

CORRECTED VERSION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND OUTER SUBURBAN/INTERFACE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Marine Rescue Services in Victoria

Melbourne — 24 March 2014

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Victoria Police, Specialist Response Division

Superintendent John Todor, Divisional Commander

Inspector Mark Arneil, Manager, Water Police and Search and Rescue Squads

The CHAIR — Good morning, gentlemen. This is an all-party parliamentary committee that is hearing evidence today in the inquiry into marine rescue services in Victoria. Welcome to this hearing of the Economic Development, Infrastructure and Outer Suburban/Interface Services Committee into marine rescue services in Victoria. All evidence given today will be protected by parliamentary privilege but any comments you make outside this hearing will not be protected by the same privilege. Could you please state your full names and work addresses?

Supt TODOR — My name is John Todor, and I work at 637 Flinders Street Melbourne.

Insp. ARNEIL — My name is Mark Arneil, and I work at 100 Nelson Place, Williamstown.

The CHAIR — What organisation are you appearing on behalf of?

Supt TODOR — I am from Victoria Police. I am the Divisional Commander in charge of the Specialist Response Division.

Insp. ARNEIL — I am also with Victoria Police. I am manager of the Water Police and Search and Rescue Squads.

The CHAIR — The evidence you give today will be recorded and become part of public evidence in due course. I now invite you to make a brief oral submission.

Supt TODOR — I will kick off. My role is Divisional Commander, Specialist Response Division. I sit across the Water Police, Search and Rescue, Mounted Branch, Dog Squad and Air Wing of Victoria Police, so I have a statewide responsibility — —

The CHAIR — You have got a bit on then, John.

Supt TODOR — Absolutely. I have the biggest of the 80-odd divisional budgets in Victoria Police by far. In fact it probably equals a few of them put together. It is one of the biggest asset holdings in the organisation, primarily around vessels and aircraft obviously. My division has a significant role in search and rescue, in particular marine search and rescue.

We do not have a formal presentation to put before you today. We have provided a written submission — —

The CHAIR — We have also been for a view to your premises.

Supt TODOR — Absolutely. We were present this morning while Peter Corcoran gave evidence and we are working off the same sort of datasets as he has presented. I will leave it at that.

Probably the only other thing I would mention at this point in time is our staffing levels. We have 60 full-time equivalent police officers in the water police. The bulk of those are stationed at Williamstown. They cover essentially from Wilsons Promontory across to the South Australian border. We have six out at Gippsland, at Paynesville, that cover the eastern coastline.

Mr RONALDS — Sorry, that was how many?

Supt TODOR — There are six that operate out of Paynesville and historically, or for the last 16 or so years, we have had one officer up at Benalla who has covered the northern lakes and parts of the Murray River. That position is under review at this point in time as to where we go with it in the future. So as you can see our resources are spread fairly thin across the state with a total of 60 in the water police and 20 in the land search and rescue side of things. We have some 36 vessels available to us to cover the entire state.

The CHAIR — Why is that position under review?

Supt TODOR — The person who is up there at the moment is on extended sick leave and we are unsure as to whether he will return to the workplace or not so we are reviewing the way we have operated up in that area in the past to see whether it is the right model or whether there are other models available to us. I personally have some concerns about police working one-up on boats.

The CHAIR — Working one-up, full stop?

Supt TODOR — As you would know, Victoria Police is currently undertaking a one-person patrol review again, so there are some of those sorts of considerations, but apart from the obvious policing-type safety issues I feel as though the safety issues we will need to consider are having people out on the waterways by themselves.

The CHAIR — What do you believe the situation would be, should that position be reviewed out?

Supt TODOR — We need to look at other models as to how we can best do it. Some of the options may be to put two people up there. Another may be to try and cover it better from Melbourne. We have been sort of floating the idea — and these are all very conceptual sorts of ideas at this point in time — of whether we come to some sort of arrangement with the eastern police region and whether they can provide people to assist us in the busier periods, or whether we just put one person there — somebody to come and work over the summer periods with our person. We do not really know at this stage as to which way we will go in the future. There are obviously significant funding issues around having some water police presence up there. But then again, as you saw from the details that Peter provided, there is a lot of work up there to be done too.

The CHAIR — Certainly. Continue.

Supt TODOR — I might leave it at that. As I said, we have heard what Peter said and I agree with a lot of what he had to say. I should have mentioned that we are actually the control agency for search and rescue; we have responsibility under the emergency management arrangements. We coordinate all of the search and rescue that is done from Williamstown. You saw the figures that Peter presented in relation to the responses, but all of those tasks will have been coordinated from our office — or should have been.

The CHAIR — On the reimbursement for the flotillas, the view varies. Everybody has a different view on this and everyone has different information about it. Some people said they are required to put it in by fax. Others have told us that they are required to put it in electronically and yet they do not have that ability. We have two different versions of the same situation. What is the truth?

Supt TODOR — I might have to default to Mark because I do not know the mechanics of it. The only comment I will make is that it is my understanding that it goes to Peter's area first and then it comes to us to validate that we have actually tasked it.

The CHAIR — That was my understanding.

Supt TODOR — That is one of the issues we have. A flotilla may not be available so they will subcontract the job out and we are not aware of it.

The CHAIR — You would have others dealing with that specifically so there is good reason why you would probably not have absolute detail on that. Is that right?

Supt TODOR — Yes.

The CHAIR — Okay. Mark, are you able to shed any light on this?

Insp. ARNEIL — Yes. Transport Safety Victoria own the data holdings with their marine safety system. We contribute to that as part of the arrangement we have in recording marine incidents. The volunteer rescue agencies are required to submit to Transport Safety Victoria details of the rescue they have been involved in. We will validate those hours when Transport Safety Victoria asks us.

The CHAIR — Through your tracking or through just your records?

Insp. ARNEIL — Through our records.

The CHAIR — Did I understand Peter to say that they were able to look at some electronic log and see how long those boats have been out?

Insp. ARNEIL — Correct. Yes.

The CHAIR — Is that true?

Insp. ARNEIL — No. It is accessing his database to check the data that has been entered against it. Some of these vessels will have trackers —

The CHAIR — And others do not.

Insp. ARNEIL — and we are able to track time at sea and search areas, but others do not.

The CHAIR — Okay. Are you able to come back to us with what is the real procedure on how they are to claim their reimbursements?

Insp. ARNEIL — Yes.

The CHAIR — If it does have to vary from flotilla to flotilla, can you tell us where that is and what the variation is, and we will try to make a recommendation to standardise.

Insp. ARNEIL — Yes.

Mr McGuire — Superintendent, can you outline to this inquiry what the view is of Victoria Police that 12-year-olds can obtain licences to drive boats and jet skis, which we have been told have acceleration power comparable to a Ferrari, without actually having any practical experience?

Supt TODOR — I am far older than 12 years of age and I have never ridden one. I have been close to them and had a look at them and I have observed from the shoreline what they can do, and I do not know that I would be brave enough to want to go out there and jump on one today and tear around the bay on it at 120 kilometres an hour, let alone a 12-year-old.

Mr McGuire — Do you believe this is an appropriate or safe policy? What is your view on that?

Supt TODOR — I have difficulty understanding how it could be safe to allow somebody, without having proven any competency or any understanding of what these things are capable of doing, to be just let loose. I get the issue around getting a licence and doing a paper-based test — anybody can study for that; anybody can do that. I have had a motorbike licence for 30 years. I have not ridden one for 25 years and I would not be game enough to get back on one without some guidance. I should surrender it just in case I get silly one day and go for a ride.

We do not allow people doing apprenticeships to use power tools and things until they have demonstrated some sort of competency. I just do not understand how we can have a case where we can just let people go out there without proving any competence or having had any practical training to be able to operate these powerful machines.

Mr McGuire — So the view of Victoria Police is that it is neither safe nor appropriate.

Supt TODOR — That is my personal view. In terms of Victoria Police's perspective, I would think that we would certainly want to try and minimise harm to the community and look at all aspects of making sure that what the community is doing is safe.

Mr McGuire — What practical advice would you give our inquiry to address this issue?

Supt TODOR — I agree with Peter; I think we need to look at the age restrictions — although there is some argument in road safety circles nowadays as to whether 12-year-olds are a little bit more sensible than 17 or 18-year-olds, so I think it needs to be looked at. There may be a place for 12, 13, 14-year-olds to obtain licences; there may not. But certainly it should be evidence based, it should be practical and there should be some training that goes with it.

Mr McGuire — We have also been told in testimony that there is not even an insurance proposition, like the TAC. That does not happen in this sector. Is that correct?

Supt TODOR — That is my understanding, yes.

Mr McGuire — What is your view on that?

Supt TODOR — I think it is obviously a flaw in the system. It is the luck of the draw where you are injured as to how well you are covered by insurance. We try to draw parallels between road safety and marine safety, and I think obviously there is probably an opportunity there for some sort of an insurance scheme. As to how that would be funded, or whether the funding is better directed into other areas, I have not thought enough about that at this particular point in time. But it seems strange to me that you can put your boat or your jet ski on the back of your car and drive down to the marina, have a collision on the way to the marina and be covered by insurance, but as soon as you take the vessel off the back of the boat and put it in the water you are not.

Mr McGuire — That is what I am asking about. Do we need to have greater consistency across policies that are basically about safety?

Supt TODOR — I think so, yes.

Mr RONALDS — In terms of education in a general sense — you heard the previous situation — what do you think? Do you think there is sufficient education out there for boat safety generally, and specifically for jet skis?

Supt TODOR — There is a lot of material out there, there is a lot of information out there. In my experience the vast majority of people I know who own boats — I do not own one, but people who own vessels and operate them — are responsible and try to do the right thing. I think our compliance rates are generally up around 70 per cent with our enforcement, so around about 70 per cent — —

Mr RONALDS — Is that reasonable? Are you happy with that? I mean, you are never happy with that until it is 100 per cent, but is that a reasonable sort of benchmark?

Supt TODOR — It depends what it is. Obviously that covers fire extinguishers, PFDs, registration and licensing, speed — you know, the whole thing. We have anomalies, like last week at the opening of duck season, when we enforced the regulations at a particular lake and found close to 60 per cent non-compliance.

Mr RONALDS — But specific issues, though?

Supt TODOR — Specifically around PFDs, but there were other issues as well. Generally I think there is a lot of information out there that people can access if they want to. I come back to the point you were talking about earlier with Peter about whether it is complacency or whether people have an overinflated opinion of their own ability. I think a lot of it just comes back to that old respect for the sea. The freak wave is one that has amused me forever. Having grown up in a coastal area and spent a lot of time down on the sea, there is no such thing as a freak wave as far as I am concerned; they are all waves, and one day one of them will get you if you are not watching them. There is a lot of information. It was interesting to hear the people from TSV talk about the issues with the retailers, and my thinking around that is there may be an opportunity there for some sort of an accreditation scheme.

The CHAIR — Sounds like it.

Supt TODOR — Retailers can put up a sign out the front to say they are accredited by TSV, and that might entail them having their people do the training. Without prescribing regulations and putting bureaucracy in place, I think that would be a bit like the Heart Foundation with the ticks — that sort of thing. It might be a good way to do it. Everywhere I go, in terms of the marine environment I see a lot of brochures, booklets, handbooks and publications. There is a myriad of stuff on the internet.

Mr RONALDS — Do you think it is getting through, though?

Supt TODOR — No. We still have people who do not wear seatbelts and who drink drive and speed in cars, and we have been banging on for over 40 years about that. You do not get through to everybody all the time.

The CHAIR — I think the difference there, though, is that I do not think anyone could argue that they do not know those regulations.

Mr RONALDS — Yes, I think that is fair.

The CHAIR — I think what Andrew was suggesting is that maybe there is a lack of knowledge of the regulations in the boating fraternity.

Supt TODOR — Yes, there could well be. The road is something that everybody uses. Regardless of whether you want to drive a motor vehicle or ride a bike or whatever it is you want to do on the roads, you will use it at some point in time. The waterways are probably a little bit different, because there is a specific class of person that wants to go out and use the waterway.

The CHAIR — More choice.

Supt TODOR — That is right. It should be incumbent on them to know what they are doing and make sure they are doing it safely. Obviously the information is there; whether people access it or not is another issue. We have a licensing system in place that tests their knowledge around some of it, but I do not think that goes far enough, certainly in a practical sense.

Mr EIDEH — I was going to suggest there is evidence that, with the progression of vessel education, incidents have been going up in the last five years. In your opinion, why is it that the incidents have grown at a higher rate? We have got more education and more incidents. The incidence rate is higher.

Supt TODOR — We were anticipating with the end of the drought to have more issues on the waterways because there is just more water around.

The CHAIR — It was the personal licence too, wasn't it?

Supt TODOR — Yes, there was obviously that big influx of those. I think Peter spoke about the fact that they are so many and varied. I noticed you focused on the seven in January. In fact three of those were on one day. It is the first time we can find any evidence to say that we have had three fatalities — —

Mr RONALDS — Separate incidents?

Supt TODOR — Yes, separate incidents — three.

The CHAIR — Three people died on the water in separate incidents on the same day?

Supt TODOR — Yes. There was one down at Kilcunda; a boat overturned at Kilcunda. There was a kayaker in Kananook Creek.

Insp. ARNEIL — Sandy Point was the last one.

Supt TODOR — Sandy Point was the other one. Three separate incidents.

Insp. ARNEIL — Our only kayak fatality this summer was the one in Kananook Creek.

The CHAIR — How did that happen?

Insp. ARNEIL — They just overturned and drowned in Kananook Creek.

Mr McGUIRE — Was there a weather-related issue, or was this just coincidence?

Insp. ARNEIL — Just coincidence, I think.

Supt TODOR — That is the unpredictable nature of it.

The CHAIR — Where was the third one? Sorry, I interrupted you.

Supt TODOR — Sandy Point.

Mr McGUIRE — It is down near Wilsons Prom.

Mr RONALDS — What were the details of that one?

Supt TODOR — Mark has got more information in relation to that particular incident.

Insp. ARNEIL — There were two fishermen in that one. The vessel overturned. One deceased in the water and one recovered on the sand.

Mr RONALDS — Bad weather?

The CHAIR — That one was reported, wasn't it?

Insp. ARNEIL — Yes, it was reported. Conditions were not particularly bad, no.

Mr RONALDS — We have heard evidence from various marine rescue services about GPS tracking and so forth. I know your vessels all have permanent GPS tracking. What is your view on that overall? A lot of vessels I believe do not have that. Is that correct?

Supt TODOR — What are you referring to specifically?

Mr RONALDS — I guess what I am getting at is that you can track all of your vessels, where they are, for an incident. I think the Coast Guard does, but VMR does not have that facility. Is that something you think would be important?

Insp. ARNEIL — I think it is a great tool, and it gives marine coordinators a high level of comfort in plotting search tracks as to what areas have been examined and what areas have not been. If you have got that plotted on a chart, that is fantastic evidence for being able to eliminate certain areas.

The CHAIR — It gives you confidence to move somewhere else.

Insp. ARNEIL — Yes, and then present later on.

Mr RONALDS — My understanding is that your system will track any of those vessels that have got the system at the moment. Is that correct?

Insp. ARNEIL — Yes, correct.

Mr McGUIRE — What is the view of Victoria Police on how we can make the system more effective and efficient? We are trying to look at the overview systemically. Some have said it can be a bit parochial, but obviously volunteers put their hearts, their money and their effort into it. You guys are at the peak of how this is organised, so we are just trying to get a better understanding from your perspective of what is a better way to coordinate it or a better way to make it better value for taxpayers dollars. What is your advice to us on that?

Supt TODOR — I think generally it is done pretty well. Having a central body like Victoria Police to coordinate it works. I do not think there are any significant issues in the main in relation to that. Without an enormous injection of funds into my area and maybe SES, I do not know how we would do it without relying on the volunteers, purely and simply. Certainly we would not be able to cope within existing resources. The volunteers do a fantastic job. They are dedicated and they are committed, and yes, one of the issues is a little bit of parochialism, but you can understand that when they are the ones who are raising the funds and doing all that sort of thing.

The CHAIR — True.

Supt TODOR — Where we probably lack a little bit at the moment, though, is that if you are reliant on volunteers, you are reliant on the community having an interest in what is going on. For example, if you have got — I will use the SES — an SES unit in a particular area, and they have got members who are interested in providing that service, it will work really well, but the moment those members leave and they are not replaced by people with a marine interest, then that will disappear with it. That is a bit of an issue for us. Others, like the Coast Guard people, join the Coast Guard because they want to do that sort of work, whereas with the SES they might want to do road rescue, ship rescue or a whole heap of other things that are not necessarily in the marine environment.

One of the areas of concern for me at the moment is that, whilst my people coordinate all these agencies to go out and do the rescues, we have no real level of comfort around what their capability is, so we do not really know and we only task them on previous experience, knowing that they can do the job. We do not have any sort

of process in place to credit them or audit them to be able to say that their vessels are capable of doing whatever it is and that they have got sufficient training, sufficient equipment and knowledge to be able to do the rescues.

The CHAIR — You do not have any data on that?

Supt TODOR — Not really.

Mr McGUIRE — Do you need that?

Supt TODOR — I think it would be important if I have a policeman at Williamstown who is sending somebody out off the coast of Port Campbell to do a rescue. They do not call it the Shipwreck Coast for nothing; it is dangerous water. I think we should have some level of comfort that they know what they are doing, other than just that we have tasked them before and they did a good job. I think we should have some visibility over their training. I do not necessarily think that we should enforce it or regulate it, but we should have some comfort in the knowledge that they are able to do the task we are asking them to do.

Mr McGUIRE — Knowing that you are sending the right people with the skill set to complete the task, rather than causing a further incident or whatever.

Supt TODOR — Yes. Through the Marine Search and Rescue Committee — to establish the arrangements for marine search and rescue in Victoria — we have been struggling for about two years to come up with a definitive list of what it is we think people should have in order to be able to do different types of things, but even then, once that is actually done, we have got no real process for saying, ‘We’re comfortable that your organisation has the capability and the expertise to do that’.

The CHAIR — I think it probably comes as a surprise to most of us that you do not have that information on the equipment and the people that are at your command really for this type of thing. I am surprised.

Supt TODOR — Look, it varies, and Mark might be able to be a little bit more specific about what we do or do not have, but certainly down at Paynesville, where the police are working a lot more closely with the local community, and at Williamstown, where the guys are working with people on a regular basis, we would have that.

In the land search and rescue arena, where search and rescue people actually deploy to the location to do a bush search and they use the SES or bushwalkers, they are working with them all the time, so they can see their capability, but we do not really because, if we have a job out of Port Fairy, we are not going to deploy with them, generally speaking.

The CHAIR — You potentially send out a flotilla that may or may not have a craft that is suitable for the task? Is that possible?

Supt TODOR — We could.

The CHAIR — Okay, and then it is up to them to make that decision, is it?

Supt TODOR — Primarily, yes.

Insp. ARNEIL — Yes, a fair bit of it does rest with the agency, but we know, for example, that the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard have their internal training course that brings them up to a standard. It is one that has proven to be satisfactory up to this point. It is the same within the SES. Within some of the other VMRs we are not so certain, but there is a great level of expertise within our marine coordinators.

The CHAIR — When you say you are not so certain, is that because you just do not know or because you have seen evidence to suggest that maybe it is not the case?

Insp. ARNEIL — I just do not know. When these organisations are affiliated — such as the LSV or the Coast Guard — you know that there is some internal regulation control over what their people are doing, what standards they are trained to and what standard of vessel they are operating with. I do not have that knowledge or that oversight over these independent bodies.

The CHAIR — Do you think you should have that?

Insp. ARNEIL — Somebody needs to, I think. I would like the non-affiliated to fall into line with the affiliated.

The CHAIR — In what respect?

Insp. ARNEIL — Then there is some control over vessel standards and training for their personnel, and there should be greater control over where the concentration of these capabilities are. Evidence has been heard here about the concentration or oversupply in some areas. The overall picture within the state should look at growing capability in the areas where it is most needed. The funds are finite, and we have got two agencies next door to one another and they are competing for the same share of money.

The CHAIR — Isn't it true, though, that the situation really is about having motivated people locally?

Insp. ARNEIL — Definitely, yes.

The CHAIR — Therefore you might have an oversupply of motivated people locally in a particular location, but in another location you may not have anybody who wants to do it.

Insp. ARNEIL — We have heard how difficult it is at the moment to build that capability at Waratah Bay, where they have tried to invest in infrastructure to provide that service, but without the willing volunteers to support that it is struggling.

The CHAIR — From our perspective we need to make recommendations, and given the fact that there is an oversupply or a good supply in one area in different agencies, it is beyond the control of the committee to recommend that we do something in another place if we are reliant on volunteers.

Insp. ARNEIL — Correct, yes. When it comes to funding, if we have got non-affiliated organisations competing with affiliated for funds out of the facilities program, there are going to be some issues, especially with how the funding applications are assessed. They may well be assessed based on the rescues they have performed in the last 12 months. A large proportion of those will be tow-backs. A lot of that may well be self-generated business they have captured themselves. If the panel was assessing based upon performance data for the last 12 months, they will feature quite highly, but is that an appropriate investment of funds?

As has been pointed out today, the Queenscliff Coast Guard was unsuccessful in last year's funding grant program. We are going down there to have a look at that vessel this week to see whether it needs total replacement or whether repairs relate to maintenance and engine issues. That is the sort of situation that could be prevented if we had a more strategic approach in vessel funding and dissemination of that grant money.

Mr McGUIRE — To understand the system, you are saying that Victoria Police does not have a strategic overview on personnel and equipment which is fit for purpose across the state.

Insp. ARNEIL — We have a volunteer marine rescue resource sheet, which will be periodically updated, so we have an overview of what vessels the agencies have, what is in survey and what is not, and the qualification levels of the staff. We know, and it is stated, that within some of those agencies they have their own training programs and so they have covered off on the training aspects, but as far as whether the vessel is still operating or whether it is still in survey, we do not have oversight of that. Whether the staff are still able to perform that service, whether they are still living there and supporting the agency, we do not know.

Mr McGUIRE — So you agree with the proposition I am putting to you that you cannot have at any one time a snapshot of the capability of the personnel, the state of the equipment and its capacity to be fit for purpose.

Insp. ARNEIL — That is correct, yes.

Mr McGUIRE — Following from that, do you believe there should be an audit to determine fit for purpose on personnel and equipment?

Insp. ARNEIL — Yes.

Mr McGUIRE — Who should do that?

Insp. ARNEIL — That is a very good question. I would like to ensure that any enhancement in the future does not impact upon my organisation's role in the operational sphere. That is a question for the regulator and maybe an emergency management framework within Victoria, but not our organisation.

Mr McGUIRE — Victoria Police are the lead agency, so therefore should it not be Victoria Police that take the lead on this? I am just looking at the public interest here. Should not the lead agency know and understand fully the resources they have at their disposal to coordinate a search and rescue?

Insp. ARNEIL — We have a pretty good handle on it, based upon our experience in what has worked for us in the past few months. But some of the agencies that have not been assisting us might be missing out on an opportunity because we have not used them operationally during X amount of period. Without an accreditation process, or that list being refreshed on an annual basis, we do not have total clarity over what is provided. Should Victoria Police have the lead role in running that audit? I do not think so.

Mr McGUIRE — Who do you think should conduct that?

Insp. ARNEIL — It could very well sit with the regulator.

Mr McGUIRE — Do you understand my position?

Insp. ARNEIL — Yes, I understand.

Mr McGUIRE — Given that it is search and rescue, and by definition life or death on different occasions, it is surprising to me that Victoria Police as the lead agency which need to be able to at any time call on the resources to go and make this rescue do not have the certainty of who is available, their capacity to conduct the search and rescue or the suitability of their equipment.

Insp. ARNEIL — There are a number of key agencies and key flotillas within our list of resources that we have 100 per cent confidence in performing that role.

Mr McGUIRE — But do you agree that it is inadequate that Victoria Police do not know and cannot say at any given time that there is a rescue call? You do not 100 per cent know — you do not have that certainty.

Insp. ARNEIL — Other than one that is built upon our experience, no, we do not have that certainty.

The CHAIR — How closely do you work with TSV?

Insp. ARNEIL — We have a good relationship. We meet on a monthly basis with the director.

The CHAIR — That is Peter?

Insp. ARNEIL — Yes, and some subcommittees within our subject matter experts meet with them every couple of months and talk about investigations and other issues impacting on marine safety, so we have good relationship.

The CHAIR — Okay.

Mr McGUIRE — We are trying to get the balance right in our understanding of the volunteer flotillas, and everyone agrees that they do hard work and do it at a cost to themselves. You are saying some are non-compliant and some are not affiliated. Should everyone be affiliated? Should we have a system that is transparent? What is your advice to this committee on how to address this issue?

Insp. ARNEIL — Without knowing all of the issues it is probably a very simplistic view to say that they should all be affiliated or accredited. But I am happy to stand by that simplistic view and say yes, that would provide a better environment within the state of Victoria.

Mr McGUIRE — We have been given information that some people are parochial. We have to get over that, but people like to have control of their little patch. We understand that. We are not making a decision on it,

but we are trying to get the best view on how we have a better-coordinated system and a more effective and efficient one.

Insp. ARNEIL — It is very difficult because we are dealing with volunteers.

The CHAIR — Absolutely.

Insp. ARNEIL — Okay.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much, gentlemen. We really appreciate you coming here today and giving us this information. I also thank you on behalf of the committee for allowing us to come to your establishment and showing us what you do and giving us a really good standard to work from at the very start of this inquiry. We are very grateful for that and very grateful for you coming in today. You will receive a transcript of these proceedings in the next couple of weeks. Let us know where you think there have been any grammatical or punctuation errors, but do not make any changes to the substance of the document.

Supt TODOR — Thank you.

Insp. ARNEIL — Thank you.

Witnesses withdrew.