

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF TAMAR AND ESK RIVERS MET IN HENTY HOUSE, LAUNCESTON, ON TUESDAY 28 JULY 2009.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN AND Mr GARRY BLENKHORN WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Finch) - Garry and Barry, thanks very much for taking the time to join us today to give evidence to our inquiry into whether a statutory authority is needed to manage the Tamar estuary, including its catchments. I know that both of you have a good knowledge and experience of what is happening with the river through most of its length. We'll be interested to have your understanding and knowledge and your guidance as we build our report, which is getting to its final stages. Would you care to make a presentation to us or give us some background and then we will ask some questions?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - I would like to thank you for the opportunity to give a verbal submission. I don't think that is done enough in the country. I can't read or write and it makes it very hard.

The last Legislative Council select committee I gave evidence to was chaired by Dan Hitchcock and that was the inquiry into the rice grass in the river, so you're back again several years later and having another crack at it. That inquiry prompted me to look at reclaiming the rice grass and turning the river into something that could be made worthwhile, hence we reclaimed Rose Bay Park at Gravelly Beach, put in the floating pontoon and the best boat ramp on the river. Then a lot of other people caught on and I think we finished up with 14 pontoons on the river. It got bogged down over the years with too much bureaucracy and too many people having to give you the answers to be able to do something in the river. I hope the outcome of this inquiry will bring about a single authority that has wide powers to work in the river and its banks for the entire length of it. I think it has to be far-reaching inasmuch as all of those other agencies should have someone to answer to if they're going to be there. I think the single authority ought to have the power to have all the say and very much involve their communities along the river and try to make the river work.

CHAIR - Barry, this inquiry includes the catchment areas. A lot of people who have presented to us have talked not only about the estuary but also about involving the catchment areas and the management of that area, too. People have felt that that impacts quite a bit on what goes on in the river with the siltation issues.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - I think it probably impacts a certain amount but not to the extent that a lot of people think it does. I don't think those catchment areas are the problem areas.

Mr DEAN - Can I go back to one comment you made, Barry, about the other agencies involved needing somebody to answer to. What is your view on that now? Do you see all of these agencies involved in some input into the river being autonomous and having nobody to go to, just answerable to themselves and that's all?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - The bodies that are into the river now seem to be its retardants. There are too many there giving you a verbal answer on something and they've got no-one to answer to and they can fob off your particular project of interest. The independents say, 'No, you can't do that, you can do this' and then one will contradict the other and so forth, and that is what we desperately need to get away from.

Mr DEAN - So you're saying the single authority should be the supreme body sitting there with the control and others answerable to them?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Yes, the single body to have control. How many other bodies want to be included is a limiting thing, too. I would much sooner see a bigger community input and the bodies come from that rather than the people in National Parks, for instance. Why are they controlling the river? They are not users of the river, there is no income from the river. They've got a job to control what they have got. You get them infiltrating into an area where I think they shouldn't be. It is much the same with councils. They don't get any rates off the river or anything else. Then there is MAST, the Crown Lands department, the Natural Heritage Trust and all of these people. It is the biggest retardant we have, I believe.

Mr DEAN - I do not disagree with you.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Thanks, Ivan.

CHAIR - You would have come across a lot of frustration, I would imagine, in dealing with different departments when you did that development at Rose Bay at Gravelly Beach, where a lot of those agencies that you have mentioned would have felt that they had some jurisdiction over what you were trying to achieve?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Yes, there was that about it. But in the early days in that project we did not have any problem or much at all because we were showing that something could be done and something could be worthwhile. We had some knockers, if you like, in National Parks for a while but then we got them onside and did not have a problem. They could see where we were going and what the vision was once we got through that. But once we were stopped, which was the unfortunate part about it, getting the rest of it started and carrying on with the project was where you ran into all these agency problems, and money, quite frankly, caused a lot of our problems, too much money. Then you opened it all up. All these other agencies wanted a bite of the cherry.

CHAIR - What do you mean, too much money, Barry? Were donations forthcoming to your community organisation?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - We were lucky to get some money out of Northern Regional Development. Once we received money and we were only the kids in the district, the council and everybody else wanted some of this money and they said, 'We ought to have a say in how it is spent'. I noticed that happening in a lot of community projects and a lot of community events and all sorts of things, that money can be the ruination, unless it goes to those people rather than to the other powers that be.

CHAIR - So the money came to your community group rather than to the council?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - It did not, but it should have done. We would have been a lot better off and the project would have worked a lot better.

CHAIR - So the money for the project went to the council?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Yes, they had control over it, rather than our having a direct control over the money.

Mr DEAN - It might good, Mr Chairman, for the record, to get Barry and Garry's background on the Tamar River as to their involvement in the Tamar River and the time they have spent on it and so on.

CHAIR - Okay. What about if we give Garry a chance to explain?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - I have basically lived on the river all my life, apart from a couple years when I lived a few kilometres away. But every day of the week I see it and have done for 40-odd years. Over that time the river has gone from being somewhere you could swim to somewhere you would not swim and it is slowing going back now to somewhere you could probably swim in places at Gravelly Beach. But the biggest problem with the river is that there is no access to it. Gravelly Beach is probably one of the best ways to access it. You have the bit in Launceston but you would not jump in the water in a million years. But nowhere else, south of Gravelly Beach, is there anywhere you can really get much water access.

I could see the mud moving. We have been dredging in the Tamar River for over a hundred years, basically. We have taken it from here and we have dredged it. We have taken it down to Swan Bay and dumped it in holes and now we are getting it all back, every bit of it. Ninety per cent of your silt problem is a 100-year-old problem. You can see the silt moving out of Gravelly Beach at thousands of tonnes a year. Unless we take an approach for the whole river, we are wasting our time trying to do anything.

The money that the Launceston City Council is spending on cleaning out silt ponds and stuff is only going to go up and up. At the moment they are lucky to have a good contract there that they are going to move the silt for peanuts, but that is going to stop.

The attitude towards the river has to change and we need to look at it. I love the river but we are not doing the right thing by it.

CHAIR - Just elaborate a little bit too, Garry, on the business that you now run, Blenkhorn Plumbing. I think that there are some issues in the stretch of river on which you live where the sewerage is not as good as it could be.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - We have a massive problem on the river as far as sewerage goes. My business has basically grown up around plumbing. We have now moved into civil contracting, so you see the stuff coming out of silt ponds and those sorts of things. Everyone says that it is clean water, but it is not clean water - it still has suspended solids in it and it goes straight in the river.

There are areas where it is pure sewage. Literally, if someone wanted to take someone to task it could cost millions of dollars in liabilities because of the fact that it is just raw sewage.

CHAIR - Coming from where, then?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - All over the place. I could name 20 places in Gravelly Beach. I could name you 30-40 places along Rosevears Drive without any trouble.

Mr DEAN - Putting sewage straight into the river?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Yes. I could go to Hillwood and do exactly the same.

CHAIR - Private properties?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Yes. Council, same thing. The West Tamar Council have a problem, or did have until they decided to move the water from the Exeter ponds up to the golf club. I do not know if you have ever been to the Exeter golf club and played golf on it during the summer and gone past their so-called water out of the Exeter ponds, but it turns green.

Mr BARRYBLENKHORN - Irrigated with it -

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - That used to run straight down the creek, Blackwell Road straight into the river. It is not the only one doing it. Three treatment plants are not up to standard. They are pumping a certain percentage of solids straight into the river every day of the week. If they were not you would have a fleet of trucks every day of the week carting the solids away from each of the plants and it does not happen. There is a massive problem. The whole thing has to have an authority that is big enough, that can override councils and put the new water authorities on notice that they have to fix these problems. We do those things. We are going round and round in circles. It is not just in our area; it is all down the river - that is happening everywhere.

CHAIR - When you say the sewage treatment plants, how many are there, let us say for instance on the West Tamar, in your opinion?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - There is no sewage treatment plant apart from the one at Riverside. All the other ones are ponded sewage. There is one at Legana, which takes in Grindelwald. There is one at Exeter, which is very small and is overloaded at the moment - council will deny that but that is the case. There is one at Beaconsfield and there is one at Beauty Point and they are only ponded sewage.

Three of those have a reuse scheme after which it goes out on farmland. The calculations that they did on the one at Legana was that that pond should have taken in excess of 16 months to fill up and it was full within three months. I do not know who worked out their flow calculations but for nine months of the year that water is just going straight out the other end of that pond back into the river. They cannot use the water quickly enough. It is the same with the one at Beauty Point and the same with the one at Exeter.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - The council are in the position in those three areas of even limiting building approvals because they know that their sewerage ponds are a problem.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - The East Tamar is the same; it is just that I do not spend as much time on the East Tamar.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - There are 1 000 houses between the foot of Muddy Creek hill to the Batman Bridge with no sewerage at all, only septic systems.

CHAIR - What distance was that? Did you say it was seven kilometres?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - No, 1 000 houses over the distance from Muddy Creek to the Batman Bridge, which is nine or 10 kilometres, all Rosevears Drive, there are no sewerage systems at all, just septic tanks.

Mr WING - It is septic tanks there, is it?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Apart from a little bit on Gravelly Beach, which is very short - a kilometre and a half.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - My background is, as most of you probably know, that I have pumped sewage waste for 23 years - I know what sewage is, and I know where a lot of it is going and coming from. I remember well the Exeter tip - it had become contaminated, they reckoned; my son and I had to cart the water to the Riverside treatment plant, so-called, with two trucks in tandem. We were probably two-and-a-half loads down and the rake system in the sewage treatment plant just could not catch it; it overflowed and went straight down the river. I said that we would be better putting this straight off the Batman Bridge and it caused a bit of a stir.

Mr DEAN - I wanted to get Garry's position: your father is talking about the single authority and that is one of our terms of reference around the setting up of a single authority to take control of all of this, including the catchment areas. Are you of that view, Garry? How do you see that? Do you want to talk about how it should be controlled?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - It is an absolute must. It has to have one authority that has all the say over what happens in that area. It is an absolute must and until we do, then we keep dealing with the Launceston City Council wasting money on flood levees over here and someone else doing this here and someone else doing something else; we are going to go nowhere with the river - absolutely nowhere.

The money they are going to spend on the new flood levee would have been better spent in other ways, but that is what they have picked and that is a council issue. They are only looking at small parts of what they need to do to secure Launceston, if you like, but they are not looking at the overall approach to the river and we need to do that where it starts and not necessarily in Launceston. If we do not stop the mud and stuff coming from our end of the river back into Launceston and find somewhere to put it, it will not matter what you do in Launceston - you are going to have the same problem.

Mr WING - Which levee do you think they have done the wrong way - the overall one or the one that sank?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - The one that sank was a waste of money, under-designed to buggery. My understanding is that the council is trying to get their money back out of their consultants for it. The way they have gone about it is completely wrong.

Mr WING - What would you see as the right way?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - We need to put levees in that are going to be a bit like the edge of the Yarra in Melbourne. We need to build them so that we can use them. The levee they have put there is at high water and is no good for anything because it is under water. It does not encourage people to the river. Until you can get to the stage where you can encourage people to the river and get them to see what a mess it is, we are still going to go round and round in circles.

Mr DEAN - I think the design of the new levees will in fact do exactly what you have said.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - They have to do that.

CHAIR - And give a hard edge.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Yes, hard edging and access.

Mr DEAN - Hard edge and then the levees move back and it will open it up to the people.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - We have to have that access but in doing that hard levee stuff you also have to get rid of the mud problem to start with. You can spend millions on hard levees but if the mud keeps filling up in front of them the hard levees are absolutely useless.

Mr WING - Because it fills up the space that the floodwater could otherwise occupy.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Yes, and you are looking at millions of tonnes of mud in the river - literally - and if you go back and look over the years at how many millions of tonnes of stuff has been dredged out of the river and carted and dumped further up the river, you will realise that it is all coming back to you. We need to find areas where we can put 2 million or 3 million tonnes of stuff at once and the only way you are going to do that is upset somebody by covering up a wetland or pumping it on to farmland or doing something like that, but unless an authority has enough power to be able to do that it is never going to happen.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - There are plenty of those places adjacent to the river where you could get rid of all the silt out of the river. It is worth a look at the levee that collapsed down there at the present time, the tide has been coming right up over it and the observation is that there is just as much silt on the back of the wall now as there is in front it, so we are dealing with suspended solids that come out and drop out of the top of it. That is the sort of stuff and it is all flocculent - it is not farmland, it is not forestry land, it is fluffy stuff that is in the river that just travels up and down with the tide.

CHAIR - I respect of your work as a civil contractor, I would like to ask you, Garry, whether you have the same frustrations as your Dad in having all these different organisations to deal with. As a civil contractor, do you have the same frustration with organisations?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Yes. You have one at the present time with the pipelines, haven't you?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - It is a massive problem and I do not know how we are ever going to fix the thing because it is just getting wrapped up in red tape and there is a bit of red tape for everything you are going to do and that red tape is getting worse. You will find that our silt problem is going to get worse eventually because, from a civil contractor's point of view, finding somewhere to get rid of clean fill and dump stuff is becoming almost impossible. They will take it at the tip, that is not a problem and they will not charge you for it, but if we keep carting it to the tip the way people have been dumping around the bush and filling up creeks and doing all this sort of stuff, the tip is going to be no good in 10 years' time, so that side of it is a problem. But a lot of that stuff that we are taking from jobs with a lot of rock and stuff in it could actually go a long way to solving some of the problems with the river by being able to build retaining walls and then take the mud from in front and stick it back behind the retaining walls and open up some places.

We are not talking massive areas but there are places along Rosevears where you could create 200 acres or 300 acres of parkland in small ribbon strips that might only be 30 or 40 metres wide - absolutely useless. All right, the water rats might like it and the odd swan or whatever, but apart from that it is rotten, stinking mud. We cart rocks to wherever we can get rid of rocks, and we are not the only contractor. We've actually got to the stage now where we're stockpiling stuff in our backyard for reuse.

CHAIR - And you're suggesting work similar to what was done, I think, at Stephenson's Bend where Grammar have reclaimed land there?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Yes. Stephenson's Bend is to the stage where this last silt contract was let. I must point out that the contractor doing the job is doing it for nothing; he is actually going broke on the job and that's because he priced it wrong.

Mr WING - Doing it for nothing?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Well, on our calculations from what we've seen him do, he's losing \$400 an hour.

Mr WING - Oh, so his tender was too low.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - So council has got out of that cheaply. That contract was to take 60 000 cubic metres of silt out of the ponds at Ti Tree Bend and put them on that area. Grammar said, 'Yes, we'll have that'. When they started it all, the stuff was too wet and Grammar said, 'No, we don't want it'. Then it was taken out to Heritage Park and dumped out the back there somewhere. Obviously he got an increase in his price because it is an hour's round trip instead of a 10-minute round trip. But that problem of emptying those silt ponds is only going to get worse because every time you fill up areas

close to the pond, you have to travel further, and every time you travel further the cost goes up.

Mr WING - If it weren't for the transport costs, a lot of that silt could be used for landfill.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - On the West Tamar side of it, I have always said from Tamar marine right through to the tail race we should have been in there with a big dozer, knocked everything over - it looked ugly - and built a couple of decent retaining walls out in the river about 20 or 30 feet from the edge of the tea trees, and then pumped everything from that side straight in there and turned that into a massive great parkland, and then go in and replant it, put new tracks in it, do whatever. You would have got your fill and your reclaimed land for next to nothing for your dredging cost. What you will save in your transport cost now to clean out those ponds and cart it away could have been spent on paths and all that sort of infrastructure. All right, there would have been people screaming, but the authority needs to have enough power to be able to say, 'No, that's what we've got to do'.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - It's foolish. You pick up with your dredge and you pump it through a pipeline; it's the minimum cost of doing it. You put that stuff out there, but that West Tamar Pond should never have been dug out. It should have been turned into parkland. Then say to our communities, 'We're achieving something by taking this stuff out of the river'. You ask people in Launceston now where the river is and they can't tell you. They are not interested; there's no access to it, it's bogged up. Visibly you can see the thing from Trevallyn and that's it. Everybody says the water's nice when the tide's in, but we want that public open space adjacent to the river where people can get into the river, where we can bring the river alive with boating and so forth.

Mr WING - So where was that West Tamar parkland?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Where the West Tamar ponds are now; they dug them out. The ponds were filled so they dug them out and took them around to Grammar and now they're pumping into them again. It's an unsightly thing coming into West Tamar. If it had been turned into a park when they did it and put the next lot of silt somewhere else -

Mr DEAN - A lot of money has been spent there now with trees and so on around the edges.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - It's going to be another 10 years before it's filled and can be grassed down again. It's just going to be an ugly site again for 10 years when we had it to the stage where it could have been grassed down.

Mr WING - I am not sure just which area this is.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - West Tamar ponds.

Mr DEAN - Just across the bridge on the way to -

Mr WING - Oh, it runs beside the West Tamar Highway.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Yes.

Mr WING - Yes, now I know them.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - My understanding is - and I haven't got the exact figures because council won't let us have those because they are commercial rates - that you are looking at around \$5 or \$6 a cubic metre to move fill out of those silt ponds - just to move it once it's there.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - That happened with Ti Tree Bend, didn't it.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Yes, but they're actually pushing to be able to clean those ponds out inside 12 months, and it won't happen. We, as contractors, are not game enough to stick our gear in there. We'll work for you, but not at those prices because it's just so wet and soft that you could lose a digger in there in no time flat. Those costs are only going to grow, so we need to be smarter and say, 'Right, we need to spend some money in front of that and turn it into parkland', like Dad said.

CHAIR - Is the idea with those ponds that they be continually filled up and harvested?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Yes, and cleaned out.

CHAIR - And then you fill them up again.

Mr DEAN - And the water leaches out. A lot of the mud is made up of about 90 per cent water when it goes in and the water just leaches out back into the river. But a lot of the water coming back in the river still contains solids and a lot of silt, but the majority of it is held in the pond, and that builds up.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - That is why there are three ponds.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - We have got it out. We are just shifting it again. You don't do that double-handling. Let's single-handle it and make it into something once we have handled it. To do anything with the river, people do not want to contribute the money. They are not achieving a thing. We have been dredging the river for years and years and it is the worst the silt has ever been. So we have to take it out, lock it in, and use it. Put it to good use. The Launceston City Council had the local contractor for the topsoil. He said he would take every metre they pumped out. When it was dry he would buy it. That was the idea - sell it as topsoil. Then they realised it was full of pathogens and all sorts of things so they said, 'We cannot put that in everybody's backyard. We could be in all sorts of problems'. So it could not be solved. But this time, luckily, Grammar said, 'Let's take it around there. We will pay for some of the deal and we will get it around there and turn it into a sports ground'. Why didn't we leave it where it was and turn it into a park? Pump the next lot down because we can pump from those dredges for miles. Savage River pumps from there to Port Latta, doesn't it? We have no trouble putting it through a pipeline and pumping is somewhere. All we want is for the geo-fabric people to be involved to put their geo-fabric all around. It leaches the water back through it but holds your silt. Put your hard wall around it and you have created this open space and stuff that you can use.

The dredging of the river has been necessary for shipping and tall boats and so forth. But in the literature that I have the basin in one report was only ever 4 foot 6 inches

deep. It is a very shallow base. So they had to dredge it to get stuff up there. There was 18 acres of royal park reclaimed and pushed out by hand trucks. So not very big quantities of stuff went out at that time. Then they put the *Ponrabbel* dredge in with the barges and they carted it down to Swan Bay and a couple of holes around Rosevears Drive. They opened the bottom of the barges and let it go. So it was not taken out of the river.

The next time the PLA put a barge in with a long-extension excavator in there and dug some of it out. Then there was a committee meeting similar to this. I went along and they were all talking about how they were getting this out of the river and doing this and so forth. I said, 'From a layman's point of view, I think you are doing the wrong thing'. I said, 'They were taking out round thunder eggs that came down the Gorge a million years' in this dredge'. They were down into the bedrock of the river. They were not taking the sludge and the silt out of the river. Then they put in this other little dredge and were pumping out onto the West Tamar flat. Their pumps broke down. You look at the discharge end of the pipe and there are lumps of blue clay, which is the bed of the river coming out. They were not pumping out the silt at all. Their pumps broke down and invariably their pumps keep breaking down because they don't have the right sort of gear to pick up the stuff that is there. As I say, there is never anything being taken out of the river. They dug the Trevallyn tailrace. Where did the fill go? They bought the *Ponrabbel* dredge around from Devonport back in the 1950s and they put 700 or 800 yards of pipeline on the back of it. If you have the dredge facing up towards the power station and you put 700-800 yards of pipeline on the back of it, where did the sludge go? It didn't go out of the river anywhere. It went out on that point opposite Grammar, which has nearly choked the river there now. So how many thousands of tonnes came out of the Trevallyn tailrace? It was never taken away. A big percentage of it is still in the river.

Mr WING - It slipped back in, do you think?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Pumped back in - and it slipped back in. Let's use that term. But none of that was ever taken out of the river. The Margaret Street sewage and everything all went straight down the river. So the dilemma we have is: do we need to get that stuff out? Do we need the river? The GHD report is asking, 'Do we do nothing?'. We put a lot of emphasis on the Tamar River and the Tamar Valley. At the present time we have a dirty ditch.

Mr DEAN - GHD said, 'Do we do nothing?'. That is an option, but they have now scratched that out and have said that we cannot do nothing. So that is now not an option.

Mr WING - I would have thought it never was an option.

Mr DEAN - They have two other options now.

I just want to change tack. How should the single statutory authority to take control of all of this be made up? Do you have any ideas? Have you given any thought as to what the make-up of that body should be, the type of people?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - I have considered it. Someone said to me the other day, 'Would you be prepared to go on it?' No, I am not that silly. But we need people that

could work from a private enterprise type of thing, to run it like a business, and we have some good people who have been very active in the river. There is Errol Stewart and a few of them. We could come up with those sorts of people. They do not want to be the Professor Fosters - God forgive, he's dead, isn't he - because they have these science models. They are not doers. We have to have doers and people who can see that we can achieve something, and by doing this the end result is so.

CHAIR - Can there be a balance though, Barry, do you think, with the science as well as the doers and the business people?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - We would hope so, Kerry, but we have tried a lot of the science and we have tried very little of the practical, and a lot of the science and so forth has failed. We have reports after reports and so forth into the thing and really have achieved very little or anything. But once you start looking at that board or that authority, it has to take in more than just the wet strip down the middle. It has to look after these banks and so forth, and they have to overrule every other body that we have there, councils and all.

Mr WING - And government departments, agencies?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - The whole thing, National Parks, the whole lot, because unless you get rid of those people you are not going to get the right answers.

CHAIR - Do you think we need to get rid of those people, to use your words, Barry, or do you think that there can be a more cooperative model that might draw those people in but have new approaches to handling the estuary?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Well, a lot of them would want to change their ways big-time, because, as I say, in the 50 years or so that I have been dealing with these sorts of things with the bureaucrats and so forth, what really have we achieved? Unless we had got the licence to do what we did at Gravelly Beach, there would be no access to the river. Michelle O'Byrne had a letter in the paper the other day, the best bit of sense she has made. She said we want the river to be accessible to the people, and I have been working on that for 40 years. If you go back and say, righto, do nothing, what do we want the river for? We want the river for recreational purposes. Recreational purposes are walking along its banks, and the boating people. There is not a boat on the river. We have a 40 kilometre navigable river and there are no boats on it. There is no activity at Gravelly Beach and nothing going up and down. The runabouts are not there. The ski-jets are not there. There is just nothing happening because there are no destinations, no points. The *Odyssey* said 'Gravelly Beach will be good, we can drop off there', and they tried to drop a few off there and bus them back and bus them down the wine route and what-have-you. It will take things like that to really bring it alive, get your boat registrations, get some money, get some things happening. We couldn't run a regatta in Launceston if we tried, could we? Where could we run a regatta on the Tamar? Gravelly Beach is the first place you -

Mr DEAN - They have a rowing regatta, but that is at high tide.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Yes. I have been trying desperately with the Palmer boys and that in Devonport. They have a wonderful regatta in Devonport but they have no water.

We have a full kilometre wide of water at Gravelly Beach and we have potential for a kilometre and a half of foreshore there that is limited by the tide to half mark. With a bush backdrop we have potentially the best regatta.

Mr DEAN - So it is recreational and aesthetics, isn't it? It looks as well.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - That is right. Why do people live on the river? I asked my brother-in-law the other day, 'What do you think of the river?' He said, 'It is a river. It is nice to look at when necessary' and he is not a bit interested in any other part of it, and there are a lot of people like that. But drive round Rosevears Drive. I suppose it is one of the best little bits of river road in the country, and it is a mess.

Mr WING - Yes, I did yesterday morning.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - It is a mess, blackberries, rubbish all the way round, and so forth. If we had a new look at some of those places at low tide, and we said, 'We could see what Barry wanted. All he wants is a few woodchip logs across here as a barrier, fill that in there', and I can park out there and I am in the middle of a river and the place can be used for kids. We need to have it active so let's put in a decent dredge, let's put in a decent authority that can control a decent dredge, get the stuff and pump it out and when it's pumped out, leave it alone and make it into parkland and so forth.

CHAIR - When you say a decent dredge, Barry, do you mean a bigger dredge or something that's more appropriate for the job?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - For a bigger type of job; a more appropriate dredge. It wants a dredge where it will scoop up so that it just goes around and literally sucks the sludge off the top. The cutter dredges they're working there now are down on the bottom; the fluffy stuff is floating past at a hundred miles an hour. It does go down the river and come back. With the tests and experiments that I did 40-plus years ago with the drawings out in the river in the rice grass when Dan Hitchcock chaired the thing, I said then that the river was reclaiming itself or the rice grass was reclaiming the banks of the river at about 3 inches a year. It was building up. On the northern side of the groyne it would build up and on the southern side of the groyne it would suck away. The tides run in and they do run out so they bring the stuff back up the river. If you go down past Devils Elbow round the point from there, there is no sludge. At Clarence Point, Beauty Point and all around there, there is no sludge in the river and there is nothing that goes out past there. We had a good example of what the river does 10 years ago when we had the landslip up above where the present Meander Dam is. Do you remember when all the red clay came down?

Mr DEAN - Yes.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - There was nothing coming over the dam at Trevallyn. It came through the power station and was nicely churned up in there with the turbines; it came out of the tailrace and it came around and went up under the Gorge bridge. We have only got to put food dye in the river now and we will see where the tide takes the silt and so forth. There was nothing, at that particular time, that went past Legana - Freshwater Point.

Mr DEAN - Not a lot of silt gets past the area where it comes into strong salt water. The water just flocculates and settles at the bottom.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Yes, and that's what science will tell you; this is what happens when it flocculates and drops out and there are two rivers running together and all the rest of it.

Mr DEAN - Except when you get a big flood. If you get a lot of water coming through it can drive it.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - But then we bulk Gravelly Beach up to the bloody hilt; then we get five years' or 10 years' dry as we've got and it is going to come back. It has to come out of the river. It's no good talking about knocking the dam out, flushing the river; it won't achieve a thing. It will only take this problem further down the river. In the interim it will come back.

CHAIR - Garry, to give you a turn, you were talking about silt and it was being brought up and put into some holes at Swan Bay and those sorts of areas. Is my understanding correct that some was dumped out from Gravelly Beach as well, in the river?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Swan Bay.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Swan Bay, yes. Across from Gravelly Beach.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - North-east a little bit of Gravelly Beach. But if you study the river now, probably anywhere north of the bottom end of Muddy Creek and go north, if you drive along and look at the river at low tide and look where the rice grass is compared to where the mud is in front of the rice grass, on 90 per cent of the river there'd be a drop there of 500 or 600 millimetres.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - The shelf in front of the rice grass.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - It never used to be like that. When we first put the *Odyssey* on the river, which was probably 15 or 16 years ago now, that was a rice grass base which was a taker of mud out to low water. Since the *Odyssey* has been there she has created shelves and, particularly at Gravelly Beach, you can see rice grass receding back towards the bank at massive rates. In some places it is 2 and 3 metres a year. Gravelly Beach marine house is a perfect example. In front of the house on the point there used to be rice grass that went out there about 25 feet. There is not a piece of rice grass in front of Gravelly Beach marine house at all. There are two rocks that I haven't seen for 30-odd years that have poked their heads up that used to be covered in mud. They sit at low tide now over 2 feet out of the water.

Mr WING - Why is this?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - The mud is coming back to Launceston.

Mr DEAN - Back into Launceston; back up this way.

Mr WING - It's not the wash of the *Odyssey*?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN -No, no. The wash of the *Odyssey* stirs it up.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - It is stirring it up. It is moving more than you think it is. If you go and look at Google Earth, its map I think is about five or six years old. If you have a look at it and then take a drive and have a look and see the difference, in some places you won't believe the difference. It's massive.

Mr WING - So it's clearing the area around Gravelly Beach.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - It's not only Gravelly Beach; it is up as far as Muddy Creek at this end of Rosevears.

Mr DEAN - In the GHD report - and you raised it as well - do you know whether they spoke to anybody in those areas? Did they speak to you?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - I gave evidence to GHD, a young lady from Hobart.

Mr DEAN - When was that, Barry?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Out at the tram sheds when you gave us permission to have a verbal meeting out there. I said to her, 'You've got to look at the river holistically. There's no point in just looking at the basin; that won't achieve anything. The sediment is going up down the river, coming up more than it's coming down because of the drier season' et cetera. I just talked in general terms and she said, 'My word, we haven't heard these comments'. I said, 'What's the position? Will you give me some feedback?', but I haven't heard anything since. She certainly wasn't familiar with the Tamar River because she came from Hobart, and she said that.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - The terms of reference for those things are too fine. From what I can see the terms of reference were never for the whole river.

CHAIR - The GHD report was more about Launceston. It was commissioned by the Launceston City Council.

Mr DEAN - And supported by the State.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - That in itself was a mistake because we have wasted a couple of hundred thousand dollars on something that they haven't looked outside of to see what's really causing the problem. They're saying all the silt is coming down the Esk. If it was, our Esk rivers would be chocka.

Mr DEAN - This is the problem you get and it is a good example of why you need a single statutory authority because the Launceston City Council spends money on its municipal area and, in fairness to them, they have no interest in West Tamar or the other areas. That's why it's done that way. That report is on that narrow area from the Launceston municipal boundary, the Tamar River and a very small part of the catchment area.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Whereas your single authority would look at the whole thing and listen to it on a broader scale - 'That silly old bugger might be right so we ought to bring this together'.

Mr WING - With power to do something about it.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Yes, and do something about it from a practical point of view. The money is not everything. We can't plough millions and millions of dollars into it; there are other things that require money. It could be done on a much more economical basis and really achieve something and then you could get the support of everybody. We've been doing it for a lot of years and we've achieved nothing, so you've got no public support. They don't care.

Mr DEAN - Is there any photographic evidence, Garry, on the changes that you've seen out there?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - We tried to find a few.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - I've got hundreds of photos.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - If you go to Gravelly Beach where they put a boat ramp in there. I might have been five or six when it went in. It was a standard boat ramp. At low tide it used to sit out of the mud and then it went through a period where maybe the last 50 feet of it had mud over the top of it. Now you can see some of those slats back out of the mud, so there is proof of those things happening. I know David Girling at the marina has information on some of the stuff that he's taken notice of around his place where it is disappearing. I can see it from home. My place looks straight out over the creek and you can see where they used to moor the boats in the creek. There used to be three rows of boats and now there's only one row. The rice grass used to come right up to the one row of boats and now it's further back than the three rows were years ago. It is actually disappearing so that mud has to be going somewhere.

Mr WING - Yes, back up to Home Reach.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Yes, and unless they are looking at the river as a whole thing then it doesn't matter what you spend in Launceston, it is just going to be a waste of money. We need to go even further than just looking at the river; we need to look at our sewerage schemes and change the way we do that. We need to change the way we do our stormwater stuff. The infiltration of storm water, silt and stuff is incredible. We drove along West Tamar Road on the way this morning and I reckon I could have filled up a five-yard truck of silt sitting in the kerb - and that's just on one side of the road from the end of Riverside through to -

Mr DEAN - In the gutters you mean?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Yes, just lying there.

Mr DEAN - No sumps inside empty pits.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - No. I saw a road worker cleaning up gravel out of the kerbs and he walked up side entry pit and he went straight in it. So they are all things that just end up there. In South Australia they are smart to realise they need to put sumps in their pits and they need to put traps to trap all the rubbish and all that sort of stuff. We have to start to do that because every little bit we stop, out of those things, is a bit less we have to stop or get out at the other end, and the sewage is the perfect example of it. In that e-mail I sent to Kerry with those few figures, if you sat down and really thought about that there should be x amount of solids coming out of those sewage treatment plants on a daily basis, and it has to be going somewhere. It does not happen. How many times has the Launceston City Council emptied their silt ponds at the sewage treatment plant - two or three times?

Mr DEAN - It is done on a very irregular basis.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - It is not massive amounts either. So where does the fine particle go? It goes into the river. So what we need to be doing is moving those sewage treatment plants. They do not want to be on river banks. They need to be halfway down the Midlands somewhere. All right, it is massive amounts of money to do it. We have farmers screaming for water. Let us treat the water a bit further. Instead of giving them absolutely A1 water, why aren't we giving them reused water? We have to look at those things as an overall package. But at the moment we just look at little narrow strip.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Let us join with Gunns and sewer the Tamar Valley and make one big treatment plant because we do not have a treatment plant in this northern area that is up to full tertiary level. Burnie is about the only one in the State that comes anywhere near.

Mr DEAN - Ti Tree Bend's is -

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - It is close but it is built in the wrong place. The outfall of it should not be doing what it does, because we need to put that outfall somewhere else to take those suspended solids out of the water. They will tell you there are no solids in it.

Mr DEAN - They tell us there are no solids in it.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - But you go and get a glass at the pipeline and see what it looks like. It isn't crystal clear water. It is a brownly coloured water, and what creates that? Fine particles. If you get enough fine particles together you have silt.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - The stabilised sludge that they get in ponds are what we are trying to remove at the present time. The tip department wanted \$5 a metre to bury it out there. It is just another total waste of good resource. I ought to be put somewhere to reclaim some of these banks. I do not believe that reclaiming the banks will speed up the channel and help anything. I do not think that will achieve anything. It might do something for the rise in the tide a bit.

Mr DEAN - There could be a move to move a lot of it towards landfill, I understand.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - It all has to go into land to make use of it.

Mr DEAN - I meant the landfall property.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Yes. The question is, where do we put the silt? There should not be a question. There are hundreds and hundreds of acres where that silt could be put and stabilised without any problem.

Mr WING - It is obviously that cost of getting it there.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - We can pump gas across the Strait; we can do all sorts of things. As I said, there is trouble to pump it.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - You see it in Queensland all the time.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - You do not have to take it out and put it on road transport or anything.

Mr WING - So where in Queensland?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Burleigh Heads and places like that. I have seen them with dredges in creeks and they will pump it three or four kilometres around a headland and they will pump it back out on the beach where the sand has disappeared. They will do that on a regular basis. But that is only one spot. It happens up there in massive amounts, and they will go seven or eight kilometres.

Mr WING - Do you know what the cost is of doing that?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - No, I do not.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - A millionaire has just paid to have the beach replenished, so they pump sand.

Mr DEAN - As Barry said, Port Latta is a good example of how long they pump.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - The cost of pumping is not that high with the right equipment. You can do it.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - We are not even pushing it uphill; it is a level playing field.

Mr DEAN - They are talking about pumping woodchips for kilometres.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - The biggest cost in pumping is the initial cost with the pipe. With a 250 or 300 mm diameter pipe, which is probably all you would want for that, you would be looking to buy that at around \$120 to \$130 a metre. It sounds expensive but -

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - They are built in Tasmania, too - big polymer pipes

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - When you are talking about a fair distance, it is a fair bit of money but the upkeep on it is nothing; it is cheap.

Mr DEAN - Especially compared with trucking it over a period?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - It is. It is miles cheaper and that trucking cost is going to get expensive.

Mr DEAN - More expensive with fuel costs.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Yes, and we have nowhere to put it.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - We need that single authority that can do all of this. Get some practical people on there. The biggest mug in the world can probably run the thing a lot better than the science people. As I said, I think the science people and a lot of those so-called have had a go and have not achieved much - let some practical people get on to that.

Mr DEAN - In fairness to them, I think a lot of those have put the right reports in and made the right findings but then those have not been put into action.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Because a lot of it cannot be adopted by the layman - that is a big problem. I said 'Let us look at getting a decent dredge and putting it in there.' What is his name on the Council? Ted Sands - he wanted the council to go into partnership with Badcock, didn't he? Anyway, whoever it was, the only sense he made was to get a proper dredge to do the thing.

Mr WING - But he advocates pumping it too, doesn't he, away to a site?

CHAIR - It is a fair distance, though - it is kilometres over hills or -

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Why pump it out over the hill and so forth, Kerry? You have to find those spots when we have them on the river bank.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - We have Invermay Football Club down behind all of that; there could be two metres of fill stuck in that whole area there which is now farmland - over probably 1 000 acres at really no cost - just the cost of pumping. But to go and truck that amount of fill somewhere else, the cost would be massive.

CHAIR - We had evidence from Les Dick in respect to an area south of the island -

Mr DEAN - Tamar Island.

CHAIR - south of there. I believe there was some fencing put up there; silt was put in behind the fencing and that has been allowed to collapse and resume back into the river. Do you have any knowledge of that operation?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - You can see that fence.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - You can see where the fence was and the potential is to put something there but in those areas you have to finish up with that hard wall; the beauty of the rice grass is that you can pump your silt and stuff out there or you can dump into the rice grass and it will retain it until you get out to where that wall needs to be. So you can put a lot of silt, and, say, use geo-fabric material - those people can guide us along all

that sort of thing until such time as you get your silt in there and get it consolidated and then go along and put your hard wall along the front. It is easily the cheap way: you don't have to go out over mud tracks and cart hard filling. But it is a matter of selecting those places where you are going to achieve the biggest benefit to the majority of people; they are the ones you want to pick on first and let them see that you are achieving something. Then you have done away with this 'We want to keep the vertebrates, we want to keep all this', and when we are turning sections such as Gravelly Beach - and I think it has gone in the back door to try and stop us from reclaiming our next section - they have turned it into a conservation area.

In this day and age if we start conserving rice grass and sewage in the River we are on the bottom of the barrel. We are not achieving a thing, are we, if we conserve that. We have to think bigger and better than that and really get out and achieve something.

The single authority, given the right statutory power, I think would go a long way to achieve some of the goals that need to be achieved but they will need some down-to-earth practical sort of people who can think and say we can do this or we can't.

Mr DEAN - I think Garry mentioned Queensland. Are you familiar with any other areas in the country - anywhere that has problems, Barry?. You have not looked at any of that?

Mr Barry BLENKHORN - The Rubicon estuary - they talked about the problems around there with the moss grass and you might remember that the Rubicon conservation group or whatever they call themselves use black plastic to kill the rice grass. We invited them and we met some of them at Gravelly Beach and talked about it and I said 'What do you do when you kill the rice grass? You have unlocked the sludge and it is going to go somewhere else or you have just killed it for the time being; take the plastic away and it is going to grow back and you won't achieve anything'. I said that we think what we are doing is the best thing because we are creating this public open space and beautifying the river bank. I said if I were you in the Rubicon I would be building lakes and tarns in amongst them and they said 'What does that mean?' I said 'A tarn is a small lake or waterway, beautify your bank and you have all the birdlife and stuff; you have enhanced that sort of thing. Why are you killing the rice grass because you are just going to work against your silt movement?' I think, as I said to the select committee into rice grass, in areas like Native Point, which is opposite Gravelly Beach around the bush, the rice grass is aesthetically better than the mud banks and it's holding all that stuff and saving the dredging.

If it had not been for that rice grass the basin would have been choked - we would not have had a basin. So we have to think of it doing its bit, we have to think of the bits that it has devastated and we have to think of the bits we can improve because it is there. For example, Gravelly Beach, Rose Bay Park and the like. But we have to stop feeding the rice grass, if we want to stop it off growing so prolifically because it is growing in the best nutrient material that you can put in there.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Cairns is another case, off the Shangri La Motel right on the wharf. They have turned all that around since you have been to that area, if you have been there.

Mr DEAN - I have been there but I have not -

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Well, that was all mud. That was a bit like looking out off Home Point, covered in mud, useless, no-one could walk there, a crocodile infested area. Cairns Council spent \$15 million and now it is full of swimming pools; it has a sand beach and everything.

Mr DEAN - What did they do there - did they dredge it out?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - They got rid of the mud. In that case they did not dredge it, they carted it by trucks. Some of their construction sites around Cairns had sand so they carted sand and tipped it all back over the beach and now it is a five star beachfront.

It was done so simply. It was just because they took an approach and said, 'Right, this is what we are going to do'. There is nothing to stop us doing that here either.

Mr DEAN - Do you know where that was coming from - that mud or silt?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - That was a mangrove muddy area.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - A Surfers Paradise sort of thing, like Bruce Small did.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Up around Hinchinbrook it is the same thing. They took a lot of mud and stuff out of there and turned that into good sandy beach areas.

CHAIR - Just being cognisant of the time, I am wondering if there are any closing questions or whether you would just like to make a statement in closing, Garry and Barry?

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - Kerry, I would like to have more people like yourselves visit on the river and look at some of these things that we have been talking about from a practical point of view, to get some of that inside knowledge as to what we think has happened and we are certain has happened. You can do so much indoors and with reports and so forth. How hard do those sort of people really look into things? Any time that we could get a group together and have a look around at those sorts of things. I have hundreds of photos from day one right through that might not mean a lot to you.

Mr DEAN - Other than to tell a story of just what the changes are; that is important.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - And that is what needs to happen.

CHAIR - This could be the job of a new authority if it is set up. That would be their role - to get that deep understanding

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - All that sort of information and what has been achieved, what could be achieved and look at someone's vision. It is hard to get someone's vision across at times. The practical approach to a lot of it is a very important thing. Your science people are not practical people. But if you could get a table with a body sitting around it - you know, let us pick on Errol Stewart, let us pick on Barry Blenkhorn, let us pick on a few of these sort of people and come up with a consensus of 'Let's do this'. But you have to get that authority so that there is no undermining. In our experience it has been that we are targeted all the way through.

Mr WING - No obstruction.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - No obstruction. We have this planning scheme where you go to the board but there is obstruction; everything you do is retarded. Chinamen take over the entire town.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - The one authority is it - the only way we can go. While we have councils and everybody else working against each other, doing their own little bit, we might as well forget about the river. We need to change that attitude. It has to become one system; that is the way to go. It is a bit like what has happened with the water and sewerage. It is going to cost us a fortune but it is going to be the best thing that has ever happened. People are going to scream because they are going to be paying extra rates, but if we do not do something similar with the river we are going to keep doing exactly what the councils have been doing for the last Lord knows how many years. 'We spend our little 10 cents over here on our little bit because we like that', and, 'We will go and spend our 10 cents over here', and at the end of the day, if they had put their two 10 cent bits together they would have ended up with something worth having. That is the whole problem with the approach we have.

Mr DEAN - It is a pretty good analogy of water and sewerage and where we are going with the river.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - That is the simple crux of the thing. If you do not work together, we can go around and around in circles for the next 50 years. It would be a pity if that just keeps going. At the end of the day it has to get to the stage where we probably need to get rid of three councils and just have one Tamar Valley Council. In this situation, a valley that has a ditch - as most of it is now - is being looked after by three different municipalities and none of them are really doing any good by it.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - None of them should be in the river.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - They shouldn't be. We are wasting our time, because there is no goal to do anything differently from what we do in our backyard. Sewerage and water will solve some of those problems because it is going to get to the stage where we are going to have to upgrade those sewage treatment plants and now they will have the money to do it. If it had been left to the West Tamar, Launceston City and George Town Councils it would never happen because the money would not be there to do it. Now there is a combined approach. As I keep saying, we need the combined approach to solve this problem. If it means one council, one body, to take over, that has to be the way to go.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - The West Tamar Council is a very viable council, they tell us. You know, it has the largest population in Tasmania without any sewerage.

Mr DEAN - It is only viable because it has not done much!

Laughter.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - You can actually see that sort of thing happening across a lot of government areas now. This is completely off the track. The irrigation board is another one. What is going on there is not right. We are doing the right thing by giving farmers water but what they are actually doing is going to cost the farmers a lot more than what they should pay for the water.

Mr WING - The unit cost is going to be very high.

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - The running costs of what they are accepting as projects is rubbish. It should change.

Mr WING - So it is uneconomical to have a unit cost that will be just for grazing purposes?

Mr GARRY BLENKHORN - Impossible. It is a government department working the wrong way.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - The tender basis is cranky.

CHAIR - I think we are digressing into another area now.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - We are looking at, say, a three or four million dollar job. Unless you have done a \$10 million job you cannot tender for it. So we have eliminated 90 per cent of the tenders in Tasmania.

CHAIR - What I would like to do, Barry and Gary, is thank you very much. I know Gary in private enterprise. I know, Barry, you are enjoying your semi-retirement but we equally appreciate the input that you have made.

Mr BARRY BLENKHORN - We appreciate being able to talk freely and openly about these issues. We hope that some of the practical terms can be taken on board. That is the way to clean up a lot of things, I think.

CHAIR - Thanks for taking the time to be with us.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.