



# ***ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE***

## **Members present:**

Mr LP Power MP (Chair)  
Mr DJ Brown MP  
Mr JM Krause MP  
Mr ST O'Connor MP (via teleconference)  
Mr DG Purdie MP  
Ms KE Richards MP

## **Staff present:**

Ms T Struber (Acting Committee Secretary)  
Ms M Salisbury (Assistant Committee Secretary)  
Mr M Binns (Inquiry Secretary)

## **PUBLIC BRIEFING—INQUIRY INTO THE DRAFT LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DISSOLUTION OF IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL) BILL 2018**

### **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**FRIDAY, 20 JULY 2018**

**Brisbane**

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### **The committee met at 2.03 pm.**

**CHAIR:** Good afternoon. I declare open the public briefing for the committee's inquiry into the draft Local Government (Dissolution of Ipswich City Council) Bill 2018. I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet. My name is Linus Power. I am the member for Logan and chair of the committee. With me here today are Kim Richards, the member for Redlands; Dan Purdie, the member for Ninderry; and Don Brown, the member for Capalaba, who is attending in the place of Nikki Boyd, the member for Pine Rivers, who is unable to attend. We also have Jon Krause, the member for Scenic Rim, who is attending in the place of the member for Mermaid Beach, Ray Stevens, who is unable to attend this afternoon; and Sam O'Connor, the member for Bonney, is joining us via teleconference.

On 17 July 2018, in accordance with section 92(1)(d) of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, this committee resolved to conduct an inquiry into the draft of the Local Government (Dissolution of Ipswich City Council) Bill 2018. The purpose of the briefing this afternoon is to assist the committee in its inquiry into the draft bill. The briefing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is also being recorded and broadcast live on the parliament's website. Media may be present and will be subject to my direction. The media rules are available from the committee staff if required. All those present today should note that it is possible you might be filmed or photographed during the proceedings. I ask everyone present to turn off mobile phones or switch them to silent.

Only the committee and invited officials may participate in these proceedings. Any person may be excluded from the briefing at my discretion or by order of the committee. I also remind committee members that officers from the department are here to provide factual or technical information and that any questions about government or opposition policy should be directed to the responsible minister or shadow minister or left to debate on the floor of the House. I also note for the benefit of members and the department that the standing orders still apply and issues regarding sub judice—those facing criminal charges—cannot be discussed in this committee. I also ask that responses to any questions taken on notice today are provided to the committee by 5 pm on Tuesday, 24 July 2018. We will now hear from representatives of the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs who have been invited to brief the committee on the draft bill.

**DUNNE, Mr Tim, Manager, Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs**

**HAWTHORNE, Ms Josie, Director, Legislation Services, Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs**

**STEPHENSON, Ms Jo, Acting Executive Director, Local Government and Regional Services, Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs**

**CHAIR:** Good afternoon and welcome. I invite you to brief the committee, after which committee members, I am sure, will have some questions for you.

**Ms Hawthorne:** I thank the committee for the opportunity to brief the committee on the draft Local Government (Dissolution of Ipswich City Council) Bill 2018. I propose to brief the committee on the key components of the bill. If it pleases the committee, the department is happy to take questions as they arise in relation to the bill.

The draft explanatory notes state that over the past 12 months a number of Ipswich City councillors, council contractors and former council officers have been charged by the Crime and Corruption Commission with a variety of misconduct and corruption offences. Approximately 15 people, including the current mayor and the former mayor, are facing in excess of 75 charges.

Turning to the draft bill, clause 4 dissolves Ipswich City Council and ends each Ipswich City councillor's term. Clause 5 provides that the Governor in Council must appoint an interim administrator to act in place of the councillors for the interim period. Clause 5(11) defines the interim period as the period starting when the interim administrator is appointed and ending at the conclusion of the quadrennial election of councillors for the Ipswich local government area held in 2020.

Under the draft bill, an ICC councillor means a person who immediately before the commencement of section 4 held office as a councillor, including as mayor, of Ipswich City Council. The draft bill at clause 7(1) provides that an ICC councillor cannot be a councillor from commencement until the conclusion of the quadrennial election of councillors for the Ipswich local government area held in 2020, nor under clause 7 can an Ipswich City councillor be nominated as a candidate or for appointment as a councillor at any other local government election before the 2020 quadrennial election. The draft bill, however, provides at clause 7(2) that the ICC councillors may nominate as candidates for the 2020 quadrennial elections. The intent is that the usual eligibility requirements under the Local Government Act and the Local Government Electoral Act will continue to apply.

In relation to the interim administrator, the draft bill at clause 5(4) provides that the relevant Local Government Act provisions apply to an interim administrator. The relevant Local Government Act provisions are defined in clause 5(11) of the draft bill. This means that the interim administrator has all the responsibilities and powers of the Ipswich City Council and the mayor under the relevant local government provision, section 124(2). Section 124(5) of the Local Government Act provides that the Local Government Act and other acts apply to the interim administrator, with all necessary changes and any changes prescribed under a regulation as if the interim administrator were the Ipswich City Council.

Section 124(10) of the Local Government Act provides that the minister may create an advisory committee to give the interim administrator advice about the performance of the Ipswich City Council's responsibilities. The interim administrator may sign documents on behalf of Ipswich City Council as if the administrator were the head of Ipswich City Council under section 236(1) of the Local Government Act. If the interim administrator is a corporation, the draft bill at clause 5(5) provides that an individual authorised by the corporation to act on its behalf may sign the documents.

The interim administrator is protected from civil liability for an act done under the Local Government Act or the Local Government Electoral Act or omission made under those acts honestly and without negligence under section 235 of the Local Government Act.

The draft bill at clauses 5(7) and (8) provides that, if there is a vacancy in the office of the interim administrator or the interim administrator is absent or cannot perform the duties, the minister may appoint a person to act as interim administrator until the Governor in Council appoints a new interim administrator.

The minister may also appoint a committee of persons—the interim management committee—to help the interim administrator to perform the administrator's responsibilities under section 205(1) of the Local Government Act. The interim administrator is the chair of the committee under section 205(3) of the Local Government Act.

Finally, clause 6 provides that, unless the Supreme Court decides a decision of the Governor in Council or minister in relation to the interim administrator is affected by jurisdictional error, the decision is final and conclusive and cannot be challenged, appealed against, reviewed, quashed, set aside or called into question in another way under the Judicial Review Act 1991 or otherwise and is not subject to any declaratory, injunctive or other order of the Supreme Court, another court, a tribunal or another entity on any ground.

In closing, the draft bill commences by proclamation to ensure that the dissolution of the council and the end of each ICC councillor's term align with the appointment of the interim administrator by the Governor in Council.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much. I have a question about the Local Government Act as it stands, from when it was drawn and also the recent amendments. It gives an existing framework under which councils can be dismissed. Can you give us a summary of the practical differences—not the clausal differences—between the processes and the outcomes of a council being dismissed under the existing legislation and under this one for the Ipswich council?

**Ms Hawthorne:** Sections 122 and 123 of the Local Government Act rely on a remedial notice process. That is the difference between those provisions and this draft bill.

**CHAIR:** To that end, the other structures of appointment of administrators—are the processes similar or the same for practical purposes?

**Ms Hawthorne:** For practical purposes, yes. It is the Governor in Council. I think that is right. Yes, the Governor in Council appoints an interim administrator.

**Mr PURDIE:** The explanatory notes for the draft bill advise that there are no costs associated with implementation of the bill; however, the draft bill refers to costs and expenses associated with the interim administrator and the advisory committee. Do you know how much this will cost and who will bear the cost?

**Ms Hawthorne:** We cannot anticipate the costs entirely at this point. That will be a matter to be determined. The explanatory notes in relation to the cost issue are about the cost to the state government. The provisions in the draft bill are in relation to the costs of the interim administrator.

**Mr PURDIE:** What fundamental legislative principles does this bill breach?

**Ms Hawthorne:** The fundamental legislative principles are addressed in the explanatory notes, or the potential to breach them is addressed in the explanatory notes.

**Mr PURDIE:** What is the longest period in Queensland that an administrator has been in charge of a council?

**Ms Hawthorne:** I seek to take that question on notice.

**CHAIR:** If the question can be answered during this session, or else we might summarise that and ask you to answer it on notice.

**Mr KRAUSE:** My question is to any of the officers here, and thank you for briefing us. I have listened carefully to your opening statement and I note the minister has advised publicly that the bill comes about because the chair of the CCC seeks the Ipswich City Council to be dissolved—

**CHAIR:** Member for Scenic Rim, I remind you that it is not an opportunity for speech making but to put your question.

**Mr KRAUSE:** I am getting to my question, Chair. It is fair in all committee hearings to have a reasonable preamble. I have previously said that councillors should be given a fair go and due process so I want to ask: where is the evidence for corruption or misconduct on the part of 10 councillors at Ipswich City Council? Two of the councillors, previous and present, are on charges but the other 10 are not. What can you provide to us in terms of evidence about their misconduct, given that I have previously said they should be given a fair go and due process?

**Ms Hawthorne:** That is a matter for the government and I understand it is outside the scope of this bill. I seek the chair's direction on that.

**CHAIR:** I think it goes awfully close to the section I gave earlier where it is about the policy of the government rather than the structure of the bill.

**Mr KRAUSE:** You are not able to provide us with any evidence of that at this point?

**CHAIR:** Member for Scenic Rim, I thought I made it clear that the question you are asking is outside the scope of the questions we put to public servants from departments.

**Mr KRAUSE:** I have noted, and lots of people have noted, that locals want representation to their council. People worry about losing that local representation, especially in division 10, which I represent, where dumps are on the agenda, industrial developments are on the agenda, roads need fixing—

**CHAIR:** Member for Scenic Rim, this is—

**Mr KRAUSE:** My question is—

**CHAIR:** With respect, member for Scenic Rim, the standing orders about putting questions are quite clear. I ask that you respect the process as a guest of the committee.

**Mr KRAUSE:** The administrator is being appointed to represent the whole council and councillors are being dismissed under this bill. Is it not possible that an administrator could be appointed while leaving the councillors in place to represent their communities?

**Ms Hawthorne:** That is not within the scope of the bill. That is a decision of the government.

**Mr KRAUSE:** What mechanisms will the administrator put in place to ensure that the community is represented and their voices are heard during the period of administration?

**Ms Hawthorne:** The bill provides that the interim administrator performs all the functions and responsibilities of the council so it would be up to the interim administrator, within that ambit under the Local Government Act, to put in place whatever procedures the interim administrator deems fit.

**CHAIR:** We might get back to you, member for Scenic Rim. We will give other members the opportunity to ask questions.

**Ms RICHARDS:** The draft bill is specific to the dissolution of Ipswich City Council, and the explanatory notes state that the bill is intended to resolve concerns and provide Ipswich community with certainty. Could you outline whether this draft bill will set a precedent for potentially managing the dissolution of other councils in future should a similar situation arise? That is my first question. The second part to that is: Geelong city council in Melbourne, Victoria was dismissed I think early last year leading on from their 2016 investigations. I wonder whether the department has had any liaison with the Victorian local government authority in terms of lessons learnt from their dismissal and that approach.

**Ms Hawthorne:** In response to the first question as to whether this sets a precedent for other local governments, that would be a matter for the government to determine on a case-by-case basis and under the circumstances of those particular cases. In relation to the Victorian local government, to the best of my knowledge, no. Tim?

**Mr Dunne:** Not specifically about how this bill comes into place, but there have been discussions about other aspects of it, yes.

**Mr BROWN:** I note the opposition leader is quoted as saying, 'I feel sorry for the people of Ipswich who deserve certainty.' Do you think this bill delivers certainty in a quicker fashion than the act itself?

**Ms Hawthorne:** The bill dissolves Ipswich City Council—that is the government's policy—and appoints an interim administrator. An opinion about whether or not that is the most effective way is not for me to answer.

**Mr BROWN:** It was not whether it was effective but timely.

**Ms Hawthorne:** Once again, the timing of the bill is a matter for the government. I cannot answer that question.

**Mr BROWN:** Judicial review—

**CHAIR:** That could be a technical or factual question which would be in your purview to answer in terms of the existing framework which has judicial review versus this framework.

**Ms Hawthorne:** As I said in my opening address, the bill provides for its commencement by proclamation. It will be a matter for the government to determine how quickly or not this bill is proclaimed into force.

**CHAIR:** I asked about a comparison with the existing act where there was capacity for councils to be dismissed. Is there a provision that links it to the number of councillors or the number of councillors and officers who are facing charges of corruption? Is that the terms under the existing act?

**Ms Hawthorne:** The existing act provides that one or more—all—of the councillors may be dismissed under those provisions in relation to noncompliance with local government principles and under the remedial notice and also the public interest amendments that were recently brought in by the government.

**CHAIR:** I was thinking more about the dismissal of councils and the powers to do that. Under the existing act that is not linked to a particular number of councillors or council officers.

**Ms Hawthorne:** No.

**CHAIR:** They are not the triggers used under the existing act.

**Ms Hawthorne:** That is correct.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Is there any precedent for dissolving a council with specific legislation while there is Supreme Court action ongoing? Has the department got any information on that?

**Ms Hawthorne:** There was a dismissal of Johnstone city council in 2007 but that was under the existing provisions of the remedial notice process.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** So there is no precedent while there is ongoing court action?

**Ms Hawthorne:** Not that I know of, no.

**CHAIR:** There are very few precedents altogether; is that correct? In the case of the Johnstone shire—

**Mr Dunne:** The former Johnstone shire council.

**CHAIR:** In the case of the former Johnstone shire council, to follow up on the member for Bonney's question, it was not at that stage engaging in Supreme Court action by definition.

**Mr Dunne:** The Supreme Court challenge was finalised before the government took action.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Have there been other incidents of specific legislation to dissolve a council in Queensland or is this the first?

**Ms Hawthorne:** No, there have not been instances of a specific stand-alone bill to dissolve a council.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Is there any information that we can get on the amount of money that the department has spent defending the Supreme Court action?

**Ms Hawthorne:** I would have to take that on notice.

**CHAIR:** It might not be strictly relevant to what is before us, Mr O'Connor. I might give that some consideration, but I do not think it is really in order with what we are being asked to look at as part of the inquiry.

**Mr KRAUSE:** I would refute that—

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Are we able to have any information on the show-cause notice that the minister issued? Are we able to find out what advice the department gave the minister in that regard?

**CHAIR:** In regard to the Local Government (Dissolution of Ipswich City Council) Bill, what is the question again?

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Are we able to know what the department advised the minister in regard to the show-cause notice that led to this?

**CHAIR:** You are looking for internal advice. That might be a question that you put to the minister in the parliament.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** Okay.

**CHAIR:** Mr Krause, did you have a point before?

**Mr KRAUSE:** I did. You mentioned that you did not think the question of costs for defending Supreme Court action was relevant to the bill. I disagree with that because this bill usurps that Supreme Court action, so I would argue that the question is in order. I think the representatives here were willing to take it on notice and I ask that they do take it on notice.

**CHAIR:** The question being whether—

**Mr KRAUSE:** The amount of money the government has expended preparing for and defending Supreme Court action—

**CHAIR:** Under a different bill.

**Mr KRAUSE:** Yes. The effect of this bill is to render that action useless. We would like to know the costs—

**CHAIR:** Are you asking for costs in terms of what they would expect in future—

**Mr KRAUSE:** I am asking for what they have already spent in defending the Supreme Court action which this bill is putting an end to.

**CHAIR:** I am not sure it is strictly relevant. Let me think about that. We will return to that before we finish, if that is all right. Are there any other questions?

**Mr KRAUSE:** Yes. Clause 7 of the bill relates to the disqualification of an ICC councillor and prevents an ICC councillor running in a council election in Queensland until the time of the 2020 quadrennial elections. Can the government guarantee that no election for Ipswich will be scheduled before the 2020 quadrennial local government elections?

**Ms Hawthorne:** The bill under clause 4 dissolves Ipswich City Council so there will be no election before the 2020 local government election for Ipswich.

**Mr KRAUSE:** In relation to where we were at before about representation of local communities, will the dissolution of council and the sacking of all councillors mean that divisional officers in each of the 10 divisions will also be sacked?

**Ms Hawthorne:** I do not know how that will work with the appointment of the interim administrator. As I said earlier, the interim administrator will have all the powers and responsibilities of a local government. If that is what the interim administrator determines is in the best interests of the council then that may be a possibility, but that will be entirely up to the interim administrator.

**Mr KRAUSE:** That will be up to the administrator.

**CHAIR:** To follow up, that would be similar to the process under the existing act where if a council were dismissed the administrator would make those decisions in the same manner.

**Ms Hawthorne:** That is correct.

**CHAIR:** So this is not something that is different within this act.

**Ms Hawthorne:** That is correct. That is why the draft bill has been structured the way it has in its drafting. It relies on the existing provisions of the Local Government Act in relation to the appointment and functions of the interim administrator.

**Mr KRAUSE:** Do you know whether the staff of those divisional councillors are employed by council or by the councillors personally?

**Mr Dunne:** I am not aware of that.

**Mr KRAUSE:** As I was saying, the community would like representation so I think they would like to see those officers stay in place, but I note your answer that it will be up to the administrator as to whether that happens.

In relation to the right of appeal in clause 6 of the bill, it says that there is no right of appeal other than where there is jurisdictional error on the part of the Governor in Council. We have already had one appeal against the notice by the minister. Can you outline for the committee what circumstances might equate to jurisdictional error when it comes to a decision under clause 5?

**Ms Hawthorne:** That would be a matter for the court to determine. I could not speculate as to what may or may not constitute a jurisdictional error.

**Mr KRAUSE:** In relation to the appointment of an administrator, has the government or the department drawn up a list of potential administrators at this stage?

**Ms Hawthorne:** That will be a matter for the government.

**Mr KRAUSE:** In relation to the advisory panel, the prospect of which is enabled under the bill, can you inform us whether the advisory panel, if and when it is appointed, will be made public?

**Ms Hawthorne:** I think that will be a matter for the interim administrator.

**Mr KRAUSE:** So it is possible we could have an advisory panel that is not made public to the people of Ipswich?

**Ms Hawthorne:** That would be a matter for the interim administrator.

**Mr KRAUSE:** It is not set out in the Local Government Act?

**Ms Hawthorne:** No, it is not set out in the Local Government Act.

**Mr KRAUSE:** It is extraordinary that we could have an advisory panel that people do not know about advising the administrator of their council. In relation to the administrator, given that the government is sacking all councillors without due process, what powers will the administrator have to hire and fire council staff?

**Ms Hawthorne:** The interim administrator has all of the existing powers of the local government. The powers to hire and fire will be a matter for the interim administrator, and that is no different from what operates under the existing provisions of the Local Government Act.

**Mr Dunne:** To add to that, the current council is not responsible for the hiring and firing of staff of the Ipswich City Council other than the chief executive officer of the council. The chief executive officer is responsible for the employment of all other employees. The interim administrator would not be looking at hiring staff other than perhaps the chief executive officer if that came to pass.

**Mr KRAUSE:** That is interesting, Mr Dunne, and thank you for that. There have been two councillors charged at Ipswich and a number of other officers or former officers charged and other people—15, I think, in total. Obviously, council officers in senior positions have enormous power. I think even the CCC has indicated that a clean-up of the ICC might require a change to staff because there are cultural probity issues. Are you saying that the administrator themselves would not be able to hire or fire staff of the ICC?

**Mr Dunne:** No, the chief executive officer is the officer under the Local Government Act responsible for the employment of staff, but there are other things that the council can do, or the interim administrator can do, such as looking at corporate structures, organisational structures, budgets and things like that. Ultimately, no, not directly, but policies, procedures, codes of conduct and things like that could effect other changes throughout the organisation. The chief executive officer is responsible for staffing matters.

**Mr KRAUSE:** The administrator would be able to replace the CEO?

**Mr Dunne:** Yes.

**Mr KRAUSE:** But that is about it?

**Mr Dunne:** Yes.

**CHAIR:** We have heard many people, including the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow minister, call for the council to be dismissed in a quicker fashion. Is there a method or mechanism that you can anticipate that would make that happen at an earlier date?

**Ms Hawthorne:** No. The remedial action process, I believe, is the—

**CHAIR:** Followed through with—

**Mr Dunne:** Yes. Under the current provisions, there would have been a regulation made by the Governor in Council which then had to be ratified by parliament, which would have taken time to do, anyway. This would be about as quick as it could have been.

**CHAIR:** For those in the parliament who have called for the dismissal of the council to happen, or that it should have happened already, which I think are some of the words they have used, this mechanism would be the way to do that in order to fulfil those who have called for that?

**Mr Dunne:** Yes, it is one option for the government, yes.

**Mr PURDIE:** I will go back to my second question, which was a question about fundamental legislative principles. You referred me to the explanatory notes. I have just been refreshing my memory on those. There are a number of potential breaches in relation to fundamental legislative principles that have been highlighted and explained, such as 'consistency with the principle of natural justice', 'Administrative power should be subject to appropriate review' and the rights and liberties of individuals generally. Was there any concern within the department about these potential breaches or any discussion around other safeguards that we often see in other legislation as they relate to natural justice?

**Ms Hawthorne:** The explanatory notes are the result of the deliberations of the department and the justification of the FLPs.

**Ms RICHARDS:** Going back to the Geelong city council example, I think the reasons that council was dismissed are very similar. I note that they appointed an interim administrator initially as an individual entity but then expanded that to a panel. Does this legislation provide for that provision?

**Ms Hawthorne:** Yes, it does. The legislation provides for an interim administrator but also identifies that that may be a corporation. There is flexibility there within the draft bill.

**Mr KRAUSE:** Tony Morris QC has said publicly that the proposed laws violate the separation of powers by usurping the judicial process. How does the proposed bill respect the separation of powers and the right of parties to review decisions of government?

**Ms Hawthorne:** If I may just refer to my notes, in relation to the fundamental legislative principle of the institution of parliament and/or interference with the independence of the judiciary or the institutional integrity of the courts, the department considers that the bill has sufficient regard to the institution of parliament. Local government in Queensland is created by a statute of the Queensland parliament. The draft bill affects the Ipswich City Council but has no effect on the institution of the parliament. The enactment of the bill will be an exercise of the Queensland parliament's power to make laws for the peace, welfare and good government of the state. Under section 2 of the Constitution Act 1867, the draft bill proposes to do something that is consistent with the Constitution of Queensland 2001 contemplated by section 71(3) of the Constitution of Queensland.

The department further considers that the draft bill does not interfere with the independence or institutional integrity of the judiciary. In particular, the draft bill does not impermissibly interfere with the judicial process. Rather, the draft bill will, if enacted, merely effect the change in the law.

**CHAIR:** I have a question about clause 5(8). The draft bill has a provision that if the interim administrator is absent and cannot perform their duties the minister can appoint someone to act as the interim administrator until the Governor in Council appoints a new administrator, if that is required. That seems to be on the presumption that that is required—that it is being replaced. What happens if there are short-term absences owing to illness or leave of that nature that would need some kind of replacement?

**Ms Hawthorne:** If that is the case, under the Acts Interpretation Act there is provision for the interim administrator to appoint an acting administrator. This provision is in relation to if the interim administrator resigns—those sorts of circumstances.



**CHAIR:** In that circumstance, an interim administrator appoints an acting administrator on their own power? The minister's power is not required?

**Ms Hawthorne:** That is correct.

**Ms RICHARDS:** Do you think that what could potentially be 18 months of the administrator being appointed would be sufficient time before the next election to change the culture and remove the systemic issues that have been evident within that council?

**Ms Hawthorne:** That you would be a matter for the government to make that determination.

**Mr KRAUSE:** I want to clarify something that we touched on briefly earlier, that is, the cost of the administrator. I think the bill says that there will be no cost to the government. Does that mean that the cost of the administrator will be borne by the Ipswich City Council itself?

**Ms Hawthorne:** That is correct. There is a provision in the bill. Section 124 of the Local Government Act provides for that.

**Mr KRAUSE:** I imagine that, as the director of legislation services, you may have had some involvement in the changes to the Local Government Act that were passed in May. When the Ipswich City Council lodged a Supreme Court challenge against the show-cause notice, did the department advise the government to proceed with this specific legislation to dissolve the Ipswich City Council?

**Ms Hawthorne:** I would seek the direction of the chair on that.

**CHAIR:** I think you might be asking about the policy direction of the government. That is a question that you could put to the minister.

**Mr KRAUSE:** I am asking a question of fact about whether the department has advised the government about pursuing this legislation after the Supreme Court appeal.

**CHAIR:** I think that is—

**Mr KRAUSE:** Clearly, the show-cause notice had failed.

**CHAIR:** I think that is really a question about the government's or the opposition's policy and should be put to the minister. We will have that opportunity coming up. Are there any further questions from the panel?

**Mr KRAUSE:** Member for Bonney, do you have any?

**CHAIR:** Thank you, member for Scenic Rim, for reminding me.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** No, thank you.

**CHAIR:** I wish to thank you very much for your appearance here today. That concludes the briefing. Thank you for the information that you have provided today and I thank the Hansard reporters. The transcript of these proceedings will be available on the committee's parliamentary web page in due course. A response to the questions taken on notice is required by 5 pm on Tuesday, 24 July so that we can include it in our deliberations. I wish to make a ruling that it is those questions that are related to this bill and not other acts. That might be a question that can be put at another time.

**Mr KRAUSE:** Are you referring to the question about how much the government spent on preparing for and defending the Ipswich City Council's Supreme Court action?

**CHAIR:** That might be something that can be put to the minister at estimates.

**Mr KRAUSE:** The department is not taking that on notice?

**CHAIR:** I am referring to questions that are part of the proceedings here.

**Mr KRAUSE:** I just want to clarify, is that taken on notice or not?

**CHAIR:** No. I have said that that is not one that is to be taken on notice because it is about a separate court action. I declare this public briefing closed.

**The committee adjourned at 2.41 pm.**