T R A N S C R I P T

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Nuclear Energy Prohibition

Melbourne—Thursday, 25 June 2020

MEMBERS

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WITNESSES

Mr James Sorahan, Executive Director, MCA Victoria, and

Mr Patrick Gibbons, Director, Principal Advisor Energy, Minerals Council of Australia.

The CHAIR: I declare open the Environment and Planning Committee's public hearing for the Inquiry into Nuclear Prohibition. Please ensure that mobile phones are turned to silent and that background noise is minimised. I would like to welcome witnesses for the session, Mr James Sorahan, Executive Director, and Mr Patrick Gibbons from the Minerals Council of Australia. Thank you, gentlemen, for making yourselves available today to give us some evidence.

All evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the *Constitution Act 1975* and further subject to the provisions of the Legislative Council standing orders. Therefore the information you provide during the hearing is protected by law. However, any comments repeated outside the hearing may not be protected. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered a contempt of Parliament. All evidence is being recorded. You will be provided with a proof version of the transcript following the hearing. The transcript will ultimately be made public and posted on the committee's website.

We have allowed 5 to 10 minutes or thereabouts for opening remarks, and I believe you have submitted a submission which members have read so you do not need to repeat everything in the submission, but if you wish to go through a summary that would be excellent. After that we will go to questions. Who would like to lead?

Mr GIBBONS: I will. Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you to the committee for allowing us the opportunity to come and meet with you and also to discuss our submission to the inquiry into removing prohibitions enacted by the *Nuclear Activities (Prohibitions) Act 1983*. Now, I take it that you have our submission—I take that as read—so I will keep our opening remarks relatively short. From our perspective, from the minerals council's perspective, it is clear that the nuclear prohibitions Act is bad for Victoria. The Act is no longer relevant for modern society. It represents a state-based response to nuclear proliferation, which has been effectively managed by the commonwealth of Australia. More importantly, the Act is hurting Victoria in two critical areas.

Firstly it is undermining key emerging industries which are seen as priority sectors by the Victorian government. Medical research is an important focus of the Victorian government, as it should be given its ability to provide highly skilled, highly paid jobs as well as saving lives. While New South Wales is the home of the Lucas Heights OPAL medical research reactor, which produces around 10 000 doses of nuclear medicine which will be used by one in two Australians over their lifetime, the Act means that Victoria is undermining its own attempt to be at the forefront of medical research. And there are a number of other examples that we could point to.

The second area where we think this is hurting Victoria is the ability to consider—and we emphasise 'consider'—zero-emission, 24/7 electricity capable of meeting the needs of Victorian industry, households and communities. There is no scientific or policy justification for the continued ban on nuclear power in Victoria. This ban was applied in an era before the mainstream understanding of climate change and potential mitigation solutions. Nuclear energy provides 10 per cent of the world's electricity. Without it, global CO_2 emissions would be 2.2 billion tonnes higher. Small modular reactors could provide zero-emission, affordable, 24/7 power for Victorian industry. On small modular reactors, we say that these will be commercially available by the late 2020s and could, along with CCS-ready coal or gas plants, replace retiring coal generators as well as complementing intermittent renewable energy sources such as wind and solar.

What we are really saying is that nuclear energy needs to be considered as part of the energy mix if Victoria is to retain and grow a strong industrial sector with high-paying, long-term jobs, particularly in regional and outer suburban areas, while also significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions. So I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear here today, and my colleague James and I welcome any questions from the committee.

Ms BATH: Thank you very much, gentleman, for your submission and commentary so far today. I think there has been a theme that we have heard in the hearings today about a multi-platform mix for our energy. I think that is one thing that I am taking away that all members have made comments about. Can I drill down into something slightly different, and that is in terms of the mineral council's view on, I guess, assets that Victoria holds and in terms of, say, prospectivity. My understanding is there is not a great deal of uranium—and correct me if I am wrong—in Victoria but there is a lot of thorium. I am just interested to know, by lifting that ban on uranium does that then allow for prospectivity use, and what does the government need to do to create an environment where that is extracted, mined, processed and exported or used in Victoria?

Mr SORAHAN: Because we have been banned from even exploring for it it is fairly unclear, but uranium is a pretty common element in the crust of the earth. But there are no real, serious proposals to actually mine uranium or thorium in Victoria—for a uranium mine at this point. But it begs the question: why ban something outright and prevent even the exploration of it?

Ms BATH: Thank you very much. Correct me if I am wrong, but as part of the mineral sands mining in the western part of the state, is thorium already being mined there and is it almost a by-product or surplus to requirements at the minute? Is there any idea of what quantity there is of that? I am just trying to gauge, I guess, an asset value of some of these materials in Victoria.

Mr SORAHAN: Yes, sure. So uranium and thorium are a natural part of mineral sands mining in small quantities. They attach to rare earths, which are a small part of mineral sands mining, and uranium can be in the monazite crystals and it can sometimes attach to zircon crystals, which is a mineral sand. So they are in small quantities. The Act at the moment—as you are probably aware, section 6 effectively exempts mineral sands mining from this Act. So it envisages that some uranium and thorium will be extracted as part of mineral sands mining and seeks to exempt that specifically. Now, they are very small quantities. In the Act itself it is under 0.02 per cent of uranium and 0.05 per cent of thorium.

Heavy mineral sands mining in Victoria has occurred in the past. There are about six project proposals on the table at the moment, which would provide a massive amount of jobs and investment in regional Victoria. So they should be exempted under this Act. But for absolute clarity and certainty, particularly for downstream processing, we should not have an Act like this in place, because it envisaged at the time, in 1983, before we had mineral sands mining, that this could be a problem. The extraction of other minerals in Victoria can involve the extraction of very small amounts of uranium and thorium because, as I said, it is everywhere in the crust of the earth. So it is just another reason why this is really quite a pointless Act, which is purely political from the anti-nuke movement of the early 1980s and really serves no purpose other than just creating another hassle and thing that gets in the way of other mining. Even though there is an exemption there and it should work, why do you need a clunky exemption for mineral sands mining or any other mineral? You should not need an exemption at all. The Act just should not be there.

Mr LIMBRICK: Thank you very much for appearing today and your submission, which had some fascinating points in it that we have not really heard a lot about. We have heard a lot about electricity production. You mentioned a couple of things in the submission which I am really interested in, in that the current prohibition prevents some other industries—not just the electricity industry—so things like, you mentioned, the space industry and prevention of a renewables industry supply chain. Could you maybe elaborate on how the Act actually prevents those industries from happening?

Mr GIBBONS: Take space—space is literally at the cutting edge of technology and technology development and deployment. One of the things that is probably not widely recognised is that for any significant, long deep space-type research, to send satellites into deep space, most of them are powered by some form of nuclear reactor to provide the ongoing power the space vehicle needs. So this is an area of research which is certainly being done. I was really making a point that these are key areas of research for the emerging space industry in Australia. Victoria would not be able to do that under the law.

As to what other industries, say in particular renewable energy, if you want to have a full value chain renewable energy industry—and the Minerals Council are absolutely clear about this, that we are agnostic on energy, we see that renewable energy is going to be increasingly put into the system, and everyone is saying this—if you want renewable energy, you are going to need a lot of minerals, and those minerals, fortunately, Australia has a lot of. So it makes sense for us to start looking at a full value chain. The problem with the Act is that what it

does is constrain the ability to tap into key parts of that value chain, and certainly in relation to a couple of the critical minerals. I think this is one of the challenges. If you want to go down the path of establishing these kinds of industries, then you need to make the base for that industry so you are able to tap into all parts of it, and the Act as it currently stands will limit what you can do.

Mr LIMBRICK: If I am interpreting what you are saying correctly, this Act is one component that would actually prevent a full value chain for something like wind turbines, for example. It would not be possible in Victoria to do that entire value chain. This would be one inhibitor to that.

Mr GIBBONS: Yes. It is a full value chain in relation to renewable energy, and there are specific elements within that. So whether it is wind turbine or whether it is solar panels and storage, this is one of the issues.

Mr LIMBRICK: Another thing that you talk about is small modular reactors—we have spoken a bit about that during the course of this inquiry—and you say that they can produce the cheapest 24/7 zero-emissions power. What makes you think that that is possible?

Mr GIBBONS: We are up-front. People say there are no small modular reactors; they do not exist. They have been described as unicorns or fairy dust. Small modular reactors have been around for 60 years. They operate on ships and submarines. What is different about what is coming through—and this is particularly in North America and Europe, where you have got companies like NuScale in North America, Terrestrial in Canada, General Electric, Rolls-Royce in the UK—is that they are developing up these reactors and their target market. This is the thing to sort of bear in mind: their target market is combined cycle gas. So if they cannot deliver power in the sort of ballpark areas we suggested in the submission of $A60, $A80 a megawatt hour, there will be no market for it. So this is what they are targeting and they are focused on. I think there has been a lot of commentary around that these things are uneconomic. Well, to our mind simply saying that they are uneconomic today is no reason for them to be banned today. There will be a point when they do come on the market and, yes, they will be commercially deployed sometime in the late 2020s. But we think that, given their target market is combined cycle gas turbines, they have to be operating in that kind of ballpark—of $60 to $80 a megawatt hour.

Mr LIMBRICK: My understanding is with SMRs the idea is to mass produce these things similar to what we have seen in the renewable energy market, where they have come up to scale and we have seen price drops. You would expect a similar sort of scale phenomenon with the SMRs over the long term.

Mr GIBBONS: That is right. Yes, that is the whole point of small modular reactors. It is about the fabrication process. What you are doing with it is that you are minimising the build risk, if you want, by producing them in a factory. So think of it this way: it is analogous to, say, aircraft. It just happens to be analogous in the sense that commercial jet aircraft are roughly the same age as nuclear power or nuclear reactors—roughly 60 years old. When Boeing announced it was going to produce the 787 aircraft—this was back in the early 2000s—it was an idea, it was a concept on a piece of paper. Now, it was backed up by a lot of knowledge of what has gone before it, of all the various different types of aircraft. Similarly, Airbus announced the A350—again, just a concept on a piece of paper. Between when they announced it in the early 2000s and when they actually rolled the first aircraft off the production line in 2009 or 2010 or something like that—please do not hold me on that date—around 1200 of these aircraft had been ordered.

So the point I am trying to make here is that there is value in producing something in a factory, because you control the costs in the factory. This has always been part of projects when you build offsite or a one-of-a-kind. Power stations are a classic example of it, as are dams—anything—or roads for that matter. There are a whole lot of production costs that are involved when you are building something just as a one-off or a bespoke operation. Having the same design, like an aircraft or like a car, just coming off the production line, that is where you get the lower costs. So as to your point, Mr Limbrick, yes, they are first of a kind and will be more expensive, but equally once you start producing these relatively en masse the costs could go right down. This is what drives the economics of small modular reactors and it is also what drives what we are seeing as significant commercial interest in North America and Europe on this.

Mrs McARTHUR: Thank you, gentlemen, for coming before us today. Have we got the capacity in Australia to produce SMRs or would we have to import them? Secondly, I am interested in how nuclear energy could mix in with the expansion in hydrogen research that is actually getting underway at a serious level in my

area, in Warrnambool, and to which the federal government are also contributing significantly now. So those two issues.

Mr GIBBONS: I will take the first question. Would Australia be producing its own small modular reactors? I think we have to be realistic here—Australia generally does not produce that kind of technology, and there are a whole range of reasons for it. We would be playing catch-up with companies in North America and Europe. But would Australia be heavily involved? It could certainly manufacture parts for it, as we do, say, with the defence aircraft or the fighters we are purchasing—joint strike fighters. We produce parts for that here. So I could see that there would certainly be opportunities for it. But the real question here—I think it is a subset of the question you have asked—is around: does Australia have the capacity for a nuclear industry? The short answer is: yes. I mean, we have got a highly skilled workforce. We have got world-class educational institutions that have genuine expertise in this space. Yes, we should have the capacity to build it up over a period of time. We are being realistic. We are not saying it is going to occur tomorrow or in the next year; this is something that is going to take a decade to build up. But what we are saying is: to do that you need to start having a look at some of the legislation which effectively bans it, because when you ban something it basically undercuts any interest you should have in being able to develop these industries.

Mrs McARTHUR: As with the conventional gas ban.

Mr GIBBONS: Yes. Onto the second part of your question, around hydrogen, this is where, I think, there is a good conversation to be had. One of the SMR technologies produces high-level process heat, which can be used in the production of hydrogen. But the other way you can also do it is through the use of electricity and electrolysis. And again, if you are able to produce large amounts of electricity and then create hydrogen from it, there is no reason why you could not be using SMRs to produce hydrogen.

Dr BACH: Gentlemen, you have spoken a little bit about—to pick up a comment that you too made, Mr Limbrick—the linkages to a whole range of other areas. Our focus thus far has really been on nuclear energy and a nuclear industry, so I was really interested to read in your submission in here today about, for example, opportunities in medical research and some other areas you discussed in response to Mr Limbrick's question. Nonetheless, obviously even if what occurs here out of this inquiry is that we make recommendations and the Parliament takes action and the Victorian ban is rescinded, there is still a national ban in place, if I am correct. Would you mind talking us through what in your understanding Victoria would be able to do, given that even if we take action here in the Victorian Parliament there would still be a national ban?

Mr GIBBONS: Let us be clear as to the differences between the Victorian ban and the national ban. The national ban basically prohibits nuclear energy. Victoria prohibits the exploration for the mining and milling of uranium and also nuclear facilities. So there is a difference. As to your point, if Victorian lifted it and the commonwealth ban was in place, I think it is a fair question you have asked.

But this is the other point we are making. We have seen an inquiry at the federal level—the House of Representatives inquiry from last year. You have had a similar inquiry to this in New South Wales. This a conversation that is starting, and we are realistic. Overturning legislation, and particularly legislation that is based on what we would characterise as a 40-year scare campaign, is not easy, but equally the conversation has to start somewhere, and this is why we welcome the opportunity and that a committee such as yours has taken this on. We will be looking to changes by the federal government to the federal legislation as well as we will be looking to see changes within New South Wales. At this stage I am not arguing against you on this one. But it comes to: we are at the Victorian inquiry and so we are—

Dr BACH: No, of course, but I was really interested to hear that in New South Wales—because of a different position there—they were able to, for example, support medical technology in a different way. So I hear you: that is right, that obviously your aim would be to have changes made across other jurisdictions as well. But even in the interim, say, if that is the way we are heading, would there be some other things that could be done here in Victoria, in addition to the excellent example that you have already raised regarding medical technology, where, as you said, the government has a real focus—rightly so—and we want to be seen to be world leaders? Are there other things we could do, despite the fact that there would be a national ban still in place?

Mr GIBBONS: The way I sort of characterise it is that if the Victorian state government took the decision to remove the ban, it would then open up a whole series of questions or conversations that would have to occur federally. In my mind it would be difficult to see that the federal government would not be having a harder look at this, because at the end of the day this is about—and you can take nuclear medicine as the as the example—something which there seems to be no disagreement about, or there should not be any disagreement about, but let us have it open up where it can be done in all states, where you do not have anything that could impede an important part of medical research. I think we were really making the point in the submission, which is that the Victorian government has identified these key areas, and it should get a big tick for that, but there are these constraints that are imposed by the existing legislation. So really just saying, 'Lift this', and then it opens up for a broader conversation about what can be done.

Ms TAYLOR: Thank you for your submission. We will probably agree to disagree that it is bad for Victoria to have this ban in place. I think health and safety are paramount and should be a priority, so let us agree to disagree on that. But bearing in mind that there is no thorium industry as yet—that is in the future somewhere—we are focusing on real jobs and energy here and now, and Hinkley, if we can make a bit of a comparison, as we are looking at First World comparators and labour costs, the costs have blown out considerably there. I know that this is probably why you are a proponent of the SMRs, but they were rejected. Generation IV nuclear concepts were considered and rejected by the 2015–16 South Australian Nuclear Fuel Cycle Royal Commission. So I really do wonder why we are having this conversation at all, because bearing in mind that—not wanting to go with the large-scale reactors, the costs have been blowing out—the industry, the SMRs, is just really in its infancy at best, so why are we having this conversation?

Mr GIBBONS: Well, let us just unpack that. First off, we are not advocating for large-scale nuclear power generation facilities in Australia. We recognise that in Australia we are going through a major transition in the way we provide electricity and that there is a move away from large centralised generation fleets—you know, large coal power stations and some of the gas—into more decentralised power sources, whether it is wind, solar and also smaller gas units. So we are not advocating for large nuclear power reactors—others are—because we sort of look at it and go, 'It probably does not work in the Australian energy market context'. But what we are saying is that small modular reactors, they tick a number of boxes. One, they are small, so you can have relatively small reactors. Take NuScale as an example: it is six times 60 megawatt units bundled together. But you could have two lots of that, which goes from 360 to 720 megawatts. Or you can take a General Electric small modular reactor—it is around 300 megawatts, give or take a few on that one. It is similar with Rolls-Royce and similar with what has been proposed by a couple of other vendors out of North America and France. These fit much more within the Australian energy market context.

Secondly, I would make the point that you can also place them. They do not have to be placed down necessarily where the existing baseload plants are, although you can easily do it because there is a benefit to that because you will be saving on infrastructure and transmission costs. The third part about it is that these have got applications in Australia which are directly relevant to the Australian context. You can place them on-grid and at the edge of grid—so right at the edge of where the electricity grid is in regional areas where there is a demand for basically 24/7 power. You can also place them off-grid in remote communities, where, again, you have that demand for power, but it is not on the grid, so what they are using there is usually some form of either oil or diesel, most usually diesel.

Coming back to this point, which is that the technology is not in its infancy. This is a technology which has been around for 60 years. It is the evolution of an existing technology. That you have got in America, Europe and the UK large private sector backing of this says that there is actually something going on here.

I will just make an observation which is that small modular reactors kind of work in an Australian context; they are ready-made for Australia. I think this is the point—when people want to talk about small modular reactors they say, 'Oh, it doesn't work', or, as you have done, they point to Hinkley C—and I appreciate that you were not necessarily using that example. Small modular reactors deal with a whole lot of the issues around cost overbuild. So take Hinkley C, where they have had a lot of cost overbuild. Basically they have had to reinvent a nuclear industry from scratch in England and parts of Europe, or the French.

This is part of the reason why you have had these cost overbuilds, plus also you are dealing with bespoke construction projects. This is where there is a lot of risk; we see it with all manner of infrastructure around the world. So there is nothing particularly unique about Hinkley Point C at one level, but when you come back to

small modular reactors, you are managing that construction risk inside a factory, and also you are coming up with a product that actually fits in the Australian context.

Ms TAYLOR: I will correct what I said about 'its infancy'. I did read that they had been around for donkey's years, but they are still not the main game, are they? That is what I was trying to say. They are not at the developed point in terms of having overcome safety and waste issues—we still will have the dreaded waste.

Mr GIBBONS: Let us deal with the safety and waste issues. Small modular reactors are basically designed to be walkaway safe. Take NuScale for example. This is a really interesting one. If you are talking large nuclear reactors, the exclusion zone around that reactor is usually pretty large—that is, a fence—and you have to be a fair way away from the reactor. The NuScale one has got approval out of the US where the exclusion zone is basically the fence around the property. It is small. These things are viewed as being safe. I think if you look at nuclear's track record, it is a safe form of electricity generation.

As to dealing with the waste issues, let us have a conversation about the waste. All of the nuclear waste that has been produced since nuclear reactors came into being could fit onto a football field, as in a soccer field, piled 10 metres high. Think about that. The entire nuclear waste stream from the world can fit onto a football field.

Ms TAYLOR: Well, that is dreadful. We should not have that amount of waste. I am sorry; it is appalling.

Mr GIBBONS: My point is that every energy source has its waste—every energy source.

Ms TAYLOR: But not with the half-life of radioactive waste.

Mr GIBBONS: My point is every energy source has its waste. So what I am saying is that the waste from nuclear energy, yes, has got its issues, but it is also very heavily managed—it is very heavily regulated. Also, let us be even clearer about this one: the nuclear sector is the only sector that actually deals with its waste.

Again I come back to: in Australia we have an opportunity to look at small modular reactors and the fact is that we cannot because there are legislative bans in Victoria and New South Wales and nationally. All I am saying is: let us have a hard look at it and let us have an honest conversation around nuclear energy in Australia, and particularly in the context that Australia is decarbonising and will be decarbonising over the next few decades.

On the idea that we can sit back here and say, 'Well, we shouldn't look at the one technology that's capable of delivering zero-emission power at industrial scale 24/7', I mean, as someone who has been operating and working in this space of environment and climate change for a long time, I look at it and go, 'I don't understand this'. I think that we should be looking at nuclear, and I think we should be looking at small modular reactors. I also take the point which was made by, I think, Daniel Walton earlier—you do this, and you do this properly. This is Australia. We can do these things properly. We know how to regulate things properly. We know how to manage things properly.

Mr LIMBRICK: That is a great segue into something I was interested in with regard to decarbonisation. It is my understanding that one of the applications that companies like NuScale are looking at is not just municipal electricity generation but also using it to help mining companies, like your members, to decarbonise their remote mining operations, which currently usually rely on diesel in my understanding. Do you think that that is something that could be possible in Australia for your members to help them decarbonise their operations?

Mr GIBBONS: I think, Mr Limbrick, you raise a really interesting point. It just happens to be that on Monday the Minerals Council of Australia released its climate action plan. This is a plan that basically is about taking action on climate change as part of the mineral sector's collective commitment on the Paris agreement and trying to achieve the goal of net zero emissions. We recognise that climate change is a global undertaking of major technological, economic and social challenges in which the sector has to play its part.

The plan, which we are more than happy to share with the members and we will get it around to you later on, is really about saying, 'Let's look at the technologies you need to decarbonise'. So coming back to your point around the mine sites, yes, a lot of mine sites are in remote locations; they require energy supplies that are 24/7 and predominantly they are provided through either diesel or gas. Could you see small modular reactors? Yes, in certain contexts, but at the end of the day let the economics stack up on this one. I think this is where all we

are really saying is, 'Let's have a look at it. Let the economics stack up as to whether it's the best solution for a mine site in a remote area', but we cannot do that at the moment because it is banned.

Mr LIMBRICK: Yes, it is impossible to tender for it and find out if it is economic if it is prohibited.

Mr GIBBONS: So to come to your point, this would be one of a potential number of ways that you could look to decarbonise mining operations, and why wouldn't you? I mean, the fact is we talk about this in the climate action plan.

Mrs McARTHUR: I am just wondering, Patrick, if you can tell us: how much diesel are we importing at the moment for energy use?

The CHAIR: You can take that on notice.

Mr GIBBONS: I will take that on notice. That is a hard one to have off the top of your head.

The CHAIR: You do not want to give us the wrong number.

Mrs McARTHUR: And at what cost.

Ms BATH: I have just been having a look, gentlemen, at the federal government's inquiry report. That was a multiparty report. I think it had a Liberal chair and a Labor deputy chair, and as I am reading it—and you will know it better than I—it actually is quite positively considered, I guess, in terms of nuclear energy. They are talking about the government considering 'the prospect of nuclear technology as part of its future energy mix' and undertaking a body of work to look at nuclear energy technology. As I am reading it very quickly, it is on the favourable side. If that was to be adopted by the government, if all of the work under that occurred, if this report came back favourable—I am just doing a lot of scenario ifs—how long, what is the lead time for training, for manufacturing, for the whole works for us to have nuclear sitting somewhere in Victoria?

Mr GIBBONS: I think in the federal government inquiry there is series of recommendations, but when it was released, we welcomed it. We thought it was a sensible series of steps to getting to the point where a federal government could consider removing the ban. What it is really saying is there are a series of steps you need to do before then, and that is quite a lot of work in terms of understanding what the potential is, understanding some of the issues around exactly what needs to be done from a regulatory perspective to ensure safety and what needs to be done from the workforce perspective—do we have the capacity in Australia? How long is that going to take? Realistically where this is going, where the federal government inquiry was ending up, was saying you probably would not be looking at Australia having small modular reactors before 2030. In a sense this is being realistic. If they are available commercially in the Northern Hemisphere sometime in the late 2020s, that is probably when you would be looking at it in Australia—sometime a few years later.

So to answer your question, Ms Bath, I cannot give you a specific date on it, but all we are saying is there would be a number of years of work involved in it, but you might as well start now doing some of this preliminary work, which you should be able to do even though there is a ban in place, but you should be able to do it and then have a more serious, mature, grown-up discussion around, 'Do you lift the ban?'. If it is shown that there are insurmountable challenges, okay, that is an issue, but I think most of us would see it as we can deal with this. We have to be sensible and methodical in our approach, and then we have a conversation around how we lift the ban at the federal level.

The CHAIR: On that note, that is the last of the questions. Gentlemen, thank you again for your time. We appreciate your contribution, your submission and your evidence. A copy of the transcript will be sent to you shortly.

Witnesses withdrew.