PUBLIC

THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION B INQUIRY MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE HOBART ON WEDNESDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2026

POLICE INQUIRY

The Committee met at 2.33 p.m.

CHAIR (Ms Haddad) - Good afternoon everybody, and thank you for your attendance at this afternoon's Committee hearing. I can confirm that you are all still sworn in under oath as you were sworn in on the 20th, so for the life of the Inquiry you're still considered sworn in and under oath under our standing orders.

I will remind you that the hearing is covered by parliamentary privilege, which will allow you to speak with freedom and without fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place outside of parliament. This protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to outside of the parliamentary proceedings. The hearing is public. There are members of the public in attendance today. Others may be observing online, including the media. If you do wish aspects of your evidence to be heard in private, please make that request of us at the time and we can move into an *in camera* hearing.

As I said last time, the Committee has agreed to give a sensitive content disclaimer at the beginning of each of our hearings in the interests of the sensitive issues that we're likely dealing with. We do recognise that during these hearings we may discuss highly sensitive matters that have deeply impacted people, which may be distressing for people listening to or participating in these proceedings. Anybody that does need support can contact services including Lifeline on 13 11 14. There is a list of additional contacts and services on the Inquiry's website, and we also have hard copies in the room today.

I also want to acknowledge on behalf of the Committee the very serious and sensitive nature of the subject matter likely to be raised at today's hearing. As a Ccommittee, we acknowledge that there has already been a lot of investigation into the Reynolds matter, including the coronial inquest, the Commission of Inquiry and the Weiss report. Each of these identified that there were still outstanding matters to be resolved and this was one of the reasons for the initiation of this Inquiry.

The Inquiry is intended to seek and receive evidence in order to make tangible and useful recommendations to ensure that the failures identified, and the organisational deficiencies relating to the Reynolds matter, can be addressed and that the kind of offending that Reynolds engaged in can never occur again without serious and early identification, action, prevention and cultural change.

We recognise that some of this work has already commenced and much of the good work of Tasmania Police has done in the past and continue to do. Tasmania Police are widely respected. Many officers have been deeply affected and shocked by the Reynolds matter and also seek resolution and answers. We recognise the serious harm that the Reynolds offending has caused to victim-survivors and to their families and everybody affected, as well as to police officers, their families and the wider community. We are confident that the work of this Inquiry will assist with some of that resolution and provide tangible and positive recommendations for change.

As I said, we are committed to a trauma-informed approach and I'll endeavour as Chair today, to chair the hearing in that manner, recognising not only the sensitivities but also the trauma that many still carry and may always carry.

I'd like to invite you, Commissioner, if you would like to make an opening statement to do so.

Comm ADAMS - Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the opportunity to reappear at today's Committee in relation to Terms of Reference 3 and 4. At the outset, I acknowledge the harm caused by Paul Reynolds' offending and the continuing impact on victim-survivors, their families and the broader community. His conduct was abhorrent and his criminal offending has had an irreversible impact on many lives. I know as well that his conduct has affected the reputation of Tasmania Police and has eroded public trust and confidence. I want to acknowledge all of the victim-survivors of sexual abuse and their advocates and thank them for their courage in giving evidence before the Committee.

In 2008, I was an Inspector of Police when concerns were first raised after an event at the Police Academy. I reported those concerns in accordance with the process at the time and expected that they would be properly acted upon. They were not. We missed an opportunity to stop Reynolds' offending, hold him to account and prevent further harm to many victim-survivors. In 2018, Reynolds' conduct was subject of a further report by a police officer which led to a Professional Standards investigation, the execution of a search warrant and the seizure of electronic devices. The following day, Paul Reynolds died by his own hand, at which time the matter became subject to a coronial investigation.

Had this occurred today, the Professional Standards investigation would have continued, in accordance with trauma-informed practices, to understand the full extent of his offending and to inform organisational learning. Tasmania Police proactively disclosed the Reynolds material to the Commission of Inquiry.

Following the Coroner's findings and the Commission's final report, I commissioned the independent Weiss review to examine Tasmania Police's response to these matters. The five recommendations of the Weiss review were accepted, and the funeral decision and the handling of the 2018 allegations were also independently assessed by the Integrity Commission. We've acted on the Weiss findings and recommendations, we've strengthened our systems and reporting pathways, and we've engaged with the Integrity Commission to provide an independent oversight and assurance. We've also worked closely with the Office of the Independent Monitor to ensure our progress in meeting the recommendations is tracked and scrutinised.

This was a horrible chapter in the history of Tasmania Police. It's very important to me as Commissioner of Police to make it clear that we remain committed to transparency, accountability and ensuring that the lessons from this matter result in lasting organisational change for Tasmania Police.

I also want to address the decision concerning Paul Reynolds' funeral. I have said before that the decision to hold a police funeral for Reynolds was wrong and a mistake that Tasmania Police regrets. We have apologised for that decision, and today I do so again. I sincerely apologise to all victim-survivors and their families, to all Tasmania Police staff, and the wider Tasmanian community for that decision and the hurt that it caused. The funeral decision caused

further distress and, as we have heard through submissions and evidence to this Inquiry, has undermined confidence in Tasmania Police among those who have been affected. We cannot undo what has occurred, but what we can do is acknowledge our failures honestly and accept responsibility and learn from them to ensure that they're not repeated.

Ultimately, Tasmania Police must be an organisation in which people feel that they can safely raise concerns. And it's my intent to deliver on this by ensuring that misconduct is confronted, strongly and swiftly, that we are here listening and supporting victim-survivors as best we can, and that our values translate into actions that demonstrate the high standards the Tasmanian community rightly expects of us.

CHAIR - Thank you, Commissioner. Did the Deputy Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner have anything to add by way of opening statement?

Dep Comm HIGGINS - No.

Asst Comm OOSTERLOO - No.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Chair. And I just want to add my support for the Chair's comments about the purpose of this Inquiry and reinforce what you've just said, Commissioner, about learning and making sure mistakes never get repeated.

Before asking some more detailed questions about the decision to hold a police funeral for Paul Reynolds, I wondered if you had any reflections on your own personal experiences of attending his funeral. As you've just outlined, as Commissioner, you held your own concerns from 2008, and Mr Higgins, you are obviously aware of the allegations about Reynolds. That's a matter of fact. Given your seniority, I can only assume that you were required to attend. We've heard from officers who attended the funeral about how they subsequently felt let down about the funeral occurring. I wondered if you'd like to share for people your feelings, what it was like to be present at a funeral of a man who was honoured and celebrated while you knew disturbing information about him.

Comm ADAMS - There is one way to describe what I now know has occurred and the fact that I attended that funeral, and I'm ashamed that I was there. I believed that the 2008 investigation was an unsubstantiated investigation and that there was no basis for the comments that had been reported to me by the Victorian Police officer, and that was the advice that I'd been provided with when that investigation was closed.

When I attended the funeral, I knew that Paul Reynolds had been searched by Professional Standards, but I had no detail about what the investigation entailed, what had been found. And that is not unusual. I was in a state service position from 2016 to 2021. I was the Deputy Secretary. I effectively was not a police officer. I attended the funeral as a civilian, as a state service employee. And as I said, I was ashamed to be there with other police officers, other state service employees, when I later found out what was the basis of that Professional Standards investigation. And can I say it was some time after that funeral that that detail became known to me.

Dr WOODRUFF - Would the Deputy Commissioner care to share any thoughts on that?

Dep Comm HIGGINS - I was the Commander of the Western District at that time. Paul Reynolds was in the Western Prosecution. I was aware with what was in the statement, or the report made by the officer, that went through one of our Inspectors, as well, to be submitted to Professional Standards. I and one of my Inspectors from Western District, after he took his own life, did the notification of next-of-kin, which was one of the most awful things I've ever had to do, and that was to his wife, his children, and others that came to the house in the middle of the night. I was there for about eight hours. So, why the funeral? For me, I was supporting the family. It wasn't about Paul Reynolds. It was - yes, I wasn't there celebrating his life. I was there supporting his family.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you for sharing that. So, regarding the decision to hold the police funeral, documents that have been released subsequently under Right to Information show that the family made a request for this honour. And can I make it clear that nobody holds any judgment whatsoever towards the family given the unimaginable circumstances they were facing. But we're concerned about the decision to grant the request despite the allegations and evidence against Reynolds. Just to start with a simple question, specific to the Police Manual as it was written in 2018. The Manual said:

> Subject to the consent of the next-of-kin or relatives, the Commissioner may approve a police funeral for a deceased member.

Given the document says that the Commissioner 'may' grant a police funeral, I want to be clear that we all agree there was no requirement for such a funeral. It was the former Commissioner's discretion. Is that your understanding as well?

Comm ADAMS - That's correct.

Dr WOODRUFF - So, the former Commissioner wasn't required to make the decision but did so anyway and, of course, we know that after calls from MPs, Tasmania Police - and you've reinforced it just then - made an apology for this decision, which is welcome. But the missing piece for so many people is an explanation of why. I'm not asking you, Commissioner, to read into the former Commissioner's mind, but to the best of your knowledge, do any of you remember receiving any explanation as to why this decision was made, given the allegations and evidence that were available?

Comm ADAMS - I can only reiterate I didn't have any knowledge of the Professional Standards investigation, the details that related to that. I was not party to any discussion around whether there would be a police funeral or not. I don't know whether there was a conversation, but I certainly wasn't party to that conversation. And I really don't know what the basis was for that decision to hold a police funeral.

Dr WOODRUFF - Deputy Commissioner, did you want to add anything?

Dep Comm HIGGINS - I can. It was at the request of the family.

Dr WOODRUFF - Were you, or are you, Commissioner, at all concerned that the decision might have been made in part to protect the reputation of the police force? Or whether it was influenced by the well-known long history between the former Commissioner and Mr Reynolds?

Comm ADAMS - I can't answer that. I don't know what the former Commissioner was thinking when that decision was made. I can't, I guess, make an assumption around what that thinking was. I wasn't privy to any conversation around the decision for the funeral, so I can't make an assessment on what he was thinking.

Dr WOODRUFF - Okay.

CHAIR - Ms Butler?

Dr WOODRUFF - Can I ask the next one, and then Ms Butler? Is that okay?

CHAIR - Yes.

Dr WOODRUFF - So, that was around the funeral, which the Deputy Commissioner has just said the family requested. We've heard in media reports that on 29 September 2018, there was a Police Remembrance Day event held at Tasmania Police Academy. The report suggests that while Mr Reynolds' death occurred too late for him to be included in the printed program, Paul Reynolds was nonetheless honoured at that event as well. Is that correct, and what do you recall from that event, if either of you were present?

Comm ADAMS - I don't have any recollections of that event. I wouldn't know whether I attended that event. I'd have to check my diary. I don't have a recollection.

Dr WOODRUFF - Does the Deputy Commissioner?

Dep Comm HIGGINS - Actually, I don’t remember either.

Dr WOODRUFF - Would you be able to check whether he was, in fact, honoured at that event, because that's our understanding from media?

Comm ADAMS - Yes.

Ms BUTLER - The Reynolds matter has caused serious harm to victims, affected public confidence, and deeply impacted many serving police officers who played no part in the events. In fact, many of them are absolutely mortified. Many serving officers feel tarred by the same brush and are unsure why the matters of nearly a decade ago are being thrashed out again as part of this parliamentary Inquiry - we understand that. We have heard similar questioning also from many of the victim-survivors.

What gives you confidence, Commissioner, that the Tasmania Police Service has learnt from those lamentable failures and emerged as a stronger organisation today? What are the biggest lessons learnt? Moving forward, what assurances are there for the victim-survivors that the reprehensible actions of Reynolds can never happen again?

Comm ADAMS - There's a lot in that question. The first thing is there's been significant learnings and one of the objectives of the Weiss review was to identify organisational learnings and for us then to consider and make sure that we're making changes that address those concerns.

We spoke at the previous hearing when we talked about systems, processes and culture, and I identified the significant changes that we've made in relation to our culture and the promotion of our values and the fact that those values have been developed from the bottom up. And we embed those into policy, into recognition of our officers, into disciplinary action and into every day when our officers are behaving, we expect them to have alignment with our values.

We've considered and made significant change in regards to providing the community with a confidence that they can come in at multiple pathways to report behaviour by police officers, whether that be through the Integrity Commission, which at the time of the matters revolving around Mr Reynolds, the Integrity Commission didn't exist. We now have very clear protocols in relation to reporting serious misconduct, which includes intelligence or information that regards senior officers and also serious misconduct involving any officer. And the Integrity Commission can have an oversight role in relation to that.

We've set up an online portal for members of the community to make complaints, which can be anonymous about police officers. We've recently just rolled out another online portal called Safe2Say, which is separate from our Professional Standards area, which again provides members of the community a safe way to make reports of sexual misconduct, which can also involve police officers, and we've modelled that particular online portal on an online portal that's been used in Western Australia quite successfully.

We expect our police officers to call out bad behaviour, and again, the statistics in our submission will show that around a third of the complaints that we investigate are internally generated, and I think that is a true sign of the change in the culture that we have people being prepared to put their hand up and call out the bad behaviour, which is exactly what I tried to do in 2008.

Ms BUTLER - The Reynolds' matters caused profound harm to victim-survivors and damaged public confidence and also, as I previously said, deeply affected many serving police officers who had no involvement in those events, and they have reported that they experienced a real shock when they received that news about what was underlying there with Mr Reynolds, and also really disappointed and let down by the funeral once they had that information. What has Tasmania Police done to support serving members in rebuilding that confidence within the organisation, whilst also ensuring that the victim-survivors remain at the centre of that reform process?

Comm ADAMS - The first thing I'd say is that everything that surrounds Paul Reynolds has impacted every police officer; whether you're a current police officer or a past police officer, it affects everyone's reputation. We have a proud reputation of serving the Tasmanian community. We've had high levels of trust and something like this completely can erode that trust and certainly causes concerns within the community about that sense of trust and expectation that we will do things in a professional, transparent and accountable way.

What I've tried to do throughout my examination of this issue is to actually, first, understand fully what has occurred. From the entire of Paul Reynolds' career, I've wanted to understand whether there was any other member within the organisation that has been a facilitator or supporter or enabler of his behaviour. We've sought to understand whether he's used his position as a police officer to facilitate the offending. I've sought to be transparent and accountable about the process that we've undertaken as part of the review, as part of the

findings, as part of our action that has come as a result of the review. And every step of the way I've tried to rebuild the trust within the organisation, as I have done with the community. That started the moment that that review was called for. The continual updates to our staff, and standing in front of the media and answering every question until the media didn't have another question to ask.

We wanted to do this review once. We wanted to do it properly. We did not want there to be anything that was not addressed through the purpose of that review. And, I guess, that's why it's a bit disappointing that, from my perspective, the review doesn't seem to have landed in the way that we intended it to do, because we certainly didn't expect to be here and, it was 'no stone unturned,' I think Ms Weiss has used that quote a number of times, because that was the brief that she was given. If we were going to do this right, we needed to actually examine everything. That was what I believe we've done. And, as it would appear, some people in the public don't share that same view.

Ms BUTLER - Just on that - last question, Chair, sorry - what feedback have you received from currently serving police officers and also, I suppose, police officers that may have retired in the time from the recommendations, or have left from the Weiss recommendations to now? What feedback have you received from serving members about the reforms that have been implemented since the Weiss review?

Comm ADAMS - We've had strong feedback certainly from our police leadership group who are intimately involved and, I guess, the leaders that actually put some of these recommendations and some of the change in practice into play. And just general conversations around the organisation. We do have a significant cohort of people who were not around when these incidents happened with Paul Reynolds. So, a lot of this is new to them, but those that were in the job at the time have been supportive of the action that we've taken. I don't think we've had any criticism. In fact, a lot of support for the fact that we've initiated the review and sought to understand the full extent of the offending.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Chair. Just a question for the Commissioner. In relation to the Weiss review, how were the terms of references set for that review?

Comm ADAMS - Thank you for asking that question. I think it's very clear, and it's been on the public record, that I developed the draft terms of reference. But I wasn't the only person that participated in the construct of those terms of reference. So, if I could just provide the Committee with what the process was and the chronology around the terms of reference.

I developed a draft terms of reference, which I emailed to the Corporate Management Group, my Director, and our Media Manager and legal team for their review and indicated in the course of that email that I was intending to discuss the terms of reference with them. I made the decision that we needed to institute an independent review into Mr Reynolds' actions. Members of the Corporate Management Group, as I said the Principal Legal Officer, contributed, and the draft substantially changed over a number of days.

I also consulted and shared the draft with another Secretary to get their feedback. Ms Weiss was provided with the draft terms of reference on two occasions because the draft was evolving. And at the first meeting I had with Ms Weiss, Ms Weiss was also provided the opportunity to change, to value-add, and amend the terms of reference.

So, whilst I developed the draft, really it was a combination and a collective effort of everyone wanting to undertake a review that was going to consider all of the issues and concerns that we had, and also that the community had. That's how the terms of reference were developed.

Ms HOWLETT - Excellent. Thank you very much for explaining that to me.

Mr GEORGE - Chair, if I could just follow up on that briefly, if I may. As I understand it, my recollection is that, in fact, there were a number of other matters which were raised that should have been included in the terms of reference. I think the Greens raised a number of them. And I noticed that in her report Ms Weiss referred to the fact that there are various areas that were beyond her terms of reference. Considering you say that you want no stone unturned that seems to go against my recollection of how the terms of reference were evolved.

Comm ADAMS - If you look at the terms of reference, it was clear that there are a number of key issues and then there were objectives. The key issues clearly identified the funeral, the 2008, and the 2018 investigation. Those issues were identified very clearly in the terms of reference. And then there were objectives or outcomes, I guess, that we sought to have as a result of the review. I sat beside Ms Weiss when she was asked a question around, I think, the funeral, by an ABC journalist and, from my perspective, I think, and I'm not going to talk for Ms Weiss, but this is how I understood the answer to the question: that it wasn't an objective in terms of giving an outcome as to whether anyone acted improperly around the decision to hold a funeral, but she certainly considered the funeral and there was certainly commentary in her review about the funeral.

Mr GEORGE - I can quote this. The question was,

> Why doesn't it seem though that there are any quotes from interviews that explain that decision toward a full police funeral? We can't find anything in the report that actually speaks to that decision at the top level.

And the response was,

> Well, it wasn't in my terms of reference, David. That wasn't in my terms of reference.

If you read the five objectives, the funeral wasn't one of them.

Comm ADAMS - As I said, Ms Weiss has answered that in terms of her objectives. The key issues were very clearly stated in the terms of reference, and from my perspective, her review did address those key issues. I'm happy to provide the Committee with some additional information *in camera*, but I'm sure we can do that at the right time.

Dr WOODRUFF - One of the disturbing things about the honouring of Paul Reynolds at the funeral is that it wasn't an isolated incident. For example, when a Member of parliament wrote to police to request information for a condolence speech, the information they were provided included very positive characterisations of Reynolds, including this quote,

> He was a larger-than-life character who was widely known and respected in policing circles with his focus always on others before himself.

That statement was approved by senior command in Tasmania Police despite knowledge of the allegations and evidence against Reynolds. It was provided in the knowledge it was intended to be put on the public and parliamentary record. Commissioner, do you want to comment on the appropriateness of such a statement being provided by Tasmania Police for the public record?

Comm ADAMS - Clearly, it's not appropriate and I did not have any involvement in that and no knowledge of that given, again, that I was in a state service role for that six-year period but, clearly, it's inappropriate, given what we know now.

Dr WOODRUFF - Okay, thanks.

Right to Information documents show that the Commission of Inquiry intended to issue a misconduct notice to the former Commissioner under section 18 of the *Commissions of Inquiry Act*. Tasmania Police's general counsel represented the former Commissioner on this matter. To the best of your knowledge, was that notice issued?

Comm ADAMS - I don't know.

Dep Comm HIGGINS - I don't know either. I don't think so.

Dr WOODRUFF - Would you be able to confirm whether that is true or not?

Dep Comm HIGGINS - I actually don't know whether we can from the Commission of Inquiry.

Dr WOODRUFF - Could you take it on notice and come back to us with an answer or reason for why you might not be able to do that?

Dep Comm HIGGINS - Because if it hasn't been issued, we wouldn't have been aware. That would have been directly with the Commissioner.

Dr WOODRUFF - The question was, was the notice issued?

Dep Comm HIGGINS - I don't know, because they go directly to the people involved.

Dr WOODRUFF - It would go directly to the former Commissioner and would not be part of the Tasmania Police's records?

Dep Comm HIGGINS - No, it wouldn't have been part of the Corporate Management Group, no.

CHAIR - Would it be part of the records held by Tasmania Police if it had been issued?

Dep Comm HIGGINS - We'll take it on notice.

Dr WOODRUFF - Okay, thanks.

In arguing against the intention to issue a misconduct notice regarding the funeral decision, Tasmania Police described the eulogy that was delivered by the former Commissioner

as being 'mostly a factual narrative prepared from information contained in his personal dossier'. Tasmania Police downplays the level of praise in the speech that was given to Paul Reynolds. The text of the eulogy describes the former Commissioner's long relationship with Reynolds. It talks about his 'enthusiastic and capable manner, his compassion and caring for others, his quick wit and sense of humour', and talks about a number of awards that he received. Given all of this, do you understand why victim-survivors would feel let down to see police downplaying the contents of the eulogy?

Comm ADAMS - I absolutely understand why victim-survivors feel let down. As I have said, I feel ashamed to have been at the funeral myself.

Dr WOODRUFF - It wasn't just the funeral happening, but it was the contents of the eulogy delivered. I wonder if you can offer an explanation as to what the problem was within Tasmania Police at that time, in 2018, that allowed not only a full honours funeral to occur with such a positive eulogy, but also a celebration of Reynolds at a Police Remembrance Day, to be confirmed, and positive commentary about his character being sent to MPs for speeches. It surely reflects more than just one person's decision. What was the culture, particularly in senior leadership, at the time that allowed that sort of thing to occur?

Comm ADAMS - I mean, that's a difficult hypothetical question. I was not a police officer at that time. You'll have to ask those that were police officers at the Corporate Management Group at that time.

Dr WOODRUFF - Have you turned your mind to it, given what you know now?

Comm ADAMS – Again –

Dr WOODRUFF - As the person of the most senior leadership and responsible for culture?

Comm ADAMS – I'm disappointed in exactly what has happened. I mean, I put a report in 2008, which was not, clearly, not investigated, and had that been investigated at the standard it should have been, that's where this offending should have stopped. And there's a number of victim-survivors that have been hurt, and criminal offending against victim-survivors from that point onwards. I feel terrible about that.

Dr WOODRUFF - In the briefing note about the Reynolds matter that was sent to the Police Minister in September 2018, there was mention of potential child exploitation material, but it didn't explain the full extent of the allegations or evidence. Was further explanation provided at any subsequent point to the Police Minister and, if so, when? And if not, why not? Why would that information be withheld from the Minister?

Comm ADAMS - I don't know whether that occurred. The first time I saw that briefing note was during the RTI process when I became Commissioner.

Dr WOODRUFF - Could you confirm, or could you bring that information that answers that question back to the Committee?

Comm ADAMS - I think we have checked records as part of the RTI process, and there's nothing that's been identified through that process.

Dr WOODRUFF - No subsequent information provided then.

Comm ADAMS – No.

Dr WOODRUFF - Okay, thanks.

Ms BUTLER - Through the RTI that Ms Woodruff just referred to, it was revealed that, following the 2018 death of Paul Reynolds, the office of Mark Shelton contacted Tasmania Police seeking background information to prepare a speech; a speech that was never made, leading to the assumption that Mr Shelton was made aware of the investigation. Former Police Minister Michael Ferguson claims his office had received a briefing note from Tasmania Police in relation to the matter prior to the funeral, but he did not read it until after the funeral and could not recall if he had received the information prior to or after. I have worked myself as an adviser in a Police Minister's office and this is always struck a bit of a chord with me. Given the explosive and unprecedented nature of the child sexual abuse allegations against a serving officer, it is standard protocol - I have always assumed - for a Police Commissioner to immediately escalate such risks to the Police Minister verbally. Would that not have been the case?

Comm ADAMS - I can't answer that.

Ms BUTLER - Were you aware of whether or not that would normally be a protocol, where a Police Minister would be advised of such a serious risk both to Tasmania Police, as well as to the Police Minister themselves?

Comm ADAMS - Are you asking me that?

Ms BUTLER - Yes.

Comm ADAMS - There's definitely not a documented protocol.

Ms BUTLER - No. So, did the Police Commissioner or any senior member of Tasmania Police brief the Minister or his staff - in person or via telephone - regarding Senior Sergeant Paul Reynolds prior to that funeral or the police funeral on 19 September?

Comm ADAMS - I don't know.

Ms BUTLER – Right. And if I go back to the question: it’s such a catastrophic institutional risk, I do not believe that that would be, and I'm not undermining you here, but I do not believe in light of my experience as an adviser in a Police Minister's office and also the sensitive nature that that would have been left to a briefing note sitting in an in-tray. Does that seem like a reasonable outcome to you?

Comm ADAMS - I don't know what was considered, what the briefings were in relation to it. As I said, I saw that briefing note that Dr Woodruff has referred to as part of the RTI process. It's the first time I saw it.

Ms BUTLER - Was there potentially any political interference with 'steady on, nothing to see here' potentially to protect reputational concerns both for Tasmania Police and/or the

Government and Police Minister in the decision to continue on with the full police funeral? Was there a reputational damage that could have happened if the story was out? Was there a reputational damage potentially to a Police Minister or the police service at the time? Obviously, there was reputational damage, but the events that happened later with the police funeral happening, was that potentially a 'nothing to see here, show goes on' - could that potentially have been one of the reasons why that police funeral ended up occurring in the way it did?

I understand from information that you've provided that there was a protocol that if the family requested that funeral, that it should proceed, but this is a catastrophic reputational risk to Tasmania Police at the time and also the Police Minister. Could reputational protection have been one of the reasons why that police funeral proceeded?

Comm ADAMS - I can't answer that. You're asking me to guess when I didn't have the information. I wasn't privy to those conversations. I totally agree with you, in hindsight, it absolutely was significant reputational risk and there would have been significant community concern around a police officer and allegations such as that.

Ms BUTLER - Just going back to my previous experiences as an adviser within a Police Minister's office and the professional way in which information is shared between a Commissioner, a Deputy Commissioner and a Minister: I can't fathom a process where this information would not have been given potentially verbally to a Police Minister when it comes to such a huge issue. Would that seem unusual that information as such would go in the form of a briefing note to a Minister and no-one even knew if he had received it? According to him, he's not even sure whether he even read it.

Comm ADAMS - Again, I can't answer. I don't know what the protocols were in place regarding Professional Standards briefings and advice to the Minister.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you, Chair and Commissioner. I'm not sure if you'll be able to answer this, but who had knowledge of the Professional Standards' inquiry at the time of Paul Reynolds' death, and what measures have you put in place since to prevent an incident like this occurring again when a police funeral is granted to a member that's under investigation?

Comm ADAMS - So, first to that question, I don't know who knew about the Professional Standards' investigation. I can give you what - and the Deputy can give you what the protocol is in terms of Professional Standards' investigations and the confidentiality and how they're managed by the Deputy Commissioner, which, as I understand, was the same back in 2018.

We have made changes as a result of the Reynolds matter and we now have a clear requirement that the Commissioner of the day must consider any conduct, Professional Standards investigations in relation to anyone who does pass while being a serving police officer, and those matters are to be considered in the consideration of whether there'll be a police funeral granted or not.

Ms HOWLETT - Thank you. And if a member is under investigation?

Comm ADAMS - Again, it'll depend on what the investigation is - whether it's a level 1 complaint, where it's a customer service complaint, to a serious level 3 complaint, which involves criminal misconduct. Obviously, those matters would need to be considered by the Commissioner, and the Commissioner would then make a decision regarding the granting of a police funeral. I don't know if the Deputy wants to explain the protocol around the confidentiality with Professional Standards and why that is in play.

Dep Comm HIGGINS - So, with information being put in, and I said that at the start, that I was aware of the information that was put in, and it wasn't to the extent that came out years later that I became aware of. It was not detailed like that at all, but it's set an investigation off. So, that was submitted, it went to Professional Standards and that's the part that I knew. Once it went there, I'm not sure what happened at that particular time now, and I've had Professional Standards for the last four years, but probably six years' involvement in acting and so forth.

The information will go into Professional Standards; it will be assessed by Professional Standards. A matter of this significance would be briefed to the Deputy Commissioner. It probably wouldn't be briefed to the Commissioner because the delegation at that stage for the investigation will be with the Commander of Professional Standards and the Deputy, and they were the ones liaising here. An investigative team will be formed, and it was in this case as well.

I can't remember the exact dates but the information was on the Friday and they went over and did a search on the Wednesday. So that's pretty fast in this respect here. I wasn't aware, as the Western Commander, that was going to happen like that. I found out when I did the notification that evening, the next day. But as far as the investigation itself, it is kept tight. It's confidential, it's very sensitive, and Professional Standards are very professional when it comes to the investigation and will only bring into the investigation plan those that are required for the investigation, which - from what I understand for this investigation - is exactly what happened.

Dr WOODRUFF - Just on the Police Manual again. The Manual now reads:

> The holding of a police funeral shall not occur without the approval of the Commissioner. In determining whether to approve a police funeral, the Commissioner will consider any current or relevant Professional Standards or conduct matters relating to the deceased member.

Commissioner, if the Manual had been written this way in 2018, would the option still have been available to the former Commissioner to hold the funeral? Is there any line drawn that says in circumstances, such as Paul Reynolds, a decision cannot be made to hold a funeral or is it still now ultimately at the Commissioner's discretion?

Comm ADAMS - I think it's a hypothetical to go back in time and look at what we have in play now. It's clear around the changes that we have in the Manual now, and it's very clear that, if I am the Commissioner, when a death of a police officer occurs and there is Professional Standards investigations outstanding or are occurring, then I will need to make an assessment of that investigation, the seriousness of the allegations or the conduct, and I'll be then required to make a judgment around whether a funeral occurs or not, and it really sits with the Commissioner of the day to make that decision.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you. It's not hypothetical because there isn't any, as I read it, substantive difference in the change that's been made to the Police Manual from where it was in 2018, which gave the discretion to the Commissioner. The Commissioner wasn't required to provide a police funeral in 2018; it was discretionary. It is still, as you've just described, discretionary. So, would you be open - I suppose people, victim-survivors, don't consider that the change to the Police Manual has been signalled strongly enough - would you be open considering further changes to entirely rule out the possibility of a funeral in certain circumstances, for example, if there was an active criminal investigation underway into the officer's death?

Comm ADAMS - So, there are two parts to that: Again, if the changes to the TPM had have been in play in 2018 and the previous Commissioner had to make a decision regarding the police funeral, it's still the discretion of the Commissioner to have that funeral.

If we move forward to obviously the changes that we've made, the changes we've made are to provide a reassurance to our members and to the community that the granting of a police funeral is for those police officers who have served the community in a way that justifies a funeral. If there are some concerns around that, I'm more than happy to consider people's perspectives around that to ensure that if there needs to be some tightening of language. In my view, it's tight and, yes, it certainly puts the emphasis on the Commissioner to be informed about any current investigation and to consider that as part of a decision to grant a funeral or not. As I said, I'm more than happy to consider if someone wants to put forward a different perspective on how that's worded, more than happy to consider that.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, and I suppose the gravity of what happened and the seriousness and the response requires, in my view and in some people's view, a more definitive direction about how the Commissioner's discretion will be used in the circumstances, so something along the lines of criminal investigations. I'll leave it obviously for you to talk about.

I just want to turn to the issue of how long it took before we got to the point of Reynolds' offending being fully examined. Obviously, Tasmania Police and the Weiss review have both agreed that the lack of proper investigation in 2008 was a major missed opportunity and a failure. There's been an apology for that, which is welcome, but there is a question as to why a proper review wasn't until October 2023 when the Weiss review was called. Why didn't a review happen before that time?

Comm ADAMS - I can't answer that. I wasn't a police officer at the time, and it wasn't within my scope of responsibility to consider.

Dr WOODRUFF - Any time before 2023 - you were Commissioner prior to that point. Why was it only in October 2023 that an investigation into Reynolds? I'm not talking about 2008, no.

Comm ADAMS - So there were two things for me. The first was the coronial inquest findings. I read through the coronial inquest findings and there was a lot of information in there that I did not have any knowledge of in terms of the basis of the Professional Standards investigation. There were comments in there regarding Reynolds potentially either providing information to a third party in exchange for money. There were a whole range of issues that I did not have any visibility over.

We proactively provided the information around the 2008, 2018 to do with Reynolds to the Commission of Inquiry. The Deputy and I had a number of conversations around the concerns as a result of the coronial findings, and we were in the deliberations of how we were going to examine the veracity of some of the issues that came out of the coronial findings. The leadership group at the time when the coronial findings came down was completely different and none of us had the level of knowledge that was expressed in those findings.

Dr WOODRUFF - I'll return to the coronial findings in a minute. In late 2018 Tasmania Police knew that there was significant evidence about Reynolds, about a number of his victims from evidence that was previously provided to parliamentary Estimates hearings. The 2008 matter was also on Reynolds' Professional Standards file. Why at that point were steps not taken to widen the examination of his conduct and why was it kept secret - that information at that point?

Comm ADAMS - So again, you're asking me to provide a comment about what happened in 2018 when I was a state service employee?

Dr WOODRUFF - Well, with respect, this is about Tasmania Police as an organisation. It's not about you as a person. You are the person representing Tasmania Police, the organisation. We are asking questions now about Tasmania Police as an organisation. Why in 2018 when there was on Paul Reynolds' file the 2008 complaint, why at that point did Tasmania Police not undertake a thorough investigation of him?

Comm ADAMS - So again, you're asking me to make assumptions, to guess why decisions were made or not made, and I don't think that's appropriate, that I've been asked to make assumptions around decisions of previous Commissioners, previous Deputy Commissioners. What I can tell you is that the facts are that once Paul Reynolds died, there was a coronial investigation. That was the standard approach to investigations at that time. Again, I haven't read the full coronial investigation, but the comments of the Coroner who complimented the Inspector who undertook that investigation give me the comfort that that was done in a thorough, and it was a high-quality investigation. That was the process at that time. That process has now changed. The Deputy Commissioner has made changes to our policy and processes: where we have matters where we have an offender, whether it's a police officer or not, who dies and there are outstanding criminal investigations to be investigated, those investigations continue.

Dr WOODRUFF - Okay.

CHAIR - We've been going for an hour. We might take a short bathroom break for 10 minutes and make that time up after we come back? If members are happy to do that, we'll stop the broadcast.

The Committee suspended from 3.26 p.m. to 3.36 p.m.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - Commissioner, there were major concerns about Paul Reynolds' conduct in the community in 2022 when it was four years after his death. The 2018 allegations were made public through a hearing of the Coroner's Court. You referred to the coronial inquiry

final report earlier. By that time, in 2022, you were in your current role, Commissioner. In November 2022, the Coroner heard evidence of Reynolds offending against a number of children. The community was shocked. But what people didn't know at the time was that there had been previous concerns about Reynolds reported to police a decade earlier. The community also didn't know that, as your submission to this Committee has said, two more victim-survivors came forward to police that same month to make reports. Given the knowledge that the police had about the history and the new allegations, why weren't steps taken at that point to launch a broader review in November 2022? Is that something, in retrospect, you can see should have happened at that point?

Comm ADAMS - There was also the Commission of Inquiry. We'd provided information regarding Paul Reynolds to the Commission of Inquiry and the Commission, as I understood it, were considering that information. I acted once I'd read the coronial findings in the coronial inquest findings. And also, the Commission of Inquiry report came within two or three weeks of the coronial findings. Once I'd read both of those reports, as I said, we'd already had some conversations, the Deputy and I, after reading the coronial findings and the concerns that we had regarding Paul Reynolds's behaviour. Shortly after the Commission of Inquiry was tabled in parliament, I'd instigated the external review with Ms Weiss to understand exactly the extent of Reynolds' offending and whether there was any other misconduct on behalf of any other police officer in relation to his actions.

Dr WOODRUFF - The coronial findings, the formal report, wasn't until September 2023, but in November 2022, the public hearings happened and all of that information was made public about Reynolds. As I've detailed, at that point, in addition to all the materials seized in 2018, in addition to the fact it was on his file from 2008, in addition to the extra information that came forward from two other survivors, why at that point didn't Tasmania Police - you said the Commission of Inquiry. Were you expecting the Commission of Inquiry would have done that deep dive into that criminal history?

Comm ADAMS - I actually did expect that that was going to happen. They provided a case study in there. If you read the Commission of Inquiry, it gives an impression that it's certainly considered the information that we've provided, and it has been provided with additional information. I think, just to help the Committee, Reynolds was searched and his suicide in 2018, as I've indicated, I was a state service employee working within the Department at that time. In 2019, I was seconded to DPAC and performed the role of Lead Negotiator for six to seven months. In 2020, I went to Health and I worked in COVID. This investigation, the coronial investigation, and matters relating to that investigation happened when I wasn't in Tasmania Police. The information relating to Reynolds was proactively provided to the Commission of Inquiry. There was an expectation the Commission would look at that, and they clearly have because they made commentary and provided a case study in their report. And once I'd read the coronial findings, together with the Commission of Inquiry, as I said, the Deputy and I were very focused on understanding the full extent of Reynolds' behaviour and that's when we instigated that review.

Dr WOODRUFF - I just remind you that this Committee hearing is not about you as Commissioner; it's about Tasmania Police and Tasmania Police's collective responses to allegations of serious misconduct from officers. In November 2022, all of that information was available, and you've just said that it was your understanding that the Commission of Inquiry was going to do the investigation into Paul Reynolds. In February 2023, the Commission of Inquiry provided Tasmania Police with a draft chapter of his report, including the Paul

Reynolds case study. It was at that time that Tasmania Police became aware of the Commission of Inquiry's strong concerns about the matter and the questions around what he'd done.

We saw that other agencies of government announced measures in response to the Commission of Inquiry's hearings as the Inquiry was ongoing. They didn't wait to take action until the final report. Other agencies took action while the Commission of Inquiry was happening. Given 2023, when Tasmania Police became aware of the 2008 matter, the 2018 allegations and evidence, are aware of subsequent victims coming forward, and now of the Commission of Inquiry's concerns and their statement that it was beyond their jurisdiction to undertake an investigation, why was nothing done at that point?

Asst Comm OOSTERLOO - If I can just add something on behalf of the Commissioner which should clarify. Those timelines are accurate around when the review started and when the coronial findings were handed out. But what's probably lost in that is that inquiries are still continuing and ongoing throughout that whole process. So the coronial inquiry and the investigation into the coronial matter continues past 2018 into the coronial inquest. When those victim-survivors came forward in 2022, we became aware - so when the media started reporting the coronial inquest and those people came forward, they came forward and Professional Standards - and I was in Professional Standards at the time, so can speak with some authority to it - made contact with those people and commenced inquiries to get statements from those people and start collating that material.

That material, along with the matters that were coming out of the coronial inquest and that were coming through the Commission of Inquiry all, without speaking for the Commissioner, but form part of the decision-making around launching the formal review later in 2023. I just need to make it clear that inquiries were ongoing and continuing through 2021/22 and into 2023, including Professional Standards taking formal statements from those victim-survivors that came forward during the inquest.

Dr WOODRUFF - Just to make clear, are you saying that Tasmania Police was undertaking a criminal investigation - that the breadth of criminality that Regina Weiss subsequently undertook a review of, are you saying that was already in train before?

Asst Comm OOSTERLOO - We obtained statements from those people. When those people came forward, the Commission of Inquiry had started. The inquest was underway. As a matter of routine and absolute best practice, when we became aware of new people wanting to report what was going on, we took steps to obtain, to get their accounts, to get their formal statements on record at that time. Whether those people later came forward through the Weiss review and made contact with Ms Weiss, I don't know, because Ms Weiss obviously kept those inquiries confidential. We only know who we made contact with and who we obtained information from. All that material was disclosed to the commission of inquiry and to Ms Weiss as part of her review.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you. But Commissioner, you said before that you were sort of waiting for the Commission of Inquiry, expecting that they might be doing the work. But in February 2023 you found out that they weren't going to do the work because you saw the draft chapter and the case study that said it was outside their jurisdiction. Why didn't you do the formal investigation, which is what Regina Weiss subsequently did? Why didn't you do that in February 2023 with all the mountain of evidence that there was available?

Comm ADAMS - I instigated the Regina Weiss review, and -

Dr WOODRUFF - That's not strictly accurate. That's revising history, with respect.

Ms BURNET - I'm of the understanding that Paul Reynolds was demoted in 2012.

Comm ADAMS - Well, he reverted in rank. He chose to revert from Inspector back to Sergeant.

Ms BURNET - For what reason?

Comm ADAMS - He was counselled, I understand, for poor work performance. The reports he provided were that he was unable to perform the administrative and supervisory management responsibilities required of an Inspector. Have you -

Asst Comm OOSTERLOO - Yes, so he - thanks, Commissioner - it is outlined in our submission fully, our understanding of what happened. Reversion - again, we're talking about things that no one at this table was directly involved in, but we've disclosed everything we know about the reversion in rank. Reversion is permitted under the *Police Service Act*; a member may apply to actually be demoted in rank, effectively, by reverting in rank. That's what then Inspector Reynolds did. All the records that are disclosed, and that we've been able to review as part of preparing the submission, and that are summarised in our submission, reflect that it was a result of performance issues that were being detected in the workplace: failure to submit files on time, failure to attend to particular inquiries in time, not managing personnel appropriately, and those sorts of matters that required his Commander to be effectively performance-managing him.

Now, my read of that information is that that could have led to some sort of performance management action, or code of conduct action, around failing to act with due care and diligence. It didn't because the member volunteered to revert in rank, citing wellbeing issues as well as performance issues in the workplace. So, all the records we've found, reflect that that was what that amounted to.

Ms BUTLER - In policing today and the way that you deal with officers who are showing similar signs that you've just discussed from Mr Reynolds in 2012, could some of those actions, or lack of activity and poor performance, be potentially seen as red flags? Would Tasmania Police of now, potentially, look further into issues as such now, some 15 years later, that could be seen as potential red flags or yellow flags, and whether or not there may be some underlying issues in relation to how that police officer is performing their duties?

Asst Comm OOSTERLOO - Yes, absolutely. And as the evidence we gave last hearing, a lot has changed since 2008, a lot has changed since 2012, and the introduction of Abacus is a significant one. All our processes around complaint management, conduct management, performance management and reviews of performance have significantly changed and improved, to the point where we are able to have a much better sense of performance and conduct. It is difficult to draw comparisons between what happens now and that particular matter, given the significant failing that we've already recognised and identified with Reynolds. In 2008, the way that matter was handled, would be handled very differently under the current framework that we have in place, and with the systems and reporting processes we have in place today. In 2012 with the - and so, I guess I say that because in 2012 there's no suggestion

or evidence that the 2008 matter was taken into account as part of any discussion about performance or reversion in rank, because as the Deputy has pointed out, Professional Standards matters, even to this day, are kept confidential and separate from performance management assessments. However, what we're able to do today, when there's a performance management issue, the response can be coordinated through performance management, Professional Standards, conduct history and wellbeing concerns, and looked at more holistically to determine whether or not - what might be causing the problem and what sort of response is required. Drawing comparisons is challenging because a lot of things that we deal with today are around wellbeing concerns and so not necessarily dealt with as a Professional Standards issue. They're dealt with as - often performance and poor performance in the workplace and failing to turn up to work on time, failing to put files in on time, failing to do what an officer has been tasked, often that is linked to some sort of wellbeing concern and then there's a wellbeing response around that.

In the case of Reynolds, we absolutely had a red flag from 2008 that we missed. What I'm saying is that our systems and processes today would absolutely pick up that red flag and it'd be handled much differently.

Ms HOWLETT - Commissioner, since Paul Reynolds' time, what steps have been taken to ensure that victim-survivors that do come forward have their reports investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner?

Comm ADAMS - Is that from where a police officer's suggested as being -

Ms HOWLETT - Yes.

Comm ADAMS - Yes, so we have our Arch centres, which we have in each of the geographic districts across the state, where we have trauma-informed and specialist police investigators co-located with sexual support services who can provide the reassurance and support to victim-survivors and the confidence to consider the pathways that are open to a victim-survivor. We also have a review committee that will also oversee the investigation and provide advice around how we might support a victim, whether there needs to be any additional actions taken in regards to how we manage the police officer during the course of the investigation. There are, obviously, multiple options for victim-survivors to come forward and make reports, whether they want to do that by naming themselves or coming forward confidentially or anonymously. And I've mentioned those before, with Safe2Say and the online portal and, of course, the Integrity Commission, which they play a role in terms of receiving complaints and oversighting the work that we do now.

Ms HOWLETT - And the online portal has been operational for about eight weeks now, has it?

Comm ADAMS - Safe2Say has. I might -

Asst Comm OOSTERLOO - As at July, as a pilot, yes. Safe2Say has been operational since July. It's a 12-month pilot. It is in full implementation and operation now, but we are dealing with it as a pilot to make sure we get feedback and make a decision about continuing.

Ms HOWLETT - And proving to be effective?

Asst Comm OOSTERLOO - Yes, it is, yes. Small numbers of reports, and my understanding is none around police officers at this point in time. There are no allegations against police officers, but it's absolutely there for both. And the feedback we're getting is that it's, yes, really effective, so we're getting people feeling comfortable reporting.

In fact, interestingly, we didn't do any marketing on the launch of it. It was a soft launch with a view to just quietly talking to some of our service providers and encouraging people to, if they want to report via the online system, to direct their people that way. But what we found is we were getting people just stumbling across the system looking for a way to report online and not necessarily being referred to it, so we know that the appetite and the desire to report that way was there and it's being fulfilled.

Mr GEORGE - Commissioner, this question puzzles me and bothers me. I'm looking back at 2008. You'd been in the force about 20 years by then. You were already a senior officer, an Inspector, when you received what looks to me like a powder keg of information, an allegation of serious abuse by an officer in your force. As an Inspector, soon to become a Commander, not much longer after that as an Assistant Commissioner, over all the years, what actions did you take to find out if there had been a proper investigation, and what action did you take to discover whether Paul Reynolds was, indeed, the man to whom those allegations related?

Comm ADAMS - So, just for a context piece, before I was provided with that information, I'd actually been at Internal Investigations as a Sergeant and as an Inspector for five years, so at that time, I knew exactly what protocol was in terms of how to report information. And that's what it was: it wasn't a complaint, it was information, a conversation that had been had in a bar -

Mr GEORGE - Pretty serious.

Comm ADAMS - in a bar between police officers from Tasmania Police with a male Victorian police officer there at the time. The male Victoria Police officer provided that information to me the following day and I followed the protocols, the processes that were in place at that time. That information was to be documented and provided directly to the Commander of Professional Standards, which was known as Internal Investigations at the time. As I said, because I'd been there for five years and had been involved in investigations based on - successful investigations where we had unearthed criminal behaviour by police officers based on one sentence of information, I had confidence that the investigation would be investigated in the manner that I'd investigated matters and my colleagues had investigated matters when I was there. So yes, the information was provided to Internal Investigations and I expected that that investigation would follow the course that -

Mr GEORGE - But you were wrong. It didn't happen. And in all that time - there's another 10 years in which you could have easily followed up to discover what had happened and whether there had been a proper investigation, surely?

Comm ADAMS - I was provided advice some months later that the information I provided was unsubstantiated and that there was no basis for the investigation or the substantiation of the allegations, and that the matter was filed. I had no reason not to have confidence in the internal investigation and no reason to doubt that outcome.

Mr GEORGE - So you believed Paul Reynolds was innocent of the allegation?

Comm ADAMS - No, I did not believe that at all. What I believed was the process that was in place at the time would manage my information report in the way that I'd managed information reports when I'd been at Internal Investigations.

Mr GEORGE - So, you were wrong about that then?

Comm ADAMS - Absolutely, and I've acknowledged that.

Dr WOODRUFF - Commissioner, at the time the Commission of Inquiry report was being tabled, the Government made a large number of announcements to respond to its contents. These were developed over the preceding months as every agency, including Tasmania Police, were given prior draft chapters of the Commission of Inquiry report. They were able to work up responses in the lead-up to the report being made public. However, at the time the report was tabled from the Commission of Inquiry, there is no response or comment on the Reynolds matter at all. In the same week that the Commission of Inquiry report was tabled, Members of parliament called for an independent investigation of the Reynolds matter, which had been recommended by the Commission of Inquiry in their case study. And we saw from the Commission of Inquiry's report that 2018 was not their only concern, and that reports have been made a decade earlier, that we've talked about. There was no response to this public call for an investigation into Paul Reynolds, so it was repeated a week later, on 4 October. On 6 October, the Weiss review was announced. Can you explain - hence my disagreement with you before when you said that you initiated the review - can you explain why it took multiple calls from external parties for this matter to be taken up by Tasmania Police?

Comm ADAMS - I'll go back to my earlier response. I did initiate the Weiss review.

Dr WOODRUFF - After multiple calls from Members of parliament and the Commission of Inquiry.

Comm ADAMS - You had made comments in the public domain, but I called for the independent review.

Dr WOODRUFF - Okay, well that's wordsmithing because that was exactly what Members of parliament had said needed to happen. The Police Minister was written to about it and calling for that particular review.

My question is about the police funeral as the part of that review. When the Weiss review was released, you were asked by the media why it had taken five years for the review to be called and you said:

> The true extent of Reynolds' behaviour became evident to me when I read on 1 September in 2023 the coronial inquest findings. That caused me great concern about what we do know and what is the extent of this offending. Six weeks later, Ms Weiss had commenced an independent review. I had a clear driver for wanting to understand the extent of his offending and his sexual abuse. As Commissioner, I want to know that we've got a police organisation that's trusted by the community that we serve, but also I had a personal motivation to understand the extent of his offending.

I'm struggling with that statement, Commissioner, because before 1 September 2023, all the matters about Paul Reynolds' conduct from the Coroner's report had been heard in their coronial hearing a year before in public. Tasmania Police knew about the 2008 report, they knew about the 2018 evidence and the further reports in public in 2022, and Tasmania Police had already received the draft chapter of the Commission of Inquiry report seven months earlier. Given all of that, how is it possible that you only became aware of the extent of this issue when you read the coronial inquest findings?

Comm ADAMS - That's exactly what happened. I read through the coronial inquiry. There was a lot of information there that I'd not been privy to before. As I've previously stated, I've been in and out of the organisation. We had COVID, I wasn't across the coronial investigation, what came from that. I'd never seen the file. I wasn't even aware of the number of people that had given evidence in relation to the coronial inquest. I provided some support to the Principal Legal Officer by freeing up one of our Inspectors to support him during that process, but I never monitored that process. We were managing COVID, we had border closures, we were doing plans for people to return to school and work, and I was never across the detail of what happened in relation to that.

Dr WOODRUFF - Well, the problem is to victim-survivors, which is why we're here today, it seems as if the Commission of Inquiry inter-agencies hadn't happened, and if MPs hadn't pushed and victim-survivors hadn't spoken out, there would have been no Weiss review, and the full extent of Reynolds' offending would still be unknown today. What can you say to reassure the community that that's not the case?

Comm ADAMS – Firstly, I disagree with that, as I have indicated already today on two occasions. The Deputy and I had had a number of conversations around some concerns that came from the coronial findings, and we'd already considered how we might move forward. Again, I've apologised to victim-survivors and to every police officer that's been affected by this, every member of the community. This has tarnished our reputation. I described it at the very beginning, it's a horrible part of our history. I don't step away from that.

What we've tried to do is to understand the full extent of his behaviour. We've appointed an eminent reviewer to undertake that review. The remit to the reviewer was to leave no stone unturned. We wanted to know the extent of his offending, and we wanted to do this once. We wanted to have an opportunity to provide the support to victim-survivors that we hadn't done in the past. Clearly, we'd let down a lot of people, and some of those people were our staff as well. And we, through the review, were trying to, I guess, right the wrongs of the past. That was never going to erode the impact on victim-survivors, but what we were trying to do is ensure that we had an organisation that had a framework in place where people felt that they could come forward and actually call out this behaviour and know that something was going to be done, because clearly that hadn't happened. And that's what we've been doing ever since then. And all the changes lead back to this.

Dr WOODRUFF - You asked us earlier, well, you sort of expressed at the start of this Committee hearing that you're surprised that we're here today, and you feel that the Weiss review did some very in-depth work and did uncover an enormous amount of evidence. No one on this Committee, I think I can speak for other members, has anything but great respect for the quality of the work that she did. But the Commission of Inquiry, in their report, clearly expressed concerns about the decision to award a police funeral for Paul Reynolds, and they asked why it happened. But that was not written into the terms of reference when the Weiss

review was announced on 6 October. Because it was omitted, on 13 October I requested an expansion to those terms, including the addition of an objective to examine Tasmania Police's decision to award a full honours funeral to Paul Reynolds. Why was that request not adopted? Why wouldn't Tasmania Police want those matters to be considered?

Comm ADAMS - As I said earlier, in my view, the terms of reference did include the funeral. It was a key issue identified in the terms of reference. It is also my view that Ms Weiss turned her mind to the funeral. I think it's important to also provide again, reiterate, that the Integrity Commission sought to review the decision to hold a funeral and also the decision to cease the 2018 investigation. And the Integrity Commission, when they provided advice to me on 7 April 2025, they dismissed the complaint and they acknowledged that there'd been a public apology for the funeral; and they characterised the decision to hold a funeral as an error of judgement, but not misconduct. So again, the Integrity Commission specifically looked at the funeral. I'm disappointed that the funeral happened. I'm ashamed I attended. But there have been a number of examinations of the decision to hold the funeral. Ms Weiss did it. The Integrity Commission did it as well.

Dr WOODRUFF - Mr George said this earlier, but on 5 July, Regina Weiss was asked by the ABC in a radio interview why there was no explanation of the funeral in her report. She said:

> Well, it wasn't in my terms of reference, David, that wasn't in my terms of reference. If you read the five objectives, the funeral wasn't one of them.

I'm looking at the report, I'm looking at the five objectives. They do not say an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the police funeral. I just ask again: can you understand why many people have drawn the conclusion that Tasmania Police's response is being influenced by concerns about public perception rather than an honest examination of past mistakes? The removal of that particular term of reference, when it was asked for by the Commission of Inquiry, called for by members of the public, but deliberately not put in by yourself on behalf of Tasmania Police, begs the question about whether it's important to cover people's reputations. People want to understand why. Your explanation of just keeping saying that it's in there - it's not in there. She could have looked at anything she wanted, but she wasn't specifically drawn to that, which was a key question in the public.

Comm ADAMS - I disagree. It is in there. It's clearly stated as a key issue. To suggest that I'd removed it I don't think is a genuine representation of the development of how those terms of reference were developed. I think it's definitely named up as a key issue. It was a consideration that we wanted to do this once, we wanted to leave no stone unturned, we did not want to have concerns that any of the issues were not considered during the course of the review. And it is my view that the funeral was considered as part of the Weiss review.

Dr WOODRUFF - In that drafting process you had with other officers, did you talk about the review?

CHAIR - I'll go to Ms Butler.

Ms BUTLER - In the coronial inquest into the deaths of Paul Hunt, Paul Reynolds, Simon Darke and Robert Cooke, Coroner Simon Cooper made a number of recommendations aimed at strengthening fatigue management, welfare support, and psychological wellbeing for

police officers and their families. This Committee has received evidence suggesting there may be gaps between the Coroner's recommendations and their practical implementation. Can you explain the current arrangements within Tasmania Police for reviewing repeated suicide-related incidents involving serving members and how the findings are being translated into organisational change, policy reform and preventative measures?

Dep Comm HIGGINS - I might answer this one. I'm not sure I fully understand what you've asked, but I'll tackle the bits that I think I do understand. We implemented a fatigue management policy. Whilst we didn't accept the recommendation - I think it was of a point system, from memory, we did implement a fatigue management policy where there needs to be fatigue management plans, and so forth. I don't understand the suicide part, sorry, that you're asking.

Ms BUTLER - Some of the evidence that we have received speaks to officers who have experienced trauma and compounded trauma, who have engaged within Wellbeing Services and may have attempted to take their own life on a number of occasions. Part of the recommendations from that coronial inquiry was around being able to provide proper services and ongoing support for those officers. Whether or not all the recommendations that Simon Cooper provided in that inquest have been implemented?

Dep Comm HIGGINS - Now I understand your question. In regard to monitoring, our Wellbeing Services Directorate, under Business and Executive Services, they monitor the wellbeing, those type of things. Maybe a manager is doing it as well when referring to Wellbeing Services, where the people within our greater wellbeing system, whether it's using MyPulse, whether it's using face-to-face wellbeing officers, or whether it's through the Director or the Assistant Director, we'll monitor those. They record those instances and management plans on IAPro in a completely separate part to anything to do with Professional Standards, and are able to manage it through that point.

Ms BUTLER - In light of the findings, does Tasmania Police have sufficient staffing and resources to fully implement the recommendations of that coronial inquest? Has the absence of dedicated funding for wellbeing, or relief roster positions, or perhaps significant workers compensation cases, affected your ability to address fatigue and support of officer wellbeing?

Dep Comm HIGGINS - No. We have, I'd argue, a gold-class wellbeing support system. But policing is a very demanding job. It affects our officers in very different ways. We didn't accept all former Coroner Cooper's recommendations, but our wellbeing system that is in place across the entire Department services our members very well. But, as you're fully aware, we continue to have at least 90 to 100 officers fully incapacitated at any one time. There is more work to be done.

Ms BUTLER - Some of the information that we have received during this Inquiry points to some gaps within that wellbeing system. Some of the information we've received points to the fact that some officers may have fallen into those gaps within the system. Aside from the recommendation which you've outlined in your response, are there any other recommendations, in a perfect world, that you would have really liked to have been able to implement but are maybe restricted due to resourcing?

Comm ADAMS - I've got the recommendations in front of me. One of the recommendations that is there is around conducting six-monthly wellbeing screening of all operational police officers for PTSD. That one is a particular challenge, based on resourcing and costs. What we do have is a policy in place where police officers who work in higher-risk areas are subject to mandatory wellbeing checks. But to have the checks go across the organisation, we don't have the funding or the capability to be able to do that. It's done on a risk-based approach.

Ms BUTLER - As much is completed within the organisation's resources, or the confines of its resources. But are there enough robust processes in place that it's not a tick-and-flick process like, 'You've been checked for wellbeing, you're okay, tick. Okay, next, move on'? Can you assure the Committee that it is more than a tick-and-flick process?

Comm ADAMS - Yes, I absolutely can do that. If there is somebody that is identified as high-risk, there will be a case management meeting that will involve those that maybe supervises, or managers of that individual, and Wellbeing. There'll be a number of steps taken to ensure that we've got a plan to prioritise the safety of that individual. That, I guess, is one example. The fatigue management policy is another important step in managing a police officer's fatigue. Police officers, like every member of the community, have a number of demands outside of policing. It's important that we are managing those, such as secondary employment, in ensuring that fatigue isn't happening outside of work. There's been an increase in the funding by government to our Wellbeing Support area. There's been an increase in resources in our Wellbeing Support area which has included a very strong uptick of access of psychological services, which I understand for some members of the community can be a challenge to actually access, but we have a good framework in place to ensure that that does occur. As the Deputy says, we do have a gold-standard wellbeing program. We pride ourselves on the work that we do to support our police officers. We know that the job is traumatic and they are confronted with traumatic events on a daily basis.

The Critical Incident Stress Management Program, there's mandatory reporting if you do attend a critical incident, and there is monitoring of the number of incidents which may require an intervention for a particular individual, so it does come at a number of ways. MyPulse is also another program where we allow members to voluntarily undertake a physical or mental health assessment. They're then provided with an opportunity to, depending upon where they're rated through that process, they may have eight sessions with an allied health professional, a psychologist, a counsellor, depending upon what are the issues that have been addressed. One example from MyPulse: it picked up a sleeping disorder of an individual who disclosed that to me and allowed me to share that story. That was picked up through that program and there was a number of changes that that individual was supported to make so that they could address that particular issue.

Ms BURNET - There is some concern, and I believe it's ongoing concern, that we've heard from various witnesses through their submissions about the culture of Professional Standards that doesn't accord with the cultural change that you suggested when you sat across the table last Friday, 30 October. This does place a cloud over Professional Standards or how those wellbeing matters Assistant Commissioner Oosterloo alluded to may actually be handled. That there has not been the appropriate follow-up and investigation of cases for resolution, that there are investigations and there are reports of cover-up. There is sometimes a lack of investigation, depending on who is being investigated. I'm interested to hear what you have to say to that, Commissioner.

Comm ADAMS - Thank you. The first thing I would say is I'm more than happy to take the details of any victim-survivor's case and to look at that, and identify whether there has been any concerns around the investigation process to provide that victim-survivor with a level of comfort around what has occurred. What I've said previously is that Professional Standards investigators are the best investigators in Tasmania Police. They're handpicked by the Commander of Professional Standards and the Deputy Commissioner. They are provided with trauma-informed training. Their decisions are subject to a review by an independent review committee. Their files, if they relate to a criminal misconduct, are subject to review by the DPP, and their investigative methods and what they do are subject to weekly oversight by the Deputy Commissioner.

As I said in my previous appearance, sometimes we make mistakes and we're a learning organisation with a very a strong emphasis on reflective practice, and where a mistake is identified, we'll take action. And as I said last time I appeared, we will look at that from a continual professional development approach where we can make organisational change with policy and, on some occasions, that may result in disciplinary action against a particular police officer. But we have high standards, we are very committed to supporting victim-survivors through what we know is a very challenging journey for them, and I'm more than happy to take any information to look at a particular case and provide -

Ms BURNET - Many of these have been provided in confidence, but there just seems to be a disconnect with what you're suggesting and what we are hearing. And those are my concerns in relation to what is actually being delivered and what is coming out the other end, if you like. There seems to be much more room for improvement in relation to how some of these things handled. I'll leave it at that, but I'm curious to know what other things you can do to actually improve that image. And it's not all just about the reputation; it's also what is happening within some of those units.

Comm ADAMS - As you would be aware that one of the Weiss recommendations is to look at a specific victim support approach for victim-survivors of where there's an allegation against a police officer. We believe that the Arch centres are perfectly designed for that, where, as I've said before, we've got the support of victim-survivor advocates and professionals who can support a victim-survivor. And we hope to be able to improve the way in which we support a victim-survivor through what is a very challenging, you know, a process for them to consider whether they want to go down a criminal investigation path. But importantly, that they're getting the right support and feel that the process is actually supporting them through that in calling out the behaviour.

Mr GEORGE - I'd like to get onto contemporary issues as well, but I remain puzzled about the history of this thing. In 2012, Paul Reynolds's obviously poor performance led to a demotion in some form or another. You were the Assistant Commissioner at the time. Did that not provoke you to resurrect the whole question of the 2008 allegations? That you could have, as Assistant Commissioner, revisited and ordered another look at it?

Comm ADAMS - No, I was the Crime and Operations Assistant Commissioner. I was provided with a briefing note around a counselling report that related to Reynolds. It was around work performance, not submitting files in a timely manner. There was no suggestion or any concerns at that time about any predatory behaviour, or anything that would give me concern that, yes, I, that this would link back to some information back in 2008. The matter in

regard to his ongoing performance and the reversion in rank was managed by another Assistant Commissioner, as it was appropriate and it was their portfolio. And that's the –

Mr GEORGE - In a small police force like this, wouldn't it be true to say that if you'd followed this up and insisted on investigations from 2008 or 2012, that might well have, in the police force of its day, interrupted your progress through the ranks?

Comm ADAMS - I'm not sure what you mean by that.

Mr GEORGE - I'm suggesting that if you had actually demanded an investigation, in the police force of the day, that could have been seen as being troublemaking and, therefore, influenced your future promotion.

Comm ADAMS - I put in a report in relation to the 2008 information that had been provided to me, and I'm very proud of my ethics in relation to that. That clearly, if that was proved, that is completely inappropriate and, in fact, criminal misconduct. I reported it, as would be expected of any officer -

Mr GEORGE - But never followed it up.

Comm ADAMS - I was provided an outcome that that investigation could not be substantiated, and the matter was filed. I had no reason to believe that that investigation was substandard or did not meet expectations. As I said, I'd worked there for five years, and I knew the standard of my investigations, and I expected that this would be the same.

Dr WOODRUFF - Commissioner, the Weiss review was a much-needed step to examine the full extent of Paul Reynolds' offending, but it wasn't set up to properly examine the actions and inactions of decision-makers in Tasmania Police. It didn't have the power to compel witnesses to appear and provide evidence, such as to give the former Commissioner, to give an explanation of the decisions around why a funeral was taken despite the evidence that Tasmania Police had at hand. And to be very clear, nobody was suggesting, or wanted or expected that victim-survivors would or should be compelled to appear and give evidence to Ms Weiss. That was never suggested. But it was an expectation that people in positions of power who could otherwise avoid scrutiny for their actions if they chose to, should be able to provide an account of history. Given that the examination of witnesses was such a crucial component of why the Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse was so effective, why did Tasmania Police feel it was necessary or inappropriate for a similar investigation into the Reynolds matter?

Comm ADAMS - I believe that the Weiss investigation was an independent review that provided us with the details around Reynolds' offending. The issue - and you raised it at the time, around being able to compel witnesses, I spoke to Ms Weiss in relation to that. Ms Weiss provided a significant email in response to why that was not warranted in this case. She did highlight, as you have just done, around the impact on victim-survivors. But she also cited a number of previous cases, legal cases, where using compulsion powers was problematic should we wish to undertake any further criminal investigations in relation to any offenders that may come as a result of her review. I was satisfied that the information that she provided that she had the tools that she needed to be able to undertake this review, and be able to identify and address and equip us with information about each of the objectives of the review. And from my reading of her review, it's an outstanding review. She's built the trust of victim-survivors

where they've felt confident to be able to come forward and tell their story. She's been able to, very comprehensively, identify the method of operating by Paul Reynolds and how he's been able to groom a number of young people over many, many years, and I compliment her on the work that she did.

Dr WOODRUFF - A hundred per cent agree with that assessment of Ms Weiss's work in that respect. But the problem is that she didn't address the question of why a funeral was given and why a public eulogy was given that was so glowing. And that is functionally the reason that the Committee has been established, part of the reason, to look at that matter because it is still unanswered. And I've asked you questions today, other members have asked you questions about that, but I haven't had an answer. You've said you weren't Commissioner at the time and you can't possibly give information about why that funeral is given. So, how can Tasmanians have confidence that the same forces that are in play - cultural forces, reputational forces, whatever they were, we don't know - wouldn't happen again? Because there is great concern from the Commission of Inquiry's experiences that these sorts of intangible things are what stop people speaking up.

And so, my question is: Regina Weiss, who has declined an invitation to appear to this Committee because she's viewed it as, in her words, 'wholly inappropriate for a barrister to speak openly about any matter that they've been briefed in'; she said that she would be breaching her obligations to you as her client if she spoke to this Committee. We've made invitations to many people, including Ms Weiss. For my part, I was surprised to read that, given that throughout the review process we were assured that Ms Weiss was acting entirely independently of Tasmania Police. I was surprised to understand that she had some obligations. What is your understanding of that relationship?

Comm ADAMS - Firstly, I'd just like to go back to the comment that you made around the community having confidence around what would happen in the future in regards to a funeral. We've made changes to the Tasmania Police Manual, which are Commissioner's directions in relation to a funeral and the circumstances that need to be considered before a funeral is granted. So, any member of Tasmania Police and to the broader community, I'm saying to you, I hear your pain, I feel your pain, and we've made changes to ensure that there is appropriate consideration given to any outstanding Professional Standards matter, and that will be considered before a funeral is granted.

I take your point, as well, that if there is an expectation where there are some members of the community that are concerned the words aren't tight enough, I'm more than happy to look at that. Because, from my perspective and my leadership group, we will not be granting a funeral where there is a criminal investigation that is underway and has not been resolved. It definitely will be part of our consideration.

In terms of Ms Weiss's comments, I'd suggest you have to speak to Ms Weiss in relation to that. Absolutely, I did engage her to do a review, and I think she uses the word, I was her 'client'. I was her client. I'm not her client now, but I understand she's provided you a copy of her report and I guess her report stands for itself. It's a report that, I think, has acquitted well the objectives of what we were trying to do.

We did not want to have the community think that we were, in any way, trying to hide and not unearth criminal misconduct, child sexual abuse by any of our police officers. This was the whole purpose of doing the review, was to understand the extent of Reynolds's offending.

Was anyone else involved? Was there any other misconduct? Was there any anyone else enabling this behaviour so that we could clearly put a line in the sand and make changes so that people felt confident to come forward and report should it happen again and ensure that we had a trauma-informed framework for victim-survivors to come forward.

Dr WOODRUFF - You suggested that there isn't any legal sort of obligatory relationship between Tasmania Police and Ms Weiss. Would you be prepared to provide Ms Weiss with an assurance that she wouldn't be breaching any obligations and allow her to appear before the Committee if we had some other questions we wanted to ask about her report?

Comm ADAMS - Ms Weiss can make her own decisions about whether she wants to appear before this Inquiry. I think, as well, her work is in that report and I think that she's provided that to you, and should she wish to add or clarify, she can do that but I think she's of the view that her report stands as is. It's a comprehensive review of Reynolds's behaviour over a 30-year period and, as identified, a number of victim-survivors which we've now got an opportunity to provide a voice and listen to the harm that has been caused to them but also to provide them with support moving forward.

Dr WOODRUFF - Can you see that the stain of the funeral still hasn't been answered, the reasons for that?

Comm ADAMS - I understand that people are disappointed about that. As I've said, I am too. I'm ashamed that I went.

Dr WOODRUFF - It's about the decision-making behind it.

Comm ADAMS - For me, I'm a person that, I look forward, what can I control? I can absolutely control what and how a police funeral will be managed into the future, and that's what I've done. I've made changes that will guide my decision-making but would guide the decision-making of every Commissioner that follows me. As I said to you, if there is feedback that those words aren't tight enough in the Tasmania Police Manual, I'm more than happy to ensure that that makes it explicit that it includes criminal misconduct because I can sit here and tell you now I am not going to approve a funeral if there is a police officer that is under investigation for criminal misconduct.

Ms BUTLER - Commissioner, we've received submissions around police incorrectly identifying people reporting family violence to police in relation to police officers where the tables were turned on the complainant and instead of them being the victim, they found themselves viewed as the perpetrator. What safeguards exist to prevent a person seeking police protection from being incorrectly identified as the perpetrator, particularly where the other party is a serving police officer?

Comm ADAMS - The first thing I'd say in relation to that - and this is one of the reasons that the review committee was established, was to ensure that there was a level of independent oversight and challenging of decisions that were made with respect to police officers being subject to family violence.

More broadly speaking, if you look at the Australian New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) review, which was a review into the role of a police officer, it actually identified the challenges in terms of family violence and I specifically talk in a general sense

here about the challenges that police officers face when they're called to a situation of family violence. Their immediate response is to provide protection to those individuals involved, including the children. It's normally a dynamic environment and their primary driver is to make sure people are safe. Sometimes we get that wrong, and in the case of a police officer being involved in family violence, the review committee is there to challenge, to provide advice, and, again, I'll hand to the Deputy in relation to the changes or decisions or way in which there has been a change in a course of action based on the committee's review. But we also have in Professional Standards a dedicated investigator with skills, trauma-informed, around family violence, so that - it can be a challenge - so that we do, more times than not, get that right. But, as I said, sometimes we make mistakes in relation to that, but we've got the committee there to provide their input into how we may have responded to a particular incident.

Ms BUTLER - Before we move to the Deputy Commissioner, in this particular submission, we received the information of a family violence order when the victim was made the respondent to a police family violence order, the decision was subsequently challenged successfully in the Magistrates Court. Then we understand that Tasmania Police later conducted an internal review into the circumstances in which the order had been issued and that review identified significant deficiencies in the evidentiary basis for the order and concluded that there was no legal basis for its issue. That order is still on the victim's police record, though the legal fees, we understand, were covered by Tasmania Police, and it was also found that undue process was followed. What's the process for which the victim can have that removed from their police record? They were just the victim, but that's still sitting there on their police record. So, it's combo of all.

Comm ADAMS - There is, and I am going to be really careful here because I think we probably need to go *in camera*, in relation to this. I don't want to make a comment that would be inappropriate in a public forum.

Ms BUTLER - Okay.

CHAIR - We might move to a final question because we've resolved to go into committee in another three minutes. So, if we can park that question for that period.

Mr GEORGE - Can I just have a quick question? This is contemporaneous, I'm glad to say. First of all, would you agree that it's very hard for any person to report sexual violence or coercion to police, in a general sense? That's a big step for someone to make, right?

Comm ADAMS - Yes, absolutely.

Mr GEORGE - To make it against a police officer is an even bigger step, and more confronting. Because I'm wondering how you might react to - if you had been sitting in some of the private conversations that we've had, where witnesses basically tell us the same story; that they reach a certain point of coercion, or violence, or sexual violence against them, and which might be a perfectly - a story that you've heard so many times before - but as soon as it gets to go through the front door of the police station, they feel they're not believed, and as one witness said to us, the process leaves them feeling worthless. Now, that is what we've heard time after time here. I recognise that you haven't been sitting in, but how do you react, or how can you respond, when that's the sort of evidence this Committee is hearing?

Comm ADAMS -So, I guess the first thing I'd say to the victim-survivors who have felt like that, I'm sorry that they've felt like that. What I can say is that we have, over the last few years, and will continue to do it - we are looking to make changes so that it creates an easier pathway, so a victim-survivor feels safe, so that they understand their options. There are multiple ways to come in and report, whether that be anonymous, or through an Arch centre. We are significantly making progress, and again the Commission of Inquiry should be credited, I guess, for that. The training around being trauma-informed and ensuring our staff have the level of expertise to understand that sometimes a disclosure might take, you know, three or four times. There's one occasion I know where it took over 12 months to be able to build that trust. I've indicated we don't get this right all of the time, but what we are doing - we're a learning organisation that is committed to creating an environment where victim-survivors can come forward and have their story and then have their choice as to how they want their matter to be handled.

Mr GEORGE - In the light of that, I mean, I asked you last time, you mentioned 125 times - sorry?

CHAIR - We have actually reached - we're overtime already. Sorry to cut you off, Mr George, but we have agreed to go *in camera* for the final 10 minutes. I will, before we do that, just thank you again for your appearance, Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner, and remind you that what you've said to us today here is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, please, please be aware though that that privilege does not attach to comments that you may make to anyone, including media, even if it's just repeating what you've said to us.

The Committee adjourned at 4.41 p.m.