survey I mean a drive round with a sonar thingo on our site, and no drums were found, apart from where we found those drums in [inaudible].

Mr RAMSAY — I appreciate we are running short of time, but in relation to the remediation, were you getting advice from the EPA how to deal with the soil that was contaminated?

Mr GLOVER — The EPA advice to me — and remember I handed over to Dave Clancy, who was our guru on occupational health and safety — our thing was: get the dirt out, remediate the dirt, which was probably on the east side of the new PAD, and replace the dirt and then plant the trees, and that is what we did.

Mr RAMSAY — That was under advice from the Environment Protection Authority?

Mr GLOVER — It would have been under the advice of the EPA, yes.

Mr McCURDY — Did the EPA offer much advice over your time as officer in charge apart from that incident?

Mr GLOVER — No.

Ms WARD — Are you aware of any other chemicals or materials being buried at Fiskville other than the drums?

Mr GLOVER — No.

Ms WARD — None of the burnt-out things that had been props or anything like that were buried at Fiskville?

Mr GLOVER — There was an old tip up the back, which is in the south-west corner, I think it was.

The CHAIR — Yes. It has been identified to us on the map.

Mr GLOVER — Way up the back of the small cottages anyway, so any old stuff went there. It was not contaminated, just tossed there and covered over with stuff.

The CHAIR — On the EPA and WorkSafe, you said that you did not know what the chemicals were, yet the EPA and WorkSafe were contacted —

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

The CHAIR — and they told you what to do with things that they did not know what they were. Is that right?

Mr GLOVER — Yes. Because only one drum was leaking, because the ripper had gone through it, they said: ‘Look, the best thing to do is get the drums out’, so find out where all the drums were, which we did — —

The CHAIR — But how did they know that they were poisonous?

Mr GLOVER — No idea. They said, ‘What’s on them?’. I said, ‘I can’t tell’, because all the stuff was — you could not; they were just in 44 gallon drums.

The CHAIR — And they did not ask for any testing of it to find out what it was?

Mr GLOVER — No.

The CHAIR — Even though numbers of people had been exposed to it?

Mr GLOVER — Yes. That is absolutely totally correct.

Mr RICHARDSON — Thanks, Mr Glover, for coming in today. Taking you a bit further into WorkSafe, can you recall the rough month of the incident that the drum was run over by the tractor?

Mr GLOVER — It was in 2001, so it would have been Christmas 2001 or thereabouts.

Mr RICHARDSON — Because during your time in starting there was an inspection early on from WorkSafe. Do you recall that?

Mr GLOVER — No.

Mr RICHARDSON — I might get my secretariat colleagues to provide some information. In this documentation it states that in November 2001, on the 20th, they visited Fiskville to carry out an inspection. It says that they met with you. Do you recall that?

Mr GLOVER — I do not recall, but there is the documentation.

Mr RICHARDSON — Yes, and the point I make on that is that in that report they reference a number of minor incidences and other stuff, but in paragraph 10:

noted that several authorities have undertaken audit reports for several areas within Fiskville and the recommendations made within these reports are being addressed via an action plan.

Are you familiar with what has been referenced in terms of the action plan or what was going on at that time?

Mr GLOVER — No. I can only assume that the action plan was that we were going to plant blue gums, because that is what we did.

Mr RICHARDSON — So it was not about incident management, it was not about any other chemicals on site or any concerns?

Mr GLOVER — No.

Mr RICHARDSON — Given that that contact was in contact with Fiskville in late November — there was a contact there who was referencing an action plan — why was that person not contacted subsequent to the incident occurring before Christmas, which was less than a month after that incident?

Mr GLOVER — I do not know. The answer is that I contacted WorkSafe and EPA. They said what to do, so we did it.

Mr RICHARDSON — On that advice and given the fact that under OHS WorkSafe oversees authorities acting in the best interests of their employees, what measures were taken subsequently to that incident to ensure that that risk was mitigated against besides burying or transferring those chemicals off site?

Mr GLOVER — We did exactly what EPA told us that we needed to do, which was to remove the drums. They were removed at a cost of \$80 000 to us, and that is fair enough because they were our own drums.

Mr RAMSAY — That is the external contractor, was it, in relation to occupational health and safety?

Mr GLOVER — Yes, it was. Exactly right, yes. We had no ability to [inaudible] internally at all. We just did not have the resources. So external contractor: they moved the dirt, they got the drums out, they took them down to Tullamarine — I think it was the thingo. So we did exactly what EPA told us to do.

Mr RICHARDSON — So in that report that was delivered to you and other representatives at Fiskville — to the CFA — there is a note that WorkSafe will follow up in three months and visit on site. Did they visit and follow up on site or did they correspond with you subsequent to those recommendations?

Mr GLOVER — I can only assume they did.

Mr RICHARDSON — Okay. So they have issued a report. What implementation was undertaken during early 2002 subsequent to those recommendations and the site visit?

Mr GLOVER — In relation to?

Mr RICHARDSON — So were there any actions taken in early 2002 from their visit on 20 November and the incident just before Christmas with the buried drums being exposed? Was there any follow-up with the CFA or WorkSafe or the EPA?

Mr GLOVER — The answer is that I am unaware of any follow-up.

Mr RICHARDSON — Going further to that and the incident report at that time, was Jeff Green involved in any of those processes throughout that time?

Mr GLOVER — Not as far as I am aware, no.

Mr RICHARDSON — During your time at Fiskville, do you recall any other visits or inspections by WorkSafe at the time?

Mr GLOVER — WorkSafe came to our place on a regular basis and looked around and did their bits and pieces, and whatever they recommended we did. We followed through. In relation to reports on all that kind of stuff, yes, there were probably reports. Whatever they suggested we do, we did.

Mr RICHARDSON — Given that WorkSafe visited on regular occurrences throughout your time, was there any reference again to the drums when those WorkSafe people attended?

Mr GLOVER — No. Not as far as I am aware.

Mr RICHARDSON — Do you think you as the officer in charge and other people on site should have notified WorkSafe about these incidents?

Mr GLOVER — We did.

Mr RICHARDSON — But ongoing. So if they are not addressed yet on site, the obligation is not just upon WorkSafe; it is upon the CFA and their employees at the time to ensure safety. What action was taken subsequent when WorkSafe visited, beyond 2001?

Mr GLOVER — The answer is nothing. The fact of the matter is I notified WorkSafe and EPA. EPA told me what to do. We did it. If they wanted to come and visit, feel free. I am sure they came to visit a couple of times in relation to that. No issue.

Mr RICHARDSON — What was the reason for them visiting on those occasions?

Mr GLOVER — I think it was just a regular visit.

Mr RICHARDSON — What was the process? Would they notify CFA beforehand?

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Mr RICHARDSON — So you would always be notified and prepared for when WorkSafe was coming?

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Mr RICHARDSON — Just going back to dam 1 and the references to chemicals, the ALS report, which was a few years beyond your time —

Mr GLOVER — A long time.

Mr RICHARDSON — In 2012 it found a range of chemicals in dam 1.

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Mr RICHARDSON — Given that various fuels that were used pre-1999 were phased out, one can assume that some of those chemicals lingered for a number of years.

Mr GLOVER — Absolutely. Yes.

Mr RICHARDSON — During that time, when dam 1 and probably the PAD area had chemicals such as benzene and others that were referenced, what measures were taken to ensure people worked away from dam 1, away from the water, because with the cleansing process that you are referring to it cannot be assumed that that just stays in the sludge and it is not in the water and in the atmosphere. What measures were taken on site to ensure people were not exposed to those chemicals?

Mr GLOVER — Probably not a lot of stuff. Obviously people did not swim in dam 1; we did not let people pump out of dam 1, suction out of dam 1 [inaudible]. Dam 1 was basically an isolated patch, if you like. So we kept dam 1 pretty vacant as to what we could do. In the end, Turk did the testing, and the testing did not show any kinds of results that we had to worry about at any stage, so we were happy to continue on training.

Mr RICHARDSON — So the testings that were conducted at the time, are we then saying that there was a deterioration from then until 2012, where the presence of those chemicals was found?

Mr GLOVER — Yes. Based on all the reports we got, the answer would be yes.

Mr RICHARDSON — Okay. Just going back to the drum incident on site, was there a report made by yourself or others on site to CFA management or more generally following that incident?

Mr GLOVER — I would have contacted Spout and let him know that we have got this issue, and we fixed up the issue.

Mr RICHARDSON — Was there a formal report submitted?

Mr GLOVER — No.

Mr RICHARDSON — So it was all on the phone?

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Mr RICHARDSON — Was that standard procedure when there was an incident?

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Mr RICHARDSON — Even with someone who has been exposed to those health risks?

Mr GLOVER — Yes.

Mr RICHARDSON — Okay.

The CHAIR — Just one or two quick questions to wrap up. Going back to the officer in charge, such as yourself, being expected to know what the laws were in terms of the workplace and managing people and all of that — and I know that you did an exam to qualify, but the laws change — how did the CFA ensure that people were kept up to date? Did you have training sessions or conferences?

Mr GLOVER — We do have conferences. Unfortunately occupational health and safety is not one of those necessarily, because it is a pretty boring subject. But the fact of the matter is that officers in charge — and operations managers and operations officers — are expected to keep up with the law at all times.

The CHAIR — And that is what you were told, or is it just an implied type of thing?

Mr GLOVER — No, that is what we were told — well, not so much what we are told. It is, I can say, common knowledge. Nearly every officer in charge of every region — or, sorry, district — and department knows that that is what the requirements are.

The CHAIR — Just one other final question. You agreed that your submission could be public rather than a confidential one. From both working with the CFA for a long time and having previously experienced some health issues, how do you feel the CFA treats people who do have an illness or an injury who can still work? Do you feel that they are a good employer in that way in ensuring that people get back to their full work when they are able to do it?

Mr GLOVER — It is a bit more difficult, that question. I think I have mentioned in my thingo that I have had five strokes. The CFA, personally, I think, have tried to get rid of me, and fortunately I have been protected by the United Firefighters Union in that regard. Thank goodness, because I reckon I could provide a bit more stuff to the CFA. So in relation to some bits and pieces I would say yes, and some other bits and pieces I would say no.

The CHAIR — Okay.

Mr GLOVER — Personally I think our health and safety is paramount until you get sick, and then the CFA will try and give you the shift.

The CHAIR — Okay, because we were trying to work out what ‘CAD’ stood for earlier — —

Mr GLOVER — Computer-aided dispatch.

The CHAIR — Yes, which is sort of on the frontline really, isn’t it, in terms of emergency response and that? Is that what that is?

Mr GLOVER — Yes, well what happens is — I am a bit lucky, I suppose — for all the brigades in the CFA I was able to bring them onto computer-aided dispatch. We were the first organisation to be fully dispatched by Intergraph, ESTA — whatever you are happy to call it. We were the first one, and we were the first one by about three or four years. We have got to remember that 1300 brigades — —

The CHAIR — No mean feat to do that.

Mr GLOVER — It was no mean feat at that time, and it worked really well. It is only now, this year, that for the first time ESTA has actually been able to dispatch all 1300 brigades by pager.

The CHAIR — Wow. That is really good.

Mr GLOVER — It has been a long process.

The CHAIR — Okay. Thank you, Mr Glover, for coming in today.

Mr RICHARDSON — Sorry, Mr Glover, just to clarify one more thing. Under the OHS act now there is a requirement to consult with employees after an incident. That section was inserted after your time, but the previous legislation at the time had a requirement to prepare a report when an incident happened on site under the management of the employer. Going back to the drum incident, was a report ever provided to WorkSafe by the CFA on that incident?

Mr GLOVER — No.

Mr RICHARDSON — Why is that the case?

Mr GLOVER — Because we did not do it.

Mr RICHARDSON — Who would have been responsible?

Mr GLOVER — Me.

Mr RICHARDSON — Could you go to why that would have fallen down and why that legislative requirement would not have been acted upon?

Mr GLOVER — I did not do it, but I do not know why I did not do it — whether I was not aware of that part of the law or I was not informed by Spout that I needed to do it. If I had have been informed to do it, I would have done it — no issue.

Mr RICHARDSON — So there was not consultation with Jeff Green?

Mr GLOVER — No. Sorry — as far as I am aware there was no consultation with Jeff Green. I reported to Spout, so I told Spout everything, and who Spout talked to in the CFA was up to Spout.

Mr RICHARDSON — Thank you.

Ms WARD — The incident generally was not regarded as being important, so therefore there was not the ongoing paperwork.

Mr GLOVER — I do not know whether it was regarded as not being important, because, you know, we found all these drums, but if you want to say the incident was brushed under the carpet a little bit, then the answer would be yes, it was, a little bit. Under today's legislation, if we had have found those drums today, there would have been reports and documentation like you would not believe. The issue is that we actually found those drums, we notified the relevant authorities, they provided us with advice and we did that advice. End of story.

Mr RICHARDSON — But we are not talking about legacy times, though.

Mr GLOVER — No.

Mr RICHARDSON — The Joy report goes up to 99 and makes this — —

Mr GLOVER — Funnily, but anyway.

Mr RICHARDSON — Yes. It make an assumption that everything was fine after 1999. We are talking pretty modern times.

Mr GLOVER — Exactly.

Mr RICHARDSON — The OHS act had been going for 16 years then.

Mr GLOVER — Yes. I have got no issue in relation to what you are saying. I am in complete and utter agreement with what you say, but the issue is that we got information from the EPA and WorkSafe, we did what they required us to do and we got on with our lives.

Ms WARD — So going back to what you have only recently said, who brushed it under the carpet?

Mr GLOVER — I do not know if it was brushed under the carpet — that is just a term I used — but if it was done today, in 2016 or 15, it would be like hell or high water.

Ms WARD — Yes, but I think Tim's point, though, is that even in 2001 it was not complying with current legislation.

Mr GLOVER — You are partly right, but — and I use the term 'but' here — whatever the EPA and WorkSafe wanted us to do, we did.

Mr RAMSAY — Was the tractor driver a contractor or — —

Mr GLOVER — A contractor.

Ms WARD — Who took over from you?

Mr GLOVER — Peter Rau.

Ms WARD — He had exactly the same job as you? He had the same responsibilities and he was classified officer in charge as well?

Mr GLOVER — That is correct, yes.

The CHAIR — Thanks, Mr Glover, for coming in, and sorry that we kept you a little bit longer than we originally said. Thank you.

Mr GLOVER — Thank you.

Witness withdrew.