

**THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS MET IN  
COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, ON WEDNESDAY  
2 APRIL 2008.**

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**INQUIRY INTO TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS BY THE TASMANIAN  
GREENS**

**Ms REBEKAH BURTON**, DEPUTY SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET, **Mr JEFF REEVE**, DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET, **Mr PHIL FOULSTON**, DIRECTOR, EXECUTIVE DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET, AND **Ms MANDY SMITH**, COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Wilkinson) - Thank you very much for coming along. You are aware of the reason for your coming along to assist us in this inquiry. I ask you to speak to your paper, please.

**Ms BURTON** - By way of some opening remarks, in a strict sense ministerial and parliamentary officers are part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet but they do operate at arms length, especially the non-government officers, for obvious reasons. The funds for these officers come from the Consolidated Fund and so those officers have to operate in accordance with the usual Treasury rules - for example, the Treasurer's instructions, of which I think you have a list in the documentation we sent you.

Funding for the office of the Tasmanian Greens is provided from Ministerial and Parliamentary Support, which is part of the Consolidated Fund. It is provided as a global allocation and from within Ministerial and Parliamentary Support Output 1.2 in the budget papers, 'Support for Other Members of Parliament'. As agreed by the Premier, distribution of funding across budget categories is at the discretion of the Greens. In practice, this means that Premier and Cabinet is responsible for the administration of the funds provided to the office - that is, we process their accounts. Relevant staff in the Greens' office have been delegated responsibility for approving expenditure.

Going to the nub of the discussion today, the whole-of-government communications policy applies to all inner-budget government departments. Schedule 6 of our document, appendix A, lists the inner-budget agencies that the whole-of-government communications policy applies to. The communications policy is written from the perspective of the normal operations of government departments, from the perspective of normal departmental business rules.

Clearly, some aspects of this policy cannot sensibly be applied to non-government offices funded as ministerial and parliamentary support. To give you an example of that, there is a requirement on page 10 of the document, under 4.1.7, that the themes and messages of advertising must be consistent with government policy - I am sure the member on my left would not necessarily want that to apply to the operations of the

Liberal office - and they must reflect positively on the Tasmanian Government. We would not expect that the agency communications manager - in this case Premier and Cabinet - would approve the content of any advertising by parliamentary offices, as they would for a normal departmental business unit. There are some basic principles that apply, such as the principle that public funds not be used for political advertising. I draw your attention to page 13, under 4.1.7, and, as you can see, it explicitly states that public funds must not be used to purchase advertising in support of a political party. That paragraph applies.

In relation to the management and administration of the finances for these offices, we try to take a commonsense apolitical approach that recognises the rules that have to apply, but also acknowledges the special status of the offices in relation to the Government. I understand that Treasury will be coming to talk to you later in the week. The Treasury rules and relevant aspects of the communications policy would have been raised with relevant staff in parliamentary offices on various occasions. I think there is a bit of an exchange that highlights that in relation to the communications policy and e-mail exchange.

That I think gives a fairly broad-brush approach to the way that we in Premier and Cabinet deal with the parliamentary offices. I have in the back blocks Peter Wright, who is our finance manager, and Mandy Smith, our communications manager. We are happy to answer any of your questions in respect of the information we have provided or anything I have said.

**CHAIR** - It says here public funds must not be used to purchase advertising in support of a political party. It would seem to me that what that means is that you cannot use it for advertising to the benefit of that political party. Is that what it is saying?

**Ms BURTON** - Yes, that is certainly the -

**Mr FOULSTON** - We would not expect the funds to be used for Vote 1 Jim Wilkinson or Vote 1 Jeremy Rockliff or Vote 1 Heather Butler. You would not expect public funds to be used in such a purely political way as that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Is that where you draw the line? It is difficult because we obviously consult DPAC with respect to some material that we might put out from time to time. We are clearly advised that none of that material can, for want of a better word, bag the Government but we can inform our constituents, the electorates or Tasmanian people about what we are doing as a political party. The material also contains our logo. We always consult DPAC and make sure everything is ticked off and approved. I am assuming advertising is not a form of electronic material or mail-outs or whatever.

**Ms BURTON** - Yes.

**Mr REEVE** - I think there is a difference between promoting the policy of your party as opposed to promoting the members of your party and we do draw a line there.

**Mr STURGES** - Following that line of questioning, obviously 4.1.7 is a pertinent part of the communications policy. The way I read it -and I am only a novice - is that if I had the ALP logo on a message that I was sending out funded through this process then that

could be construed to be sending out a political message. I do acknowledge that the communications policy talks about agencies, departments and government but coming to point 4.1.7, it says to me that by virtue of putting a political logo on that message, regardless of what the message is, you are conveying to the recipient a political overture.

**Ms BURTON** - I will answer that from a different angle. One of the issues around Premier and Cabinet's role in this is that we do not provide advice on what is political and what is not political, we provide advice on the policy. One of the things that has had to happen as a consequence of dealing with a broad range of issues from contracts to finances is that delegations have been made in relation to employment and letting of contracts. Our perspective is that the delegations made to the parliamentary offices really puts the onus on the parliamentary offices to make that judgment call. I am not really answering your question, Mr Sturges -

**Mr STURGES** - But you are assisting.

**Ms BURTON** - We try to provide the information, but it is probably fair to say that if someone inquires about the processing of an account you are not getting someone who is aware of the full range of policy issues. I think this is probably quite different to the e-mail exchange that occurred in relation to this communications policy where the communications manager did draw this particular aspect - the perception I quoted - to the attention of the Greens. For the most part we assume that the delegated member will apply his or her judgment to any decision-making. I know I am not answering your question about the logo but you are not going to get a Premier and Cabinet person saying to a member of the Parliamentary Liberal Party or the Greens, 'That is political; we could not do that' because that is very much a judgment call.

**Mr STURGES** - It is helping because the terms of reference clearly stipulate that we need to have a look at the policy that applies to the use of public funds. The comment you made has been useful.

**Ms BURTON** - It is one of those issues that is very important to us because, as I mentioned at the start, there are obviously reasons why we cannot apply the strict crown Tasmanian Government issues to the parliamentary offices. It makes it a grey area. I need to put before the committee that in going through our processes and our policies there are grey areas.

**CHAIR** - You say it is a judgment call.

**Ms BURTON** - A judgment call for the delegated officers within that parliamentary office.

**CHAIR** - So they are the ones who make that call and be it on their head if they make it incorrectly.

**Ms BURTON** - You may say that, Chair. I do not know that I would necessarily use those words.

**CHAIR** - If I can cut to the chase to some degree, the whole-of-government communication policy that we have in front of us at page 36 talks about the policy applying to the following government departments and agencies. It does not apply to Parliament at all,

nor does it mention parties. It talks about DED, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, Department of Justice, Department of Police and Emergency Management, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Department of Primary Industries and Water, Department of Tourism, Arts and the Environment, Treasury and Finance, Inland Fisheries, Institute of TAFE, State Fire Commission and Tourism Tasmania.

**Ms BURTON** - What we call inner-budget agencies.

**CHAIR** - Are we therefore saying that this does not apply to the political parties; that this only applies to these agencies that are spoken about at page 36?

**Ms BURTON** - I think we are saying is that this is an aid to the judgment calls that need to be made by the delegates in the parliamentary offices. For example, in the case that we are discussing here there was e-mail advice provided by the then communications manager of Department of Premier and Cabinet, drawing the Greens' attention to that little quote that I gave in relation to political advertising. There was no judgment made; it was just a case of 'you really need to take this into consideration.' Now, your question is a different one, Chair, and that is, does it apply to those entities? Obviously, from the strict reading of the policy, no. But we would say that it is a useful document.

**Mr FOULSTON** - I might just clarify. Parliament itself is clearly not part of any of those agencies listed. So presumably the things that you get printed as parliamentary members through the Parliament has nothing to do with this. The issue here is that, in a strict reading of the Financial Management and Audit Act, the Department of Premier and Cabinet gets a series of funds to administer. Some of those funds happen to be the funds that go to the Liberal Opposition and the Tasmanian Greens. And that is where this greyness comes in, because clearly some of the -

**Mr STURGES** - Not greenness!

*Laughter.*

**Mr FOULSTON** - Some of the appropriate things in here that would apply to the normal business units of Department of Premier and Cabinet are clearly nonsensical if we suddenly turned around to these non-government offices and said they must comply 100 per cent with it. You cannot put the government logo on your advertising.

**Ms BURTON** - So under Department of Premier and Cabinet, Chair, that is the answer.

**CHAIR** - It would come in under Premier and Cabinet and the guidelines -

**Ms BURTON** - It is the Consolidated Fund source of funds badged 'Crown', but it is Liberal Opposition and Green Opposition.

**Mrs SMITH** - You have a document, the whole-of-government communications policy, and it is quite clear from your own words that there are grey areas in this. Has it ever been discussed that you have a whole-of-government communications policy for those listed in it and a separate policy that relates to the use of funds that are administered because they sit under Ministerial and Parliamentary Support in the Consolidated Fund - in other

words, a separate policy relating to the Greens, the Labor party and the Liberal Party? Labor members could get caught in this same grey area. I am differentiating them from government. So have there been any department discussions on a separate policy document?

**Ms BURTON** - Phil and I talked about this. Between us we have been around for a very long time and the answer to your question is no. It has not arisen in a way that has stimulated that discussion.

**Mrs SMITH** - Following from that, in your recollection have there been any issues in that grey area that have come from use by party members of these funds from the Consolidated Fund.

**Ms BURTON** - Not that I have dealt with. That is in 11 years.

**Mrs SMITH** - The other comment you make is that there is delegated responsibility to officers in particular offices. Is that a written delegation?

**Mr FOULSTON** - That is in this document.

**Mrs SMITH** - So you give them a written delegation and you give them a copy of the policy document. That is the entirety of the process or is there an educative discussion between your department and the delegated officer in the office of the Greens or the Labor Party or the Liberal Party, for instance?

**Mr REEVE** - It is pretty much the end of the process, but there is a lot of interaction between our finance branch and the offices of the Greens and the Opposition and the Government about the application of the Treasurer's instruction and policy.

**Mrs SMITH** - You are telling me that whilst you give them a written delegation of the policy, it is usually a staff member who has that delegation and will ring and say, 'I have a concern about this area; is this the appropriate path to take?' It is implemented from their point each time?

**Mr REEVE** - Yes, they seek advice from time to time with specific circumstances.

**Ms BURTON** - That is our understanding of the genesis of the e-mail exchange in the example we are talking about today. The issue was raised and the recommendation from Corporate Services was that you need to talk to the Communications Manager for advice on that matter.

**Mr STURGES** - Just taking that matter a little further then. what if advice is sought and the advice is ignored - and I will use the case under scrutiny at the moment? I am not suggesting that the advice has been ignored in this situation, by the way, so perhaps I had better not use this as an example. Hypothetically if the Liberal Opposition were given some advice in relation to a certain pamphlet they wanted to put out or some written or media production and they ignored that, but the delegated officer who had the authorisation to spend within the parameters of whatever that task is then authorised it and sent through the accounts and the necessary authorisation process to DPAC, would you then just automatically write the cheque?

**Ms BURTON** - To clarify, in the case of the parliamentary offices we would never see what they were planning to use as part of their advertising. So we would not see the television advertisement. We would not see the pamphlet. It goes back to the point I raised right at the beginning. We see ourselves as operating at arm's length and so we would pay the invoice. If advice of a general nature were provided, when the invoice came in we would pay it.

**Mr STURGES** - As long as the delegated officer had signed off authorising it?

**Ms BURTON** - Correct. As long as the process had been appropriately followed. Similarly, in discussions with Treasury on the Treasurer's instructions - and they are voluminous, complex and there are often discussions about them - our commentary would be very much about whether the letter of the process had been followed rather than the content.

**Mr STURGES** - This is really helping to deal with the terms of reference in understanding the policy and its application. Thank you for that.

**Mrs BUTLER** - When you said that arm's length has been taken, would you like to comment on the directions about ethical standards procurements in relation to them?

**Ms BURTON** - I am not sure. It is the Treasury document, I think. I am not trying to avoid your question, Mrs Butler, but it is not something that we are in a position to comment on. You have Treasury coming before you and that might be the appropriate area. They are very staunch guardians of their Treasurer's instructions, so far be it from me to say anything that might get me into trouble with them. I would rather be in trouble with Mr Dean than with the Treasury.

**Mrs BUTLER** - The separation of powers.

**CHAIR** - Did DPAC have anything to do with communications between the Greens and Government in relation to this money?

**Mr REEVE** - Yes, in terms of referring them to the communications policy.

**CHAIR** - I will just read you this and wonder if you could assist one way or another. The key requirement in this instance is that, providing it is under the cost of \$10 000, one quotation must be sought but if any items exceed \$10 000 then there is a requirement to obtain three quotes. We sourced and booked each item individually. The process was discussed with DPAC staff in assets and finance. Was that done?

**Mr REEVE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Can I have your evidence as to what you can recall in relation to that?

**Mr REEVE** - I was not personally involved with the process but there is a chain of e-mails to verify the conversations that occurred. I cannot really add anything to what is in those e-mails. There was an inquiry regarding the process and asset management directed them in accordance with the process as to what they needed to do.

**CHAIR** - Was that before the actual advertisement was paid for?

**Mr REEVE** - That's correct, yes.

**CHAIR** - The Greens therefore came to you and asked for advice in relation to the advertising that they were about to do on the pulp mill.

**Mr REEVE** - In regards to how to go about the actual process of procuring the advertisements, yes, but not the content and so forth; just about the process and how to get the advertisements to air.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There was no discussion about where the line should be drawn?

**Mr REEVE** - I don't believe so. No.

**Ms BURTON** - It would not have occurred at the level that the conversation was taking place because, as we discussed, that is very much a judgment call and we are talking about people who are processing invoices.

**CHAIR** - It goes on:

'...as these staff were unable to assist with the routine around advanced payments for TV advertising. One can request an advance payment, something we have never before encountered and, as we never actually handle the money, this required an advance to be paid by DPAC. We were referred to Ms Julie Pellas at DPAC communications.'

Is that correct?

**Mr REEVE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - It goes on:

'Ms Pellas advised that DPAC communications policy guidelines apply and e-mailed in relation to one specific aspect of such policy. This was the first time that we had heard of such guidelines.'

**Mr REEVE** - There are two different issues there. One is about advance payments and the other is about the communications policy.

We do advance payments if circumstances warrant it and the person who was providing that advice at the time needed to go away and seek the advice in relation to this particular advance payment.

The second issue is the communications policy and it is most likely the same person referred the inquirer to the communications policy at the same time.

**CHAIR** - What I am trying to establish is, was this the first time, as far as you are aware, that the Greens party was made aware of any communications policy, or are you aware of it being made known to them prior to this?

**Ms BURTON** - That is a very difficult question, Chair, because obviously it goes to our understanding of their understanding.

**CHAIR** - Not really, because if you are aware that you forwarded the communications policy to them at some earlier stage then that would be taken into account. Or, alternatively, if you were aware that you referred them to the guidelines, that is something you can say, because it is direct evidence.

**Mr FOULSTON** - Julie Pellas obviously had this exchange of e-mails and maybe had a conversation. I am not sure of the detail; she does not work for us any more so it is a bit hard to ascertain what other conversation she might have had. I am not aware that she had a previous conversation with the Greens about the communications policy per se. Mandy, who used to work with Julie, is also not aware, but I cannot guarantee that she did not communicate in some other way or they had some other exchange. The evidence to me is the same as the evidence to you, that probably this is an early indication that this is when they became aware, because the asset management people, in dealing with the order said, 'You better just check with Julie about the communications aspect and the communication policy'.

**Mr STURGES** - I come back to 4.1.7, the advertising principles within the government communications policy. Again, this is just for the record so that I can get your opinion. My calculations are that the Greens spent some \$18 000 on this particular advertisement; \$18 024.13, I think. In the advertising principles at 4.1.7 it talks about a process and procedure if you are dealing with a campaign valued below \$10 000, one valued above \$10 000, up to \$49 999 and then it goes on to \$50 000 to \$100 000. There are different processes that must be followed.

In my opinion, I see this as being one task. The \$18 000 is the cost of producing and marketing a particular communication process. What is your opinion in relation to the expenditure of some \$18 000 in this particular case where individual quotes and invoices were received and paid to television companies and also to a production company? I think, all up there was something like four separate invoices, but those four separate invoices ended up in fulfilling one task.

**Ms BURTON** - I understand exactly what you are getting at, Mr Sturges. I will get Mandy to answer in a generic sense about how the policy should apply. In this particular instance, that would not necessarily have been dealt with at officer level because, as we discussed earlier, there is not an understanding of what would constitute a campaign. I understand the direction you are leading to and I can see your point.

**Ms SMITH** - To answer your question, there is a section of the policy which specifies that the dollar value of advertising campaigns should be the full cost figure including creative services, production and distribution.

**Mr STURGES** - Can you refer me to that part?

**Ms SMITH** - That is on page 11. Generally, for a government campaign, it would be more common for us to use what we term a full-service agency to produce the ads and then take care of the media bookings. Whereas, in this case, that was done directly with the



television stations. That is quite different to how we would normally proceed. I think they are legitimate and then you are dealing with different contractors and outlets. If it was something that came under the policy, we would see it as feasible that you would not necessarily put those costs together in one job. Had it all been booked through one consultant or agency then, it would be a full cost figure. In this case it was not.

**Mr STURGES** - What you are referring to is the one production company producing and then booking all the media to go with it, whether it was newspaper or television advertising and sending one account. Okay, thank you.

**Ms BURTON** - There is an additional point that we probably need to make, Mr Sturges.

**Mr REEVE** - If I could refer you to the Treasury's buying for government web site. There is a common use contract for advertising which is integral communications and the process that the Greens went through was to use integral communications, a common use contract. In the web site it allows you to book your advertising direct with the TV stations. It is clearly on the web site. The Greens continued through the process and booked directly with the TV stations, but they initiated the process in the appropriate manner.

**Ms BURTON** - Perhaps we will leave that with you because it gives you the reference. It is a bit of a maze, navigating your way through this.

**CHAIR** - When you look on page 10 of your document, advertising and it talks about the principles and the policy requirements, it is not a good fit, is it, to opposition parties?

**Ms BURTON** - That is something I think we can probably all agree on, Chair.

**CHAIR** - Yes. Is it fair to say that it takes something like this to make things clearer? Would it be fair to say that there probably should be another policy provided which properly fits opposition parties in relation to this because it is just not a good fit? Agencies must ensure the themes and messages are consistent with government policy and the design and presentation reflect positively and professionally under Tasmanian Government. You are not going to get an opposition party, in all honesty, trying to do that. There has to be a better fit, I would have thought, through opposition parties.

**Mrs BUTLER** - Also no political content at the top of page 11.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Ms BURTON** - It is very difficult for me to answer a question that leads me to suggest what the Government should do, but I cannot disagree with the content of what you're saying, Chair. I think it is probably worth reiterating that Phil and I have been around a long time, and while we have not dealt with any issue quite like this, a commonsense approach has been applied over the years, and commonsense in the grey areas makes it a little bit problematic when you get to the nub of very difficult and complex issues, such as we are discussing.

**CHAIR** - When was the first time that this became an issue as far as DPAC were concerned? Was it immediately after the slot was on TV in relation to the pulp mill that alarm bells

started ringing in DPAC offices, or did anything happen? Can you give me some idea as to the history of what happened?

**Ms BURTON** - I would like to say that alarm bells were ringing in DPAC, but maybe there was some feedback and we were not hearing them! The issue was referred to us by the Premier.

**CHAIR** - Right. How long after?

**Ms BURTON** - It was months after. That period was a bit of a blur.

**CHAIR** - Sure. Would you be able to assist in relation to when it was referred to you?

**Ms BURTON** - The timing? Yes. Can we take that on notice, Chair?

**CHAIR** - Yes, please. In the interim, between the time it was referred to you and the time that it was aired on television, did the Greens get in contact with you at all to discuss the issue and say, 'You've probably seen what we've done and hopefully this is in accord with the communications policy', or something along those lines?

**Ms BURTON** - No. We have very cordial relations with the office of the Greens, but they did not ring us up to chat about that.

**CHAIR** - Are you able to say how many times contact was made with you prior to airing that?

**Mr FOULSTON** - About half a dozen. There would have been a number of occasions as the order process was being done, some e-mails are in here.

**Ms BURTON** - Some are just a phone call. There was an initial phone call, I think, with Peter's offsider in relation to getting some advice about placing TV advertisements. That would have been low-level discussion about what they might want to do, and the process.

**CHAIR** - Right. So the main advice that was required and that was requested was in relation to the payment of the - we will call it an advertisement - as opposed to the content of the advertisement.

**Mr REEVE** - Correct.

**CHAIR** - Was there any information sought at all in relation to the content of the advertisement?

**Mr REEVE** - Not from the finance area.

**Ms BURTON** - No. I just do not think that any discussion at a finance processing area level would have gone into that space, but we know that the lady who works with Peter suggested, 'Maybe you should talk to Julie Pellas if you are considering doing this, so here's the advice on the process you need to go through, the Treasurer's instruction, the common use contract. But if you need some more information, and I am trying to be

helpful, why don't you talk to Julie Pellas'. That then instigated the e-mail exchange. That was basically over the course of the couple of days before the advertisements were placed, I think around 20, 21 and 22 August.

**CHAIR** - And that's when contact was made with Julie Pellas.

**Ms BURTON** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Right.

**Mrs BUTLER** - Can I suggest we copy that chronology? It might be helpful in our deliberations.

**CHAIR** - Are you able to supply that with relative ease?

**Mr FOULSTON** - Yes, we can.

**CHAIR** - Sue's burners are starting to be ignited.

**Ms BURTON** - We will get a copy to you.

**Mrs SMITH** - I want to refer you back to some comments you made earlier. Virtually you allocate the funds and you pay the bills when they come in. How do you reconcile that with your responsibility as a department to balance the books appropriately at the end of the financial year ready for a potential audit from an auditor-general or a budget discussion around the parliament tables - 'We do not have an opinion, we just pay what comes in'?

**Ms BURTON** - One answer to your question is that we do have audits of our accounts so it is open to the auditing process. That answers that question about openness and transparency to the auditing process, which does occur. In relation to the allocation of funds and the provision of a global budget, that is the approach that is taken and obviously that fits with our financial accountability because that balances the books, so to speak, even though we do not go down to the detail.

**Mr REEVE** - Then we only pay up until the funds are expended; so if the funds are expended we will not pay.

**Ms BURTON** - Yes.

**Mrs SMITH** - So you are telling me that you are responsible for the financial auditing only - that is where it starts and stops.

**Mr REEVE** - The financial processing only, not the auditing.

**Mrs SMITH** - Thank you. If this is outside your bailiwick I totally understand, but it appears to me that as I listen there are two options to ensure that into the future there is some significant clarification - and we can see why there has not been any need in the past because there quite clearly have been no circumstances. The two options to me appear to be a new policy document specifically for parties involved in the process or a separate

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS, INQUIRY INTO TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS BY THE TASMANIAN GREENS, HOBART 2/4/08 (BURTON/REEVE/FOULSTON/SMITH)**

appropriation. To me, the latter sounds as if you would have to have some policy written around a separate appropriation anyway and that actually removes it from output 1.2 - Ministerial and Parliamentary Support.

Would you like to make a comment about either a new policy document within your department or some form of separate appropriation with different rules and different accountabilities?

**Ms BURTON** - It is hard for us to comment on your hypothetical approaches. Phil, do you want to make a comment?

**Mr FOULSTON** - We could say that, whether they are total solutions, both of those things are certainly worth considering because clearly, as we have all said, there are grey areas. As Rebekah has already said, I do not think that we can say one of those is better or not better or that there is a third option. Certainly it is not inappropriate to consider options like that. I think the way some of this might be handled in other States might well be different from the way that we would handle it.

**Ms BURTON** - That is something we have not looked at - what happens in other States.

**Mr FOULSTON** - I would just say, though, that giving the Greens another appropriation still under the Consolidated Fund would not be a -

**Ms BURTON** - Because it is the Crown umbrella, that is the problem. They are part of the Crown as is the Liberal Opposition. So you still have that basic dilemma - the Crown but not the Crown.

**Mr STURGES** - At the risk of digressing from these terms of reference, I would see this as looking at policy overall. The allocation of funding for electorate offices and the signage around electorate offices could be deemed to be part of communication depending on what that signage is.

**Ms BURTON** - We probably would not want to comment!

*Laughter.*

**CHAIR** - Are you aware of what occurs in New Zealand in relation to it?

**Ms BURTON** - Could not see anything from the Milford track, Mr Chairman - nothing at all.

*Laughter.*

**CHAIR** - I know that it says on page 48 of the document that we have before us - *Government and Parliamentary Publicity in Advertising* - that complementary rules and standards should apply. It says that separate rules and standards should apply to ministerial, parliamentary and State sector publicity, including government departments and crown entities. It would seem on the face of it that they should be -

**Ms BURTON** - I think that consideration should be given to it.

**CHAIR** - Yes. It is an interesting document. If there are no further questions for Jeff, Rebekah or Phil, I thank them very much for coming along and giving us their advice.

**Ms BURTON** - It was much less painful than I thought anyway. Thank you very much.

**Mr STURGES** - Interesting exchange. Obviously there are some questions we have not asked that you thought we would ask. What are they?

*Laughter.*

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**