

TRANSCRIPT

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria

Melbourne—Thursday, 11 March 2021

MEMBERS

Ms Sonja Terpstra—Chair

Mr Clifford Hayes—Deputy Chair

Dr Matthew Bach

Ms Melina Bath

Dr Catherine Cumming

Mr Stuart Grimley

Mr Andy Meddick

Mr Cesar Melhem

Dr Samantha Ratnam

Ms Nina Taylor

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Ms Georgie Crozier

Mr David Davis

Dr Tien Kieu

Mrs Beverley McArthur

Mr Tim Quilty

WITNESSES

Mr Richard Hughes, Victorian Campaigns Manager,

Ms Annie McCallum, Leader, Wilderness Society Mornington Group,

Ms Jodie Gregson, Co-leader, West Side Wilderness Society Group, the Wilderness Society.

The CHAIR: I declare open the Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee's public hearing for the Inquiry into Ecosystem Decline in Victoria. Please ensure that mobile phones have been switched to silent and that background noise is minimised.

I would like to begin this hearing by respectfully acknowledging the traditional custodians of the various lands which each of us are gathered on today and pay my respects to their ancestors, elders and families. I particularly welcome any elders or community members who are here today to impart their knowledge of this issue to the committee or who are watching the broadcast of these proceedings.

I would also like to welcome any members of the public who may be watching these proceedings via the live broadcast as well.

At this stage I will introduce the committee to you. My name is Sonja Terpstra, and I am the Chair of the Environment and Planning Committee; Clifford Hayes is the Deputy Chair; and Dr Samantha Ratnam. Appearing via Zoom with us today is Dr Stuart Grimley—

Mr GRIMLEY: You can call me doctor.

The CHAIR: I have just given you a promotion there. Also in the room with us is Mrs Bev McArthur; down this end is Ms Nina Taylor; Ms Melina Bath; and Mr Andy Meddick. I think Dr Bach is coming back.

In regard to the evidence that you will be giving today, all evidence that is taken 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. You are protected against any action for what you say during this hearing, but if you go elsewhere and repeat the same things, those comments may not be protected by this privilege. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered a contempt of Parliament.

All evidence is being recorded, and you will be provided with a proof version of the transcript following the hearing. Transcripts will ultimately be made public and posted on the committee's website. If you could, just for the Hansard record, please state your names and the organisations that you are appearing for today.

Mr HUGHES: Thank you, Chair. And thank you for the opportunity to come and speak today.

The CHAIR: Can you just state your name first?

Mr HUGHES: Richard Hughes, Campaigns Manager for the Wilderness Society in Victoria.

The CHAIR: Great. Thank you.

Ms McCALLUM: I am Annie McCallum. I am the Leader of the Wilderness Society Mornington Group.

The CHAIR: Great. Thank you.

Ms GREGSON: Jodie Gregson, Leader of the West Side Wilderness Society Group.

The CHAIR: Great. Thank you. All right, and with that what I will do is invite you to make your opening submission. If you could please just keep it to 10 minutes. I will give you a 2-minute warning as we approach the end of that time, and that will allow—there are quite a few of us as you can see—us to ask lots of questions of you. With that, I will hand over to you.

Mr HUGHES: Okay. Well, thanks for the opportunity to speak today. I would also like to acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waters across Victoria that are the subject of this hearing today. I would like to open by observing that nature, wildlife and ecosystems are fundamentally important to the community, and their loss and decline affect us all. To bring a personal perspective to the hearing today, I would like to invite Annie and Jodie to say a few words to talk about the importance of nature to them and why they volunteer their time in engaging with their local communities to have discussions and communicate around nature and conservation. Annie, if you would like to go first?

Ms McCALLUM: Thanks, Richard. As I said, my name is Annie McCallum. I recently completed a bachelor of commerce at Monash University and am now working in finance. I am the Leader of the Mornington Wilderness Society group, and we represent over 1000 members of the Wilderness Society on the Mornington Peninsula. I grew up on the Mornington Peninsula, where I still live today, in Mount Martha. It was a beautiful place to grow up in: amazing beaches, lush bushwalks and an abundance of nature. My fondest childhood memories were going to the beach with my family and friends. Mount Martha beach was bursting with life. As you headed down you would see thousands of seashells across the shore, small fish swimming around your ankles through the seaweed, rock pools filled with crabs, sea snails and coral, and if you looked out onto the horizon, you could even see dolphins.

In 2005, on my usual walk to primary school, I started noticing signs. They said, 'Don't bugger the bay'. The Port of Melbourne Corporation had announced plans to dredge the Port Phillip Bay. At the time I was 11 years old, and I did not understand what this meant for me, my community or our beaches, but by the summer of 2008 it was clear. As I stood on the beach with my family and friends, we watched the destruction of our beach. When I say nothing was left behind in the dredging of the bay, I mean down to the seaweed, shells and sand. Everything had been cleared from the bottom of the ocean. It is heartbreaking to see the ripple effect that this dredging of the bay has had on our beaches and our community, and especially on the marine life. To this day the marine life still has not returned to Mount Martha beach. It is still rare to come past seaweed, and even shells have declined. It is just devastating to see this place in nature that I love so much being destroyed to the point of no return. Now when I look out to the horizon there are no more dolphins, just increasing numbers of cargo ships billowing smoke over the bay. I want future generations to enjoy Australian summers like I did, abundant in wildlife and marine life, and if we act now, I think they may get that chance. Thank you for your time today. I would now like to invite Jodie to come and speak.

Ms GREGSON: Thank you, Annie. My name is Jodie Gregson. I work for the maternal and child health service in Hobsons Bay. I am the team leader from the West Side Wilderness Society Group. We currently have around 15 members, but we represent around 900 Wilderness Society supporters in Gellibrand. I grew up in the bush, in the Darling Ranges on the outskirts of Perth. A love of the natural environment has been with me for a very long time. My husband and I live in Newport. We have been there 21 years, where we have raised our three daughters. One of the saving graces of living in the industrialised west is our wonderful open spaces and regenerated areas like Newport Lakes Reserve and Jawbone Marine Sanctuary and park. We love going further afield to wilder places in Victoria and national parks, camping and walking. About six years ago my youngest daughter and I went up on a trip to the Central Highlands, about 90 minutes from Melbourne, near Warburton. Walking through the magnificent mountain ash forests, we came across a logging coupe hidden deep within the forest. I could not believe the destruction that lay before us. The forest had been completely decimated. It looked like a bomb had gone off. All the tall trees and the dense lush undergrowth were completely gone. There were just a few stumps and logs that were smouldering, having been recently burnt. The landscape was completely bare, the soil was eroded and completely exposed and there was just a deathly silence. I made a pact that day that I would do all I could to protect our precious remaining forest ecosystems. Thank you. Thanks for listening.

Mr HUGHES: Thanks, Jodie, and thanks, Annie. As you just heard so eloquently expressed, I think most people in the community have a connection to nature that is not necessarily just limited to your local park or your local patch of bushland; it extends really across Victoria more generally and even further afield. I guess in that context I would like to focus now more on the forest side of things and forest issues, and although there still are really important intact areas of forests in Victoria, there is also a crisis occurring in the forests, following decades of mismanagement, ongoing logging operations, bushfires related to climate and invasives. In that context we are still seeing logging operations occurring in high conservation value areas: in threatened species habitats, old-growth forest, water supply catchments, unburnt refuges from fire and important areas for tourism.

It is not just at the site level that logging has those impacts; it has broader impacts on the landscape, where the fragmentation of habitat prevents species from moving, the soil and sediment flows into rivers and streams, there is loss of individuals from threatened species populations and the loss of canopy allows wind to expose areas of adjacent wet forest—rainforests and so on—to drying and greater risk of fire. And the incredible thing is that the vast majority of the wood coming out of these forests is being pulped and in particular at the paper and packaging manufacturing plant in Maryvale. The Nippon Paper Industries owned subsidiary, Opal, own that facility, and I understand that 90 per cent of the wood that is coming out of the Central Highlands forest is pulped at that facility. There are viable alternatives in plantation wood that are in the ground now in western Victoria, and there is the potential for planting in the Gippsland area as an alternative source of supply for that mill. Those are really feasible alternatives.

So I guess the actions I would like to really highlight today are in the context of bringing forward the 2030 transition. I would, firstly, really like to see high conservation value forests urgently protected, and that is particularly in the context of the 2019–20 bushfires that have impacted those forests so heavily; secondly, I would like to see the reduction in volume out of the forests earlier than 2024—to see that brought forward; thirdly, that support for workers and innovation be brought forward, or elements of that, from 2024; and finally, that there are amendments made to the wood pulp agreement Act to reduce the volumes that are going to Nippon/Australian Paper.

That essentially concludes our presentation. I am really happy to take questions.

The CHAIR: Great. Thank you. Dr Ratnam.

Dr RATNAM: Thank you very much for your presentation. It was really moving to hear your firsthand accounts, especially of your interaction with the environment and the need to protect it.

I have several questions. The first question: would you be able to talk to us a little bit more, Mr Hughes, about the role of the Wilderness Society more generally in terms of environmental conservation? We have heard from a number of your community representatives. I would like to know a little bit more I think, for the benefit of the committee, in terms of the spaces that you work in in terms of environmental conservation.

Mr HUGHES: Well, we are a national organisation. Obviously, as many people know, we were born out of the campaign on the Franklin dam in Tasmania, but we are now national, and so we are engaging on issues really across the country, including deforestation in Queensland and issues around oil and gas and fossil fuel developments in the Great Australian Bight and those sorts of issues across the entire country. We are very much community based, and we engage in communities, as you have just heard a little bit about today. We think that is a really important aspect of what we do and I guess delivering our purpose. Is that perhaps—

Dr RATNAM: Yes, great. So just to summarise I guess, is it fair to say that some of the real core of your work is bringing the community perspectives and community views into campaigns for environmental action? Is that the kind of interaction space that you interact in?

Mr HUGHES: Yes, absolutely. We think it is really important that the community are engaging with issues of nature and nature conservation and the environment, and we think we have an important role in helping facilitate the involvement of community and community members who are concerned about these matters but may not easily have access to avenues to actually do something about those things.

Dr RATNAM: I have lots of other questions, but we will go around and come back, perhaps, for a second time.

The CHAIR: Ms Taylor.

Ms TAYLOR: Thank you for your presentations. It is terrific that you are so devoted to, you know, preserving the local environment. That is great. You were talking about, I think, how local community cares. I would like to think everyone does, but I think the care factor varies; some people care more than others, and we want more to care. So how do you influence people to care more for their local environment? What would you say helps that?

Mr HUGHES: I might make a start on that. I guess I would firstly say I think people do care. I think in general people do care about nature and species and wildlife, but perhaps their life circumstances are such that they do not have a lot of time or capacity or easily accessible avenues for engaging on those issues and doing something that they perhaps care passionately about; they are a bit unsure about what avenues there might be to do that. So I think that is the starting point in terms of where we might be engaging with people on these sorts of issues and then finding opportunities that work for people in their own lives for contributing towards nature and nature conservation in a way that works for them. I might just ask if you have anything to add to that, Jodie.

Ms GREGSON: I was just going to say very quickly, I have been a member of the Wilderness Society for a very long time, and while raising kids I did not have a lot of time exactly, as Richard said. But with more time and getting more involved, I remember a couple of years ago having a stall at the Yarraville Festival for the Wilderness Society, and just with the amazing interest in the stall—like, people were really pleased to see us there—what was so delightful about that experience was people really sharing their concern about the environment and the decline in ecosystems and what the environment meant to them as a place to recreate in, and they were really concerned about the extinction crisis. We need to harness this energy in the west, and that is where we got signatures and the group formed, and it is building. And Wilderness Society, through providing just such amazing community organising training, as Annie will vouch for, just really gives you the skills to feel empowered and that you could do something to actually take action. It is about taking action, and I guess a lot of people do not quite know what action to take, but they want to do something.

Ms TAYLOR: Yes, and it was a devil's advocate question, I should say. In saying that I do not think people care, I was just trying to tease out how you can influence, because I would say, arguably, many, many politicians care deeply as well. It is just realities of how you implement. Anyway, let someone else ask a question.

The CHAIR: Mr Hayes.

Mr HAYES: Thank you very much for your presentation. It was very moving, your casting your memories back. Yes, I remember 2005 too, around the bay, and I even go back to 1970 and going camping in the bush around that time, and the difference is really noticeable nowadays. My question in a way goes back to the 1970s. In 1970 we had about half the population that we have got now in Australia, and governments think it is economically imperative for us to double our population by 2050, that is, double again over the next 30 years. Do you think that under the current environmental protection regime we have now that we can safely double the population without doing further damage to the environment? We love what we have got left at the moment, but I am just interested in your comments on population plans and their effect on the environment.

Mr HUGHES: I probably do not feel in a position or confident to respond to that directly. But I guess what I would say is I think there are already really significant issues with our current population in terms of the impacts on the environment and natural areas. I guess if we look on the forest side of things specifically, obviously we have got a lot of paper and packaging products coming out of forest areas, and that is relevant to population and consumption.

I guess, as we just kind of articulated earlier, it is also about making choices and doing things in a more sustainable way. So, in the example of the Maryvale pulp mill that I was talking about, there are opportunities to actually transition that to a plantation-based resource and recycled resource. And so we are reducing our impacts on the environment and on natural systems, and I think, given the challenges around population, that is the kind of thing that my organisation is really interested in seeing advanced in terms of nature conservation outcomes.

The CHAIR: Mr Grimley.

Mr GRIMLEY: Thank you, Chair. And thanks Richard, Annie and Jodie for your submissions and your advocacy in this area. My question is just in relation to one of the recommendations that you made in relation to establishing an independent well-resourced conservation regulator to police logging, deforestation and destruction of habitat. Can you elaborate on why your organisation thinks it is important for Victoria to have such an independent conservation regulator?

Mr HUGHES: Well, I think in general we see the need for independent regulation around environmental laws and regulation. In terms of the OCR that is particularly the case. Obviously that is a fairly new office,

operating out of the department, which perhaps you would argue is a step forward, or some people might argue is a step forward, but what we are really from our perspective continuing to see is breaches to environmental regulations in the way that forestry operations are conducted, and the OCR is not really successfully addressing those issues. And there would be advantages to actually having a properly resourced independent regulator outside of the department. I understand, for example, that there was a recent situation where there were issues around environmental regulations which involved a fire management aspect, which of course DELWP have responsibilities around, and that there was a potential conflict in terms of the OCR's role around that particular issue. I think that is just one example of part of the problem of having a regulator sitting within a department when there is that potential for conflict. We would very much prefer to see a regulator that is independent and properly resourced and can provide the policing role that is really required to ensure that regulations around forestry operations and other areas of environmental management are properly policed.

Mr GRIMLEY: Thank you, Richard. Thanks, Chair.

The CHAIR: Just to follow up on that, you say that the OCR is not properly addressing things. Have you got examples of where they are not properly addressing things? We have heard evidence from them that they are successfully prosecuting breaches, so can you expand on that a bit more, where you say they are not?

Mr HUGHES: Well, I could probably provide some examples on notice.

The CHAIR: If you like.

Mr HUGHES: That might be a better way to go there, but I guess I would say from what I understand from people in the field, citizen science groups and so on, there are still a lot of breaches of environmental regulations and code occurring around forestry operations. I think the OCR really has an important role in addressing that. An independent regulator, we feel, would be able to play a stronger role.

The CHAIR: Could that actually be a question of resourcing as opposed to independence? I am just trying to tease that out. I mean, sort of implicit in your response is that because they sit within DELWP there has to be an inherent conflict of interest, but given they are prosecuting, I am just wondering where that line is.

Mr HUGHES: Well, I guess like I was saying with the example I was using earlier, my understanding is that there were some constraints in the OCR being able to regulate on an issue of fire management where DELWP had responsibilities.

The CHAIR: Right.

Mr HUGHES: So that is a specific example, I suppose, and perhaps I might be able to provide a bit more detail around that on notice.

The CHAIR: No worries. Mr Meddick.

Mr MEDDICK: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Annie, Jodie and Richard. I have really just got one question, and it centres around the fact that I was privileged to go to Toolangi last year and had a wonderful tour around there, and I was shown coupes that I was advised were supposed to have been protected because there were threatened or endangered species in those coupes, but they had been logged. Now, we have had VicForests in here presenting and they said that indeed—it took a lot of teasing out, course, but we finally got out of them that—even though an area is protected they do allow logging to happen in those protected coupes if there is a specific commercial value attributed to that coupe. So there appear to be clear and deliberate loopholes in the Act that allow that to happen. Is that consistent with your organisation's experience on the ground, and would you in effect like to see then a 'no logging means no logging' policy with no loopholes deliberately built into it, so that if there are endangered species then that is it, you cannot do it, end of story?

Mr HUGHES: Well, I guess I would start by saying I am not aware, or sure, probably, of the specific example that you are talking about in Toolangi. But the example is very consistent with our understanding of what has been occurring in the forests, for example around the Leadbeater's buffer areas and the possibility of exemption for things like roading activities through those areas. I think when we are talking about critically endangered species and so on, there does need to be a line around these things, where it is not just a constant kind of weighing up of the possibility of commercial interests versus high conservation value areas. I think

more generally as well I might say we do think there needs to be much tighter regulation around the logging of high conservation value areas and the clearing of high-value vegetation. There is a need, we think, in the regulatory system to actually have a clear line in the sand around that. As with the example we have just been talking about, it is problematic when measures that are essentially put in place to assist the perseverance of threatened species can be undermined consistently on a case-by-case basis. That is highly problematic, I would say.

The CHAIR: Ms Bath.

Ms BATH: Thank you. Thank you very much for presenting. I am interested in your take. I know you mentioned at the start that nature is important to community, and I validate that; I think there are many people who feel at peace when they are out in nature. The CSIRO's recent publication about vulnerable species and threatened species goes to the point where it says 82 per cent of threatened species are threatened by invasive species—pests and weeds. A lot of your work seems to be on activism in timber coupes and is very much focused on that small element of what you see as a problem. Why aren't you working on this more—or are you? Tell me what you are doing in invasive species removal. What work are you doing there?

Mr HUGHES: Well, I guess I would say we very, very much recognise and agree that there is a range of threats and pressures on these natural environments and on these forest systems, including invasive species. I guess our take, from a forestry point of view, of the intersection there is that a lot of these areas are actually in fairly good condition—like, the forest areas. High conservation areas may not have roads or anyone nearby to them, and the process of logging actually is problematic in terms of opening up those areas to potential weed and invasive animal access. So there is a link I suppose—we think—between the degradation of high conservation value areas and invasive species. They are not independent. I guess we would say that probably more broadly too around things like the impacts from bushfires, the impacts of climate and the projected impacts of climate, it is really important that we do what we can to maintain natural areas in their best possible condition so that they have got the capacity to be more robust and give, for example, threatened species the best chance of survival. I mean, there is a host of other broader issues going on for them around climate, invasive species, bushfire and so on.

Ms BATH: Thank you. Mr Hughes, I am grappling with this: when the truth is 94 per cent of the state's forests are locked—well, non-productive; they are not going to be used for timber harvesting—I am interested to understand if you do have any programs there that the Wilderness Society runs, and what they are in those spaces to do with invasive species, whether it be pests or weeds?

Mr HUGHES: We are not so much an on-ground management organisation. It is not like we have our members out on the ground doing control of weeds and pest plants, but I guess in an organisational sense we are certainly advocating for controls around invasive species, plants and animals, and we think it is an important aspect of conservation in the environment, including within the regulatory framework.

Ms BATH: Thank you. And one quick one that you can take on notice: how many members do you have in the Wilderness Society? How many members are signed up?

Mr HUGHES: I will probably need to take that one on notice, but it is some thousands, I guess, yes.

The CHAIR: Dr Bach.

Dr BACH: Thanks very much, Chair, and thank you all for coming along today. It is great to have you with us. I might carry on from where we have just left off, thinking about invasive species. Like so many other members of the committee, based on the evidence that we have received, I am deeply concerned, as I know you are, about the impact of invasive species. Perhaps could you, Mr Hughes, in particular—but I would love to hear from other members of the panel too—share your views about what we currently do as a state when it comes to invasive species. You do not need to drill down into the specific actions of the Wilderness Society—you have answered that very thoroughly, Sir—but rather what we do more broadly when it comes to invasive species and if there are gaps or areas of weakness, what we should be doing or what we should be recommending as a committee in order to seek to strengthen that regime.

Mr HUGHES: I do not know how much I can offer in that area, but one of the things that I think is very effective, or particularly effective, around invasives is preventing new invasives coming in, and that can

potentially be across state borders but also internationally. I would argue that, in terms of being effective, actually preventing new invasives coming into the country or the state is the point in time that you want to address the potential for new species coming in. That is not necessarily just through quarantine, but it is also I think sometimes about regulating industry and plants and animals that might be associated with particular industries as well. That is probably all I have to offer on that one.

Dr BACH: Fine. Thank you. That is all from me, Chair.

The CHAIR: We have got about 5 minutes—sorry, Bev. Of course.

Mrs McARTHUR: I know I am irrelevant here—

Dr BACH: Poor Bev!

Mrs McARTHUR: but let us follow on from that. You have just mentioned the new invasive species that are coming in. Perhaps you could enlighten us on what they are.

Mr HUGHES: Well, I guess I would firstly say that hopefully they are the ones that are not coming in. I think strong quarantine and strong measures to prevent new species coming in would be effective.

Mrs McARTHUR: Wouldn't you agree, though, that the greatest invasive species have been here for a very long period of time—like gorse, blackberries, ferns and phalaris, for instance, which is a particular fire problem along roadsides and suffocating native grasses? And what about the non-native animals that have invaded these spaces? Remembering that 99.06 per cent of the state forests are under state control and are not logged, what do you think the state should be doing about controlling the wild dogs, the wild cats, the foxes, the deer and the pigs that cause damage to the environment and the ecosystems, along with all the weeds that are not kept under control on the state public land?

Mr HUGHES: I guess I would first up say that of course we are supportive of greater resourcing for—

Mrs McARTHUR: It is just about money, do you think? Is it?

Mr HUGHES: Well, and capacity. I guess the second point I would make there is that you are talking about this very tiny area of land potentially being affected by logging, if I am understanding that—

Mrs McARTHUR: 0.04 per cent of the forests.

Mr HUGHES: But I guess it seems a bit misleading to me when in fact logging operations have affected a large proportion of particular forest types, particularly the wetter forest types. We might be talking about a particular portion each year, but over time there is a cumulative impact from those operations. And the effect that logging has at a logging site can be decades or centuries in recovery, particularly around things like old, hollow-bearing trees and that sort of thing.

Mrs McARTHUR: Not affected by fire, do you think, the high canopy?

Mr HUGHES: Well, there is increasing evidence, and there is certainly evidence, I understand, that has gone before this inquiry, around logging impacts and the subsequent increased fire risk with low canopies, if that is what you are referring to.

Mrs McARTHUR: Well, no. I am referring to the vast proportion of the forest that has been devastated by fire over recent times which has not resulted from logging but has resulted probably from a lack of control of fuel loads in the forest. Cold burning of course we accept is necessary to reduce the fuel loads. That has not been done, as the royal commission suggested it should be. The intense bushfires that we had have destroyed the high canopy, which does cause immense problems, but you are concerned totally, it seems, with 0.04 per cent of our forests, when the rest have been devastated.

Mr HUGHES: We are very much concerned about fire and fire management and are very supportive of there being arrangements around protection of life and property in areas that are adjacent to towns and houses. But when we are out in remote areas, in bushland areas, we think there needs to be fire management for ecological outcomes, essentially, as a priority, which includes planned burning programs and that sort of

thing—but that is with environmental and ecological objectives that might also have benefits in terms of fuel and fuel load. So we are very interested around that. And I guess there are interactions there, we would say, with logging as well. But it is a key environmental and conservation issue.

Mrs McARTHUR: Yes, so has enough been done in that area, do you think?

Mr HUGHES: Well, I was going to say I think one of the things that we are really interested in is seeing more done in terms of the regulatory framework around species and communities and that sort of thing that are of high value that is actually proactive so that the ecological requirements, or ecologically sensitive species or communities, are identified in the landscape. It is a proactive part of conservation planning. In fire events themselves there is the capacity within emergency services and operationally to understand the conservation requirements of species and sensitive communities in those landscapes. I understand that there is a fair bit already underway in that area, particularly in Victoria. We would just argue that there is benefit from actually putting a bit more of that into the regulatory framework.

The CHAIR: Great. Thank you. That brings our session to an end. I would just like to remind members if you have any further questions that you would like to submit on notice, we can provide them to you at a later time. The secretariat will be in touch for those purposes.

Witnesses withdrew.