

TRANSCRIPT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Inquiry into local economic development initiatives in Victoria

Melbourne — 31 October 2012

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Ms K. Roffey, Chief Executive Officer, Committee for Melbourne (affirmed).

The DEPUTY CHAIR — I welcome you, Kate, to this public hearing of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee's Inquiry into local economic development initiatives in Victoria. My name is Martin Foley; I am the Deputy Chair, and I am the Member for Albert Park. The Chair is indisposed at the moment. All the evidence that you give at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege. Comments you may make outside of this hearing of course are not afforded such privilege. I ask that you give us your full name and title and whether you are appearing in a private capacity or representing an organisation.

Ms ROFFEY — I am Kate Roffey. I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Committee for Melbourne and am appearing on behalf of the Committee for Melbourne and our membership.

The DEPUTY CHAIR — Thank you very much. I invite you to make your submission.

Ms ROFFEY — We have been working across a range of areas, but one of the areas that we have just released a paper on is the transport funding and financing area, and in particular with this piece of work we have focused on the funding aspect of major infrastructure development in this space rather than the financing. In our discussions with major groups, banks, superannuation funds and even our departmental colleagues we are told that there are a lot of financing options potentially available, albeit that the models which they may like to finance under are varied to some degree. For example, the super funds say, 'We are keen to invest.' However, quite often our investment or financing models may be less taxpayer-friendly than what might be sought after from a government perspective, so I think there is some work to do around the finessing of financing options.

However, the key question — and what we really have been driving at is that regardless of how something is financed, the funding will continue to be an issue because the bottom line is that there just is not enough money in the government coffers to continue with our traditional model, which has been that the government pretty much funds everything from an infrastructure perspective: our hospitals, our schools and our transport infrastructure. When you look at some of our major projects at the moment, being in the hundreds of billions of dollars, I think it is time that we as a community need to start having a look at how we actually make some kind of contribution to transport and infrastructure funding ourselves.

We talk about that in our paper in two ways. One is through direct models, which we are quite familiar with, in terms of tolling and perhaps a parking levy or a congestion tax. The other areas that we talk about in our paper and have used some case studying to give examples both in Australia and overseas of are some of these more indirect models, which are incremental tax-style models that are much more difficult to economically potentially understand and nut out because they have a longer tail in effect, where you might be, for example, considering that there is an uplift in the value of a property — because we have built a new train station, for example, nearby — but how you determine the exact uplift in that property, and over what period of time that uplift may exist for and you may be able to charge a levy or a tax on is a little bit of a more difficult economic model to establish, not to mention how you might collect that money. We do collect rates, for example, and it could be done in that capacity, but that is quite a complex economic model that Treasury or someone else would have to have an in-depth look at.

There are other models that we have used, and we have in fact used a couple of these here with the Melbourne underground rail link when it was built: a benefited area levy, which is more the concept of taking an area that has captured or presumed to capture benefit from the underground rail link — for example, the businesses in the CBD — and then charging a levy on those businesses to help pay for the piece of infrastructure that is being built.

We have picked up a number of direct and indirect models in this paper. We have not applied them to specific projects in Melbourne or across Victoria at this point in time. What we have said is these models exist and they have been used, for example, overseas. The London Crossrail project is using a couple of different models to help fund and generate some quite significant funding for what is a very major piece of their rail network work over there in London.

In LA they have used a 50-50 model where a general 2 per cent tax has been levied across the county, which all goes into an accelerated infrastructure funding plan. So obviously different jurisdictions have different governance arrangements, and how we actually apply some of those models here in Australia and Victoria in particular would need to be thought out in a lot more detail. However, there are options out there, I think. We

need to investigate them and we need to start getting our heads around the fact that somehow we need to increase this funding pool.

One of those interesting discussions I had with a journalist in fact was the point of saying, 'As a direct user I may have to make a contribution to a piece of infrastructure being built', and their question was, 'Why not increase the GST by 2 per cent and make that an infrastructure fund?'. I said, 'In the end you still pay.' So the bottom line is the user is paying, whether it is a broad-based tax or whether it is a direct user benefit.

The concept of this paper is going down what I call a quasi-hypothecation model, so we are not going the full gamut which says that everything is a user-paid contribution in some way and we would actually not have a tax system in effect — you would go down that direct user pays. I do not advocate, and we certainly do not advocate, that model in this paper, but I think there is a balance we need to strike whereby our tax money goes to essential services in an even spread, and that means if we start taking money from our tax dollars to give to transport infrastructure, we must take it from somewhere else. That means, do we take it from hospitals, do we take it from schools, ambulance, defence? The bottom line is the bucket at the moment just is not big enough; we have to top it up somehow. So we have been trying to get the communities thinking, moving into this space of what alternative means besides government funding alone can we actually use to top up that big bucket.

We have had a quite positive response. We have certainly had a positive response; we have spoken to both sides of state government and departments and also our federal ministry and shadow ministry and federal departments and had them welcoming the discussion that is being had in terms of freeing up a bit of the thinking around our traditional 'government funds everything'. The next steps I think for us are to start looking at how we could apply some of these models in a way that — —

We always have to be careful of direct-pays issues with areas that may need more infrastructure because they are actually low socioeconomic areas. We do not want to be in a situation where those who can afford least are hit with greater charges, so somehow we have to come up with a socially conscientious model let us call it, for want of a better term, that actually allows us to spread out the load a little bit so that it is an equitable access for all.

But I think we can actually move to a place where we can get a contribution from our businesses, where we can get a contribution from our landowners, and we can get a direct contribution from the users to actually start building specific pieces of infrastructure that we need. To give an example but perhaps to put it in a little bit of context, if we look at the Melbourne Metro line here which is being spoken about and is on the infrastructure agenda at the moment, we are getting feedback that quite clearly shows that if we do not do that piece of work we really cannot do much in terms of increasing train capacity anywhere, because it gets stuck on the loop as soon as it gets to North Melbourne or Richmond. So we look at that and say that is a pretty essential piece of initial infrastructure that has to be done for the greater good of Victoria, and that includes regional trains that still come into the loop system in the end.

So part of the thinking that we are trying to get our heads around now — and it is a big piece of work because it is so expensive — is: how can we actually potentially apply some of these models to that piece of work to free up the amount of money that actually needs to be generated by government as a funding bucket in that initial instance? So, can we somehow add to what the initial lump sum is going to be to actually get that piece of work under way? So we will continue to look at those particular models and see if we can actually get some of the —

Our membership was lucky enough to have our big accounting firms — our KPMGs, our Deloittes, those groups that can actually apply some of this very intense economic modelling to some of these things for us — help us come up with some ideas that might actually work in this sort of space. Again, we do not do this with an aim of actually forcing a government of the day to pick up this particular project and work with it. What we are actually trying to do is free up a bit of the thinking so there is a little bit more comfort for a government to start to raise some of these issues and know that people will understand that this is where we are at: there just is not enough money.

The trade-off is that either we start to make a contribution in another way or we will have to wait for infrastructure for quite some time because there is just not the volume of money coming through. That is the piece of work. To keep nutting this out will probably be for us another year's worth of work to take it to the next

level of getting some comfort for our leaders that there is a space to move in this place — of actually having this discussion and this debate. I think we are getting some traction.

And I think, particularly here in Melbourne and in Victoria, there is an understanding that the recent Burnley Tunnel closure was very timely, if you are talking about this issue, because it really brought us to a crunch point that Sydney has probably been at for quite some time because they have quite significant transport infrastructure problems due to their geography. It has, as I said, put us in that same mindset that, ‘Hang on, we are actually at a place where we had one major’ — and it is a major — ‘road shutdown and it virtually brought the city to a standstill.’ It is not only the fact that people cannot get in and out of the city to work, but that the freeway is also one of our major logistics hubs for freight as well.

We have been told — and this has not been verified, but I have some anecdotal evidence that says — that the West Gate link actually contributes 2 per cent of GDP each year, so if we do not have access to moving our freight around through that link, then that is really cutting into our national productivity. I think that probably started to hit home for Melbourne that this is an area we really need to start looking at. And not just Melbourne; there is certainly a lot of movement on this nationally as well — in other states and cities. That is what we have been working on in that specific space with this paper and we look to keep opening up this debate and discussion as well.

The DEPUTY CHAIR — Thanks very much for that, Kate. We appreciate the contribution the Committee for Melbourne has made to this debate. We have a bit of time to continue the discussion. What I am interested to know is: is the Committee for Melbourne — having heard your chair at a property council session on pretty much this whole area of the infrastructure deficit — essentially proposing a hybrid model where there would be an increased contribution from government through debt and other instruments — the Federal Government, the various funding and finance models that you set out in your report, from benefit area levies through to congestion charges, and lots of things in between, and user charges as a mix? Do you take the view that perhaps that is the most least worst option for governments politically?

Ms ROFFEY — That is right, the most least worst option. I think there are a couple of major issues that need to be discussed and dealt with. One is the balance sheet and what actually happens as you bring more infrastructure costs onto the balance sheet, and, if we are adamant that we maintain that AAA rating, how we actually do that as more infrastructure comes on. From the Committee for Melbourne’s perspective, our job is to stimulate the debate and actually open up the thinking. So at this point in time we have stopped short of actually saying whether it would be an increase in debt and what happens to the AAA rating. I think one of the things that is becoming quite clear to us — and this is in speaking to some of our political people, the ministers and shadow ministers, as well as the general public — is that there is a lack of understanding about the difference between surplus and an operating surplus, and what an actual debt is. I think there is a piece of work for us to do around trying to explain what the difference is and also nutting out some of that problem around how we actually go about increasing infrastructure, increasing asset levels, and not actually affecting that bottom line, debt wise?

I am told, and I am certainly not an economist, and this is getting into very technical areas, that there are ways of actually moving assets — the Peninsula Link, for example — into someone else’s asset register and off the government asset register, under the model that they are using. But that model has actually created a very long-tail return on investment for government; I think over a 30-year period. The government pays back a charge each year, and somebody else operates the asset on their behalf. But there are ways of moving assets around and maintaining debt at a manageable level.

The last thing that we want, obviously, is an actual debt that is uncontrollable, because we still have to repay it — wherever the financing comes from, you still have to repay the debt and the charge that goes on top of it. So we are very aware of that and have been speaking to — obviously we talk to the Victorian Government, and we spoke about this yesterday with the Federal Government, about the concept of borrowing against the Federal Government’s 3.2, 3.4 per cent rate. So it is a much lower interest rate that they can borrow money against. However, they have the same problem there if they are all going onto their bottom line and onto their risk register there.

So it is a difficult situation to sort out, and we have not actually gone into that space yet of how you would manage the debt, how much government funding — and I think it would vary from model to model, as well. If

we were talking about a level crossing, obviously the volume of money in there is smaller and it may be that you could come up with a model that a government, for example, would be comfortable with saying, 'We will contribute X number of dollars', a local government might contribute X number of dollars, and you raise revenue through some of these methods in another capacity, whether it is a direct or indirect charge. Also, it would depend a lot on the group that came in and was financing and constructing, I think. Because, as we know, that risk management in the early phases of construction and also in the business case — —

And there are a couple of examples in Sydney where the business case indicated there would be a certain of volume of through traffic, for example, and it did not materialise, and then the funding group is not getting the return on their investment. That has made, I think, some groups quite wary in terms of making sure that business models stack up.

How we deal with that, whether governments need to carry that initial risk phase for a certain period of time, and then super funds — a couple have said they would be quite happy to potentially take on some of these assets after that has been tested. You have your five-year testing model, and then they will take it over and manage it for the next 30 years. There are different models out there, and I think that rather than advocate one model you would need to look at each project in its entirety and in its scope and actually say, 'This model would apply.' Because with super funds, for example, it would be unlikely that they would do a level crossing, because it just not big enough a volume size.

Mrs PEULICH — Ten?

Ms ROFFEY — Yes, if you packaged up 10, which is what you need to do — —

Mrs PEULICH — Over a period of time.

Ms ROFFEY — That is right, because there is no point fixing one Burke Road crossing if you do not fix Gardiner — —

Mrs PEULICH — The sequence.

Ms ROFFEY — Yes, because you cannot get the trains going any faster, and really the priority is trains because they can carry thousands of people as opposed to four people in a car. Really you need to package them up into a succession plan, anyway, to really get the benefit from them. So maybe they would look at a package of 10 over a 10-year period or something. It really is calling for quite a different way of thinking about these things than what we are used to, which is: (a), isolation in terms of, 'That's a little piece and we can do that', but (b), some very different methods of funding.

Mrs PEULICH — Thanks, Kate, that is always interesting. Obviously it is a big challenge.

Ms ROFFEY — Yes.

Mrs PEULICH — And there are lots of other questions along the way. You always, obviously, need an open mind in terms of looking at other funding models, but is there a way of improving the current funding approaches and making it work better for Australians and Victorians? For example, we have local government, we have state government and we have federal government. Are you able to have a method of identifying the priorities for infrastructure and, through some sort of funding arrangements, set up a flexible, socially conscious funding model that involves the pooling of resources from different levels of government but at the same time makes sure that they are not inflated in cost, as has been the case? I think the Victorian Auditor-General found that Victorian major projects were 30 per cent more expensive than those in the private sector. So there are efficiencies that can be achieved but also a better way of delivering the funding that we now have in place. Are you able to comment on that?

Ms ROFFEY — Yes.

Mrs PEULICH — And in particular the role that Infrastructure Australia may or should play, and also how effective the regional development committees of the Federal Government have been in delivering the high priority and in what order. There are lots of questions there, but before we move to and discount any alternative models, how can we fix up what we have?

Ms ROFFEY — A couple of things first. Infrastructure Australia is considered across the board to be doing a good job but possibly stopping short of what it could actually do, which is at that next level. At the moment potentially we pass the project up and they say, ‘Yes, business-case wise, da da da da’, stopping short of actually saying, ‘Miss this project here. That is an essential link.’

Mrs PEULICH — High national need, high state need and high regional need.

Ms ROFFEY — Yes, exactly, and is there a space? I agree, yes. I like to work in that space that is the big picture. Let us start with the plan, and then we know that all the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle will eventually fit together. If we had a national infrastructure plan, for example, you could actually say, ‘Productivity is a national issue, and we really need to be cognisant of some of these productivity discussions.’

For us we had a national plan which, let us say, had 10 elements in it. Is there a way of actually saying, ‘The priorities for productivity are that piece of work and element 3’, for example, so our money goes into those pieces of work first, regardless of whether it is New South Wales, Victoria, Perth or wherever? This is a national productivity discussion. Then once those were done we could continue on and say, ‘The next piece of the link is items 6 and 7’, and you could work off a process of actually having a very clear hierarchical needs-based analysis, not based on where you are located geographically in terms of taking the GST, for example, and splitting it between the states, but actually having a bucket of money.

You talk about this potential infrastructure bank which is that concept that you may have a bucket of money there that is specifically allocated for those priority projects, and then there are others — maybe your regional development funds or other areas — that can look more specifically at local issues.

Mrs PEULICH — So rather than money going up, is there a way of having it come down? Because no-one is going to give up their dough.

Ms ROFFEY — That is right. Could it come down in a strategised way that is an agreed way forward? I think there is a way forward. That is an even bigger shift in thinking than what we are talking about here, but I think there is a way that you could potentially put it, so long as you have got the plan or the vision that says, ‘Here is the national — —

Mrs PEULICH — And the case study, and the economic loss that is identified as a result of either not delivering it or not delivering on time.

Ms ROFFEY — That is right; it is a fact-based discussion, and it is not based on where I live or what I think or what might benefit me best. It is actually based on being able to look and say, ‘I would happily contribute money to a project that is out in Sunshine West because I can afford to do that’ and ‘I think that they should have equitable access to jobs and they are just not there, so they need infrastructure to get to the south-east, which is where they are all heading’, for example. I think we can, as a very intelligent and I think caring nation, bring ourselves to look at the bigger picture and say, ‘This is for the greater good.’

Mrs PEULICH — How can we bring that about? How can we, irrespective of the hues of the government, actually get them together in the same head space on these issues?

Ms ROFFEY — I think that is the difficult question. But I think potentially what will maybe drive that is, as we start to get closer to crunch time and we realise we now have \$1.2 billion worth of — —

Mrs PEULICH — Lag.

Ms ROFFEY — Additional costs to maintain our roads — not to build anything new but just to maintain what we have got — that we will start talking about things like a Brisbane to Melbourne fast rail link. It is never going to stack up business-case wise if you just look at dollars and cents, but if you consider it in a productivity discussion or if you consider it in a liveability discussion for Australia in the next 50 years, then it starts to actually make some more sense in terms of why it would be an important piece of infrastructure. If you just say it is going to cost us \$400 billion to build and over 20 years we will get a \$100 billion return on the investment, that is never going to stack up in anyone’s mind, so it is quite a significant shift.

The DEPUTY CHAIR — Therefore how are you going to get anyone else other than government and instruments for government to lead the financing of that?

Ms ROFFEY — Yes, and again not the finance but that funding return: how do you actually get that? There are potentially some areas where you could go that do not require any government funding, but I think for those generally enormously big projects you are really going to need some kind of government money, particularly when they are mostly government assets that we are building now. I guess you could go into privatisation, if you wanted to start privatising the rail network around Australia as a single entity. You may be able to start looking at that, but that then, I think, runs into the problem that these are actually assets that are accessible to everybody. Part of our government structure here is that we provide — and I fully agree that we provide — hospitals and schools because everybody should have equitable access to those sorts of services. Our transport infrastructure is another one of those things that contributes to our liveability. There is an expectation here, I think, that we do get some access to that as a nation — that it is a very advanced and great place to live.

Mr CARROLL — Thanks, Kate, it is a good report and a good conversation starter, particularly with the overseas examples. I just have a comment in the sense that when you look at the State Government, you have the east-west tunnel; the rail link to Melbourne Airport; the rail link to Avalon; Doncaster rail; which is pretty much where this report heads. The government pretty much cannot afford to do all those things. They all have their pros and cons — —

Mrs PEULICH — Their advocates.

Mr CARROLL — They are all solid projects. Then you have the Federal Government that has the GST and the big rate base, and applications go to Infrastructure Australia. We always hear this; it is always highlighted that Australia's Federal Government is one of the few federal governments in the world that does not contribute to public transport in the way it probably should, such as having a dedicated public transport fund. How do we have this sort of conversation at the federal level? Have you had that yet, and how has the response been?

Ms ROFFEY — Again, without having the facts and figures in front of me, the contribution that the Federal Department told us they are making is actually increasing into transport, I think.

Mr CARROLL — It is, yes.

Ms ROFFEY — Back to your point, Inga: the costs are just growing so much more quickly than we can actually fund anymore, because our needs are growing. We are running a rail system that was really built in the 1950s here, so taking out the underground rail link in the city that was built in the 1980s, the last piece of infrastructure that was built was in 1952, I am told, and that was the Glen Waverley line.

The DEPUTY CHAIR — The extension.

Ms ROFFEY — Yes. The city has grown a lot since then. We need to go underground, and the costs of going underground are enormous, but somebody has to start at some point in time. I remember talking to Lynne Kosky when she was the Minister, and I said, 'We absolutely have to go underground', and she said that in 1952, when they did the last plan, they decided not to because it was so expensive. I said, 'But it is a lot more expensive now, and at some point in time — —

Mrs PEULICH — You have the rail crossings now.

Ms ROFFEY — That is right. We have 176, I am told, of those level crossings to deal with.

Mr CARROLL — It is almost like a trial is needed — some innovative trialling — like in Geelong, Bendigo or Ballarat, where you are going to try and stick one of these — —

Mrs PEULICH — Or the south-east.

Mr CARROLL — Somewhere there is a trial needed where you are actually going to pick an innovative solution and see how it goes.

Ms ROFFEY — The thing is to try to apply some of this to the metro train link, and I know I have actually become a big advocate of that because I just think it is so important in cracking open anything else that we do here. But can we apply a model to a level crossing in an electorate or in a council area where, I am told, for example, there is a specific crossing that is not only congested but congested right near the hospital so the ambulances are actually blocked — —

Mrs PEULICH — Clayton.

Ms ROFFEY — Yes. That is right. They are blocked at the boom gate now. There is not a case to be made for doing something about that as an urgent thing. I see that there is almost a competitive opportunity here for councils to say, 'Hey we can do this, community; we can actually fix our own level crossing', and next door the council saying, 'Hey, hang on, they have had theirs fixed — —

Mrs PEULICH — But it is also on the line that it is going to impact on the inland port and connect to the port of Hastings, so there is actually a real ground for getting federal government investment also. My view is that if you have money frittered away at different levels of government without pooling it into the same bucket, you are not going to get the same bang for the buck.

Ms ROFFEY — Yes, or at least saying, 'Here is an agreement', and whether it is Infrastructure Australia or whether we have an 'Infrastructure Victoria' — Sydney has got an Infrastructure New South Wales that did not quite get it right I do not think — taking it and saying, 'This is a priority project.' Even if the bucket of money is not held in one central space, but we say — —

Mrs PEULICH — That is right. That is your contribution for this year.

Ms ROFFEY — 10 per cent of federal funds, 20 per cent of state, 15 per cent local government and we have to raise the rest ourselves.

Mrs PEULICH — They have national partnership agreements for various service innovations — models. Why not infrastructure?

Ms ROFFEY — Yes, and that may be an easier method than trying to get everyone to put their money in and give it over to somebody else to deliver on.

Mrs PEULICH — Which they are not going to do. They are not going to do that.

The DEPUTY CHAIR — This inquiry is into local economic development initiatives, which you cannot divorce from the other levels. Just on that issue of, for instance, whichever local government — Monash, I suspect — the Clayton Road railway crossing is in, what do you see as the role for local governments, particularly given that range of strategies you look at in terms of capturing value and raising the necessary capital to contribute to projects such as that — and there might be different ones? Has there been any looking at how those different international models could be applied to the Australian and Victorian circumstance about how they could go about raising the capital to help meet this deficit?

Ms ROFFEY — I think one of our next steps is to look at how that can happen. It is down to the local government level, as it always is in everything in the end, because they are the ones that touch people. That is the level of government that says, 'Hang on, things are not being picked up. Our roads are not — —

Mrs PEULICH — The City of Greater Dandenong has actually applied its mind to this very issue, Martin, and they have some good ideas. It would be well worthwhile having a look at them.

Ms ROFFEY — So we have looked at Dandenong. We have spoken to the Victorian Local Governance Association — to Maree there — and we have started some initial looks at Monash and at Clayton Road. Dandenong, which we certainly discussed as part of this piece of work as well.

Again, it varies on the piece of infrastructure you are working on and on the area it is in. For example, there is a lot more uplift in terms of value capture for properties in an inner city area than there is further out. We talk about this concept of a 20-minute city and it being 20 minutes from where you work. I know Deakin University and that whole area out there is being touted as potentially a new hub, almost a new city out there. What does that mean for these sorts of infrastructure projects that are going on out there, where there is a real potential economic boom for development and land developers to come in and start building? Do you say, 'Hang on, you have to make a contribution to the greater good of this area if you want to be in this space.'

Mrs PEULICH — And the two are just so critically linked. Have a look at EastLink and what it has done in terms of forcing about relocation of business along the length of EastLink out of, say, Moorabbin or Braeside, which have been locked into congestion because of the failure to build pieces of infrastructure like the Dingley

bypass. So they are critical, and all governments at all levels have to play a role because it has a direct impact on local economic development.

The DEPUTY CHAIR — We have gone over time, unfortunately, Kate.

Ms ROFFEY — Have we? It seemed like it was only 10 minutes!

The DEPUTY CHAIR — That it did. We thank you very much. When the full committee considers these things a bit more, we might well follow up through our executive officer any further questions.

Mrs PEULICH — Can I just ask one more question?

The DEPUTY CHAIR — Go for your life, Inga, as long as it is a quick one.

Mrs PEULICH — The Committee for Melbourne — there are a number of similar committees obviously modelled on that concept. Do you guys feed into some other higher level? Is there a collaboration?

Ms ROFFEY — We do. We have a Committees for Cities group. We actually just met in Echuca-Moama recently. Melbourne is the oldest and the biggest and the most solid worldwide, so we have a real leadership role in that, and I think it is very important we bring on a 'Committee for Echuca' and a 'Committee for Wagga' and — —

Mrs PEULICH — So how often do you meet?

Ms ROFFEY — We meet twice a year. That includes Auckland and Perth and — —

Mrs PEULICH — Sorry Kate, how is the Committee for Melbourne funded?

Ms ROFFEY — Through memberships — so, all the KPMGs, the Deloittes, the NABs and our mid-level corporates.

The DEPUTY CHAIR — Big corporates mostly, yes. They are all in there.

Ms ROFFEY — Yes. We have about 150 members, and they all contribute. That is our funding. So we are genuinely independent.

Mrs PEULICH — Excellent.

Ms ROFFEY — We can actually stand up and say, 'Hey folks, we have it wrong here. We actually have to start contributing a bit more.'

The DEPUTY CHAIR — Once again I thank you, Kate, and the Committee for Melbourne for the contribution. In about a fortnight's time you will be receiving a copy of the transcript from our friends at Hansard.

Ms ROFFEY — Maybe earlier, the way they are going!

The DEPUTY CHAIR — Whilst open to minor corrections and things along that line, it is obviously not open to changes of substance. We thank you once again, and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

Ms ROFFEY — It has been a pleasure. Thank you very much.

Witness withdrew.