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TRANSCRIPT OF MORNING PROCEEDINGS

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INDEPENDENT BROAD-BASED ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION

MELBOURNE

THURSDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2019

(8th day of examinations)

BEFORE THE HONOURABLE ROBERT REDLICH QC

Counsel Assisting: Mr Michael Tovey QC  
Ms Amber Harris

OPERATION SANDON INVESTIGATION

PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS PURSUANT TO PART 6 OF THE INDEPENDENT BROAD-BASED ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION ACT 2011

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*Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of transcripts. Any inaccuracies will be corrected as soon as possible.*

1 COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Tovey.

2 MR TOVEY: Thank you, Mr Commissioner.

3 <LORRAINE JOAN WREFORD, recalled:

4 MR TOVEY: Could I take the witness back, please, to - could we  
5 bring up, Mr Commissioner, page 3845. That's been given  
6 an exhibit number. We are just determining what exhibit  
7 number it has been given.

8 COMMISSIONER: That's the budget, is it? The final budget or  
9 the initial budget estimate?

10 MR TOVEY: This is another document. In fact I'm told that  
11 it's 3925 was exhibit 65, Mr Commissioner.

12 COMMISSIONER: Yes, thank you.

13 MR TOVEY: Just looking through that, if you would go halfway  
14 down you have got "delivery of 15,000 brochures by Salmat  
15 for MG". Who is MG?---I actually can't remember, and I'm  
16 not trying to - sorry, I'm trying to help, but I can't  
17 remember who - - -

18 Okay. Well, these were candidates, many of whom would not have  
19 been elected, in any event, I take it?---Yes, I suspect  
20 so. Remember, I haven't seen this document since - for  
21 three years.

22 Just before I go on would you excuse me for one second. Then  
23 if you go down it's "all except MM and MG". Do you know  
24 who MM was?---I think MM was Mick Morland.

25 Right. If we just keep on going down, "pamphlets for SA".

26 That's Sam Aziz, even though you say he repaid; is that  
27 right?---That's my understanding.

28 Yes. And then LB?---I can't remember, but I'm sure there's a  
29 list of the candidates somewhere. I just don't have it

1 and I haven't seen it for three years.  
2 I think there is - you are right, there is a list of  
3 candidates?---I'm sorry.  
4 There's a handwritten list where you have done ratings on  
5 various people and - - -?---I think it will be  
6 in - I think it will be in the list.  
7 All right. Perhaps we'll just go through here and work out who  
8 you know?---Yes.  
9 Because we can only do one document at a time, unfortunately.  
10 So we've got - so the ones we don't know are MG, LB. AS  
11 is Amanda Stapledon?---Correct.  
12 RW. Do you know who RW is?---Rob Ward.  
13 GA?---Geoff Ablett.  
14 Then WS and DR?---Wayne Smith and Damien Rosario, I think.  
15 And going through and just looking to see whether there are any  
16 other - if we could just go back up, please, to see  
17 whether there are any other initials. So I think that  
18 covers the totality of the initials there. Could we go  
19 over the page, please?---I'm sure they can be matched to  
20 that other list that you have.  
21 Yes. Could we keep on going, please. And again.  
22 COMMISSIONER: We are now into exhibit - sorry, go  
23 back?---Okay. Louise Belmans would be LB.  
24 Every councillor, after elected, would be obliged to disclose  
25 these contributions once they are over the threshold of a  
26 gift under the Act?---Correct.  
27 Which was, what, \$500 then?---I'm not sure. My understanding  
28 was a thousand when I was in, but it may have changed.  
29 But I don't think it was just the obligation of people who

1 got elected. I think it was the obligation of  
2 people - - -  
3 Everyone?---Yes, who didn't get elected as well, to at least  
4 make some comment in the donations register.  
5 MR TOVEY: Could you have a look at 3719, which is exhibit 16.  
6 Now, do you recognise that document?---I do, three years  
7 on.  
8 And that's a document which is headed "Casey City Council 2016  
9 nominations"?---Correct.  
10 And that's a document, is it, which allocates various tasks to  
11 part of the Woodman team in respect of council  
12 candidates?---I don't know if it was so much  
13 the - I believe, sorry, my understanding - - -  
14 Sorry, when I'm talking about the "Woodman team", I'm talking  
15 about you, Tom, Lorraine, Phil Staindl being given various  
16 tasks in respect of candidates?---Yes. Yes, I think  
17 that's right, but I can't remember actioning any of it.  
18 You have seen this list, have you?---I have seen the list.  
19 Yes?---I think that was sent to me from Mr Woodman, I think,  
20 from memory.  
21 So the only - I'm just trying to look at the missing  
22 initials?---Yes.  
23 Anyway, the missing initials would relate to - sorry, the  
24 initials we haven't been able to attribute names to - -  
25 -?---Yes.  
26 Would appear from that list, I take it?---I believe so, and if  
27 I saw the right people I might be able to confirm which  
28 ones they are.  
29 All right. Look, I think rather than spend time now - - -

1 COMMISSIONER: Mr Tovey, you said exhibit 16. I don't think  
2 that's correct. Exhibit 16 was an email - - -  
3 MR TOVEY: That was attached to the email, I'm told,  
4 Mr Commissioner.  
5 COMMISSIONER: An email containing this document - - -  
6 MR TOVEY: Yes.  
7 COMMISSIONER: Between Mr Woodman, Kenessey and Staindl? Yes,  
8 you may be right. 3718 was the email, and this was an  
9 annexure to it, was it?  
10 MR TOVEY: Yes.  
11 COMMISSIONER: Thank you?---Yes, that looks right.  
12 MR TOVEY: Could you have a look, please, at 3929?---Yes.  
13 If you look at that document, is that a ledger of income and  
14 expenditure in respect of the 2016 council  
15 election?---I think so, but I actually can't remember that  
16 document. I don't really - it probably is.  
17 That, I'm instructed, is a document that was procured when the  
18 search warrant was executed at your home?---Yes. I don't  
19 recall the document.  
20 Anyway, you'd agree that that is a document which formed part  
21 of the documents that you had?---Yes.  
22 And, again, you see the total expenditure of 98,500?---Yes.  
23 And you see there The Mattress Shop being identified?---Yes.  
24 What contribution did The Mattress Shop make, are you able to  
25 say?---What contribution?  
26 Yes. I mean, did you have any dealings with The Mattress Shop  
27 yourself?---I don't believe so.  
28 Now, what was your role? You paid - - -?---No, I didn't pay  
29 anything. I - well, actually, I'm not quite sure if

1           that's exactly the way it went.

2 Did you certify for payment - - -?---I sort of was ticking off

3           what was getting paid along the way.

4 Yes, and having ticked it off where would you send it?---To

5           Spicer.

6 To?---What do you mean "tick it off"?

7 So here we are, we have the various companies which have been

8           paid amounts during that campaign, or when I say the

9           various companies, the various entities?---Yes.

10          I actually don't really understand this document - I don't

11          recall what this document is about. But, yes.

12 COMMISSIONER: You will recall that the figure at the bottom,

13          98,000 - - -?---Yes.

14 Corresponds to the final budget figure - - -?---Yes.

15 Exhibit 66, that you were shown?---Sure. Yes, no, I understand

16          that, yes.

17 MR TOVEY: So The Mattress Shop. Do you know anything about

18          the Mattress Shop?---The Mattress Shop is - I do know that

19          it is a business in Chelsea.

20 And do you know who owned that business?---The business is

21          owned by Robert Halsell, I think, is to my knowledge.

22 And who is Robert Halsell?---He's the son of Bob Halsell.

23 Yes, and do they have any - so what was their role in respect

24          of the activities that you were involved in?---In this,

25          well, I think Bob and his wife were acting as campaign

26          managers for the 2016 campaign.

27 When you say for the 2016 campaign - - -?---Is that right?

28          This campaign.

29 Is this the campaign which we have already discussed whereby a

1 group of candidates and councillors have been identified -  
2 - -?---Correct. Correct. That's exactly the same.

3 As people who would be supported as a bloc - sorry, as a bloc -  
4 when I say "as a bloc", these were people who were being  
5 supported - - -?---Correct.

6 As a group?---Correct.

7 To use a more neutral term, but the idea was that it wouldn't  
8 come out that that was going to be the case?---That's  
9 correct. So the only person I think who knew in the group  
10 of councillors would have been Sam Aziz.

11 And what about Mr Ablett?---If he knew, I didn't discuss it  
12 with him. So, if he knew, he knew through other means.

13 COMMISSIONER: Does that mean, Ms Wreford, that all of those  
14 aspiring councillors who participated in this process knew  
15 that they were following a process that would avoid their  
16 obligations under the Act?---Potentially, yes, but I'm not  
17 sure that - I don't know how it was explained to them  
18 because I didn't explain it to them. The only person  
19 I had dealings with during that process was Councillor  
20 Aziz. So how he explained it to the group I've got no  
21 idea. So potentially, yes, but I still would have  
22 expected - from my perspective, I still would have  
23 expected those councillors who received funding to either  
24 make enquiries or put in the register that they received  
25 funds but they are unsure who the benefactor was.  
26 I couldn't see why they wouldn't do that, and that was my  
27 thoughts at the time.

28 MR TOVEY: Getting back to Mr and Mrs Halsell, you say they  
29 were campaign managers. What was it about them that made

1           them appropriate to be appointed as campaign managers in  
2           respect of the 2016 council exercise?---Both of them,  
3           I think separately, had been on council, the City of  
4           Casey, so they understood the process, is my - that's my  
5           understanding.

6   Did they have any ongoing party associations or  
7           affiliations?---I don't believe either of them are any  
8           longer in a political party. Originally they used to  
9           be in - they were both strong Labor Party members.

10   And were they involved in political activity in terms of  
11           fundraising, those sorts of activities?---I'm unsure. I'm  
12           unsure of exactly what you mean by that question apart  
13           from what's in front of us.

14   Had you dealt with them other than in respect of the 2016  
15           election as part of your consultancy or as a part of your  
16           consultancy with Mr Woodman?---I don't believe so, but  
17           I'm - as part of my - I can't recall being asked by  
18           Mr Woodman to go and see them, because they are not - when  
19           I was working for Mr Woodman neither of them were elected.

20   Are you aware of whether they had any association with Sam  
21           Aziz?---Well, my understanding is Sam Aziz, or Councillor  
22           Aziz, asked them to run the campaign. So, yes, they must  
23           have. And I think - I think Bob Halsell was - I think he  
24           got elected to parliament - I'm sorry, to council on a  
25           countback when I resigned and went to State parliament.  
26           So he'd previously run for many council elections.

27   To which council?---City of Casey. I think that's what  
28           happened. At that point in time, sorry, because I got  
29           elected to State parliament my focus completely changed.

1 Did the Halsells have any association with Spicer  
2 Thoroughbreds, to your knowledge?---No.  
3 Could the witness be shown 3879. This is another document  
4 found in the course of the execution of a warrant on your  
5 home?---Yes.  
6 So that's September '16, which would have been immediately  
7 before the council elections, I take it?---Yes.  
8 And there's an invoice from The Mattress Shop to Spicer  
9 Thoroughbreds?---Yes.  
10 For various items adding up to precisely \$4,000?---Yes.  
11 Now, that was found, as I understand it, amongst documents  
12 relating to the 2016 election?---Yes.  
13 On the face of it, it refers to astro ends, Miami mats and  
14 headboard. Do you know anything about any of those  
15 things?---No.  
16 Did you pay that account?---I didn't personally pay it. I just  
17 think it probably went as a batch, as part - - -  
18 The fact that that was found amongst the 2016 council documents  
19 would indicate, would it not, that the \$4,000 - -  
20 -?---Yes.  
21 Was in fact not for what's listed there but in fact is designed  
22 to cover another payment which was related to the  
23 election?---I would agree with you.  
24 Do you remember anything in respect of that?---I think, from  
25 memory - I mean, this all happened - I just want to  
26 reiterate this happened three years ago and I'd packed it  
27 up and forgot about it. But I think that related  
28 to - I think that related to something to do with their  
29 role as campaign manager.

1 All right. So you had an undisclosed and covert operation in  
2 respect of the financing of the candidacy of the  
3 candidates we have spoken about; that's the truth, is it  
4 not?---It was definitely designed that the candidates  
5 didn't know where the money was coming from; correct.

6 And nobody else knew that the Woodmans were financing - -  
7 -?---Apart from Councillor Aziz.

8 Yes, all right. So it was covert? The operation was a covert  
9 operation, wasn't it?---Yes, I think I explained that  
10 yesterday and how that came about.

11 And within that operation there were false invoices issued, or  
12 at least one false invoice issued, to provide another  
13 level of non-disclosure of the roles of various  
14 people?---That looks like - that looks like you are  
15 correct.

16 COMMISSIONER: Was that a common occurrence, that persons stood  
17 for council election and didn't know who had been  
18 performing or discharging the services such as those  
19 listed in the budget?---In my experience, no, I've never  
20 come across it before. I've never come across an  
21 operation like this. I was - like I said to you in the  
22 beginning, I was a bit surprised that the proposal was put  
23 forward. I was a bit surprised that - - -

24 But it was implemented?---That it was implemented, yes, I was -  
25 - -

26 It was implemented, which means if you're correct that every  
27 one of these candidates didn't bother to ask anyone - -  
28 -?---Correct.

29 Who was financing that part of their campaign?---Correct.

1 That's quite remarkable, isn't it?---It is. And if they did  
2 ask and found out they still didn't declare. So I am a  
3 bit surprised. Well, a lot surprised.

4 MR TOVEY: And can we have a look, please, at 3846.

5 COMMISSIONER: Before you do that, Mr Tovey, I'll mark as  
6 exhibit 70 the ledger of income and expenditure in  
7 relation to the 2016 campaign.

8 #EXHIBIT 70 - Ledger of income and expenditure in relation to  
9 the 2016 campaign.

10 COMMISSIONER: And exhibit 71, the invoice from The Mattress  
11 Shop to Spicer Thoroughbreds dated 8 September 2016.

12 #EXHIBIT 71 - Invoice from The Mattress Shop to Spicer  
13 Thoroughbreds dated 8 September 2016.

14 MR TOVEY: Looking at 3846, that was another document found  
15 amongst the 2016 documents, and is that a list indicating  
16 the nature of the resources provided for each of the  
17 candidates listed in the - - -?---I believe so. I didn't  
18 provide the list, but I believe that's what it is.

19 Where did the list come from?---It came from the Halsells.

20 Sorry, some of the initials that you were looking for  
21 before I think relate to some of these people.

22 Now, can you just run through and tell us who those people  
23 are?---Geoff Ablett, Wayne Smith, Damien Rosario, Sam  
24 Aziz, Louise Barm- - I've forgotten her surname. Barmis,  
25 is it? Shah Barms, who was a former councillor who didn't  
26 get elected. Misha, I'm not sure who that is. Amanda  
27 Stapledon, Rob Ward and Mick Morland.

28 COMMISSIONER: During the period that you were a councillor at  
29 Casey - - -?---Yes.

1 How often were you aware that there was an audit conducted by  
2 either the local government inspector or the local  
3 government department to ensure that the obligations under  
4 the Local Government Act were being complied  
5 with?---I can't remember them ever being an audit.  
6 I suspect there were in the eight years I was there, but  
7 it wasn't something that I thought was common occurrence  
8 unless there were some - someone raised some questions.  
9 But it would seem to me that it would be a good idea that  
10 there are more audits.

11 MR TOVEY: Now, looking at those people, might Misha be Milla,  
12 Milla Gilic?---I can't answer that. It could have been.  
13 I don't know.

14 All right. So, of those people, who got on?---Wayne Smith,  
15 Geoff Ablett, Damien Rosario, Sam Aziz, Amanda Stapledon  
16 and Mick Morland, yes, from memory.

17 So, just getting back to the process that you were involved in,  
18 you would get accounts, would you? This is the ticking  
19 off process that you described. Can you just explain in  
20 terms of the - just explain the mechanics of that?---I was  
21 just making sure the bills got paid. It was like being a  
22 secretary or, you know, just going, "Yes, that gets paid,"  
23 and I just - at the end of it I just wanted to make sure  
24 everything was paid. That was what I was doing.

25 Were you involved in ascertaining that the payments were proper  
26 and justified?---I don't think so. I don't know what you  
27 mean by "proper and" - - -

28 Normally when we are ticking off, we might go through our  
29 credit card account and check off payments against bills

1 and say, "Okay, well, that's legitimate." Were you  
2 involved in that process, or were you just a funnel  
3 whereby you would send these things on to - - -?---I was  
4 more of a funnel.

5 COMMISSIONER: I take it for you to be a funnel you had to have  
6 authorisation from Mr Woodman or someone else from his  
7 company, from Watsons, that you were to perform this  
8 task?---Yes. Once again, it didn't seem that there was a  
9 lot of authorisation in terms of the amounts. It just  
10 seemed to be a bit of a bottomless pit.

11 Yes, but was it clear to you that there was some arrangement  
12 that had been reached between Mr Woodman and Mr Aziz - -  
13 - ?---Yes.

14 That these funds should be paid?---Yes.

15 So you were doing as you were directed?---Correct. I was doing  
16 exactly as I was directed.

17 MR TOVEY: Thank you. Could you have a look at financial book  
18 1, page 64, please.

19 COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 72 will be the candidate resources for  
20 the 2016 campaign.

21 #EXHIBIT 72 - Candidate resources for the 2016 campaign.

22 MR TOVEY: This is a document of 13 September of 2016. Will  
23 you just go down there. Now, on that day Swan Bay Project  
24 Management Pty Ltd paid \$5,000 to Mr Ablett. Now, could  
25 you look at page 3925, and this is a document found on the  
26 execution of the warrant on you.

27 COMMISSIONER: That's exhibit 65, Mr Tovey.

28 MR TOVEY: That's exhibit 65. I'll have to check on that. I'm  
29 not sure that the number that I have recorded is the right

1 number, Mr Chairman. I will move on to something else, if  
2 I could, thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER: Do you want that bank statement to be marked as  
4 an exhibit?

5 MR TOVEY: I don't, no.

6 COMMISSIONER: Very good.

7 MR TOVEY: My notes were there was a correspondence between  
8 documents, which doesn't appear from - - -

9 COMMISSIONER: Very good.

10 MR TOVEY: Analysis. I now want to take you to what was going  
11 on in May 2017. Now, as of May 2017, before I take you to  
12 individual documents, for how long had you been working  
13 for Mr Woodman?---I think it was since March 2015, is my  
14 recollection.

15 So at this stage, this is as of 8 May - sorry, as of May 2017 -  
16 - -?---Yes.

17 You had been in his employ for, what, about two years?---Yes.

18 When you say "employ", it was a very part-time position.

19 It's not like I was working full time. I just wanted to  
20 clarify that.

21 How were you being reimbursed?---I was putting in invoices.

22 Were you being paid in cash or were you being paid - - -?---No,

23 I was being paid through the company.

24 How much were you being paid over the period that we are  
25 dealing with; that is, from 2015 through to 2019?---It's -  
26 the three different - so I started off - first of all  
27 I was approached by Mr Woodman. He said \$2,500 a month  
28 plus GST, so that was okay. At some stage - it might have  
29 been a year or so down the track - he put it up to \$3,500

1 plus GST, and eventually it moved to \$5,000 a month plus  
2 GST.

3 So during that time, from the time that you first started, were  
4 you dealing with Mr Aziz?---On and off, yes.

5 And what were the nature of those dealings?

6 COMMISSIONER: Sorry, what period are we speaking about?

7 MR TOVEY: This is the period 2015 to 2017.

8 COMMISSIONER: Yes?---If there was something coming up at Casey  
9 Council that had interest to Mr Woodman, I would go and  
10 have a discussion with him about it.

11 MR TOVEY: And during that period of time was Mr Aziz committed  
12 to assisting Mr Woodman when it came to council  
13 motions?---I believe so.

14 His reaction was a reaction where invariably he would  
15 cooperate?---He would definitely cooperate, and my feeling  
16 about that is Councillor Aziz - and this is in  
17 hindsight - had an absolute ulterior motive, and it was to  
18 line his open pockets.

19 Yes, and so - - -?---But - sorry - at that point in time  
20 I still hadn't come to that conclusion.

21 But during that period of time he was nevertheless, to your  
22 knowledge, receiving cash payments, even though it wasn't  
23 structured?---Sorry, he wasn't, did you say?

24 No, during the period from 2015 to 2017 was it the case that he  
25 was receiving cash payments but it wasn't structured like  
26 it came to be?---I have no knowledge of any - sorry, what  
27 cash payments are we talking about?

28 COMMISSIONER: Any. Any cash payments?---Okay, yes, sorry,  
29 2015 to 2017, I can't remember when was the suitcase,

1 because that's when it started.

2 MR TOVEY: So before 2017 you have told us that Mr Aziz was  
3 greedy and rapacious or words to that effect?---That got  
4 more after 2017 that I saw.

5 I want to know about his greed and rapacity or, sorry, his  
6 greed and rapaciousness before 2017. What can you tell us  
7 about that?---I didn't see it as much before 2017.

8 I think it all started - from my understanding, and unless  
9 you have something specific you want to show me, I can't -  
10 it's very hard for me to assist you because my  
11 recollection is that the greed really started to show up  
12 after the suitcase incident, so - and I think that  
13 happened in 2017. Before that I don't think I was aware  
14 or noticed it, and that's my recollection.

15 When that occurred did you reflect back and did that assist you  
16 to understand Mr Aziz's keenness to assist in respect of  
17 Mr Woodman's interests?---In reflection, absolutely.

18 Absolutely.

19 Was it the case that up until then you had suspected that there  
20 was at least, to use a neutral term, a special  
21 relationship between Mr Aziz and Mr Woodman?---I think  
22 Mr Aziz thought there was. I'm not sure that Mr Woodman  
23 did. But that was my feeling at the time.

24 So when you say Mr Aziz gave the impression that he thought  
25 that was the case - - -?---Yes.

26 Are you saying that Mr Aziz behaved in a way where he gave the  
27 impression that he wanted to assist Mr Woodman in whatever  
28 way he could in respect of council business?---Yes,  
29 definitely.

1 COMMISSIONER: Can you just tell us, Ms Wreford, without  
2 reference to any particular planning issue how the  
3 conversations in the broad went when during the period  
4 2015 to 2017 you were conveying to Mr Aziz that there was  
5 a council issue where you wanted his support? How did  
6 those conversations go?---In a general sense it was just  
7 the facts. So this is the planning - this is what the  
8 council officers have proposed, or if they had proposed or  
9 maybe they hadn't proposed it at that point in time.  
10 Yes?---This is the way that I saw it or it could have been from  
11 Ms Schutz or Mr Woodman, because usually I was briefed by  
12 often Ms Schutz on a planning issue and I would just  
13 convey that.  
14 What were you actually conveying to him?---I was conveying,  
15 "This is what the officers think," or it may or may not  
16 have been, or, "This may come up and this is what Watsons  
17 or associated entities might like it to look like," in  
18 general terms.  
19 Don't let me put words in your mouth - - -?---No.  
20 But were you telling Mr Aziz what Mr Woodman or Ms Schutz or  
21 Watsons wanted him to do?---I was telling him what I had  
22 been briefed on. But at the end of the day I never told  
23 him how to vote because that is completely up to him.  
24 What words he uses, completely up to him. How he - if he  
25 wants to support it; if he doesn't want to support it. If  
26 anybody wants to support something, my job, as I saw it,  
27 was to put the facts out there. Can't make anyone vote in  
28 any particular way, and nor was I - there was no pressure  
29 from me. It was just about these are the facts from

1 I guess the Watsons' perspective.

2 These are the facts?---From the Watsons' - - -

3 Then, what, the conversations only implied what it is that you

4 were hoping Mr Aziz would do?---Always. From my

5 perspective, always.

6 You weren't conveying to him - - -?---That he had to vote, no.

7 No, you weren't conveying to him the course that they wanted

8 him to follow?---That was probably unsaid, in my

9 recollection, because I'd been elected and I know that

10 nobody can make me say or do anything that I didn't want

11 to do. And when I was in local government I met with many

12 developers and they all put their ideas to me because, you

13 know, we are in a growth city, and I never - I've never

14 voted on something that I actually didn't believe in. So

15 when I had been talking to Mr Aziz I actually wasn't

16 talking to him about something I didn't agree with. In

17 fact, I did agree with the point of view I was putting

18 out. But it didn't mean that he agreed with it. It was

19 his choice, always.

20 No, but, as I follow your evidence, you have said that Mr Aziz

21 made clear to you that he was wanting to cooperate or

22 assist - - -?---That became evident over time, yes. Was

23 it evident in the beginning? I didn't see it as that - as

24 black and white as you are seeing it now, and maybe how

25 I'm seeing it now in reflection.

26 Yes. That's part of the lobbyist or political adviser's

27 function that you were performing; is that how you saw

28 it?---Correct. Correct.

29 MR TOVEY: Looking back on it now, in that early time before

1           you became aware of a financial relationship between  
2           Mr Aziz and Mr Woodman was there any occasion on which  
3           Mr Aziz didn't do what was expected?

4   COMMISSIONER: Well, Mr Tovey, as I follow the witness, she's  
5           making the point that she did not convey to Mr Aziz what  
6           was expected.

7   MR TOVEY: Well, what was hoped - - -

8   COMMISSIONER: Or hoped.

9   MR TOVEY: Yes. Was there any time when - - -?---Well, I tried  
10           to convey - - -

11   Sorry, the reason that you put this material to him was in the  
12           hope that he would support?---Correct.

13   Was there any occasion that you can think of where he didn't  
14           support? This is before he threatened to turn his vote  
15           around on the H3 when he was being denied money? Was  
16           there any other occasion on which he wasn't totally  
17           supportive?---I can't recall that. I can't recall an  
18           occasion. But it doesn't mean it didn't happen.

19   COMMISSIONER: So how did the process become determined that  
20           you should - which councillors you should go to? Was  
21           Mr Aziz a Liberal - was he viewed as a Liberal, so that  
22           you had the connection to him, or was there some other  
23           reason why he was selected?---I think it was because, if  
24           you look at my history, I was ward partner with him for  
25           two years. So when you are a ward partner and you are  
26           working with someone you have a relationship, and, as  
27           I said to you yesterday, that in the time that we worked  
28           on council together he was articulate, smart, came  
29           across - sorry, I didn't see any evidence of what I was

1 later to see down the track. So I'm coming from a place  
2 of thinking that this guy's actually doing the right thing  
3 by the community, and it didn't occur to me in those early  
4 dealings that he had any other motivation. That's clearly  
5 evident as time went on and especially in hindsight.

6 MR TOVEY: So on 8 May of 2017 you messaged on WhatsApp with  
7 Mr Woodman in respect of the document that was going to  
8 record or the documents that were going to record the  
9 \$600,000 transaction. I will just take you to page 4003.  
10 Could we go down, please. So you see there on the - -  
11 -?---Yes.

12 On 8 May, "Lorraine document ready to go to Sam this morning.  
13 This delivery at 11 am. If you can find out where Sam  
14 will be, Abdul will deliver"?---Yes.

15 "PS how did yesterday go? I assume not good as I've heard  
16 nothing." Now, what was that message about?---I actually  
17 don't know what the document was. Maybe - I would guess,  
18 looking at this, back in 2017 maybe it was a loan  
19 document, I'm not sure, between Mr Aziz and Mr Woodman.  
20 That would be my guess, but I could be wrong. "PS how did  
21 yesterday go?". I'm not sure - I can't remember what  
22 "yesterday" was, sorry.

23 Could we just go down, please. So you say, "Yeah, you're  
24 right, I'll confirm and get back to you"?---Yes.

25   
26 What's that?---That was where Mr Aziz lived at the time.

27 And then further down, "Darling, Sam mobile for Abdul just in  
28 case no-one home"?---Yes.

29 And then later on you send a number?---Yes, that's Councillor

1 Aziz's, I assume. Yeah, I'm pretty sure.  
2 He says, "Thanks, Lorraine"?---Yes.  
3 And then if we just go down further, a little bit later on you  
4 are still communicating?---Yes. I suspect I was away at  
5 the time, just looking at the dates. I may have been away  
6 travelling. That may be - maybe I just got back. I'm not  
7 100 per cent sure.  
8 But, in any event, he is on 8 May indicating that the document  
9 is ready to go?---I think that was - my best guess is  
10 that - - -  
11 I can tell you that that's the day before Lockdee, the lending  
12 entity in respect of the 600,000, was registered?---Sorry,  
13 that was the day before?  
14 Lockdee was registered and two days before the 600,000 - -  
15 -?---What's Lockdee?  
16 Lockdee was the entity which allegedly lent - sorry, which  
17 allegedly - - -  
18 COMMISSIONER: Received.  
19 MR TOVEY: Was borrowing the \$600,000?---Oh, okay. Okay, so -  
20 yeah.  
21 I'd suggest to you - look, it's - in context, it's quite  
22 apparent that the agreement that you are talking about  
23 once you go through it was in fact that agreement?---I'll  
24 just make it clear I have never seen the loan agreement,  
25 but I have heard from both parties there was a loan  
26 agreement.  
27 All right. Could you look, please, at the next day, which is  
28 4005?  
29 COMMISSIONER: I'll make the WhatsApp communications between

1 Mr Woodman and Ms Wreford of 8 to 9 May exhibit 73.

2 #EXHIBIT 73 - WhatsApp communications between Mr Woodman and  
3 Ms Wreford of 8 to 9 May 2017.

4 MR TOVEY: You are there indicating the legal entity as lender  
5 is Sam Aziz; is that right?---Yes.

6 And that's what you have sent off to Mr Woodman?---Yes.

7 You have indicated that he "can meet at the usual place,  
8 Sandhurst, 2.30 tomorrow. Does that suit you?" And you  
9 arrange that there will be a meeting at the Sandhurst Club  
10 the next day?---Yes.

11 Where this document is going to be executed or further dealt  
12 with?---Yes.

13 So at that stage you had been performing a role as the  
14 intermediary between Aziz and Woodman?---Correct.

15 In respect of the \$600,000 suitcase loan?---Okay, can I just  
16 say that at that point in time I had no idea of the  
17 quantity of money. It was never discussed with me.

18 You had been - so we see that as of 8 May you had knowledge  
19 that there was a loan of some sort going on. This is  
20 several days before the loan in fact took place?---Yes.

21 How did you come to be involved, first of all?---I was always  
22 involved between the two of them. That seemed to be a  
23 role I found myself in, not that I wanted to be in.

24 Yes, but your role, you have told us, was not a role where you  
25 were involved in Mr Woodman's personal finances?---No. So  
26 I'm not sure - - -

27 No, if you just answer that question. Your role was a role  
28 where you were not involved in Mr Woodman's personal  
29 finances?---Correct.

1 So your role and your only role in respect of Mr Woodman was a  
2 political role dealing with councillors or with State  
3 politicians?---That was my understanding at the time.

4 All right. So was it the case then, insofar as you got  
5 involved in the \$600,000 loan, you anticipated that this  
6 was something to do with the relationship, the political  
7 relationship, between Mr Aziz and Mr Woodman?---I guess  
8 they wouldn't have known each other if it wasn't for  
9 politics. So somehow I found myself between the two of  
10 them, and this idea of Councillor Aziz lending Mr Woodman  
11 money, which is what I was told, was something that  
12 Councillor Aziz had thought up on his own. I didn't  
13 understand it. I didn't - I had no clue. I had never  
14 heard of a councillor lending a businessperson or a  
15 developer money. This is completely outside of anything  
16 I had ever encountered.

17 But what did you - I mean, very shortly - either from  
18 the outset or very shortly at some stage during these few  
19 days you became aware of the fact that you were going to  
20 be lumbered from time to time with the role of conveying  
21 cash repayments?---Actually, that's not true and that was  
22 never my understanding of what was going to happen, and my  
23 understanding was that I wasn't involved in any of that.

24 Well, you - - -?---Sorry, it just evolved down the track when  
25 I was asked to - by Mr Woodman to go and pick up a loan  
26 repayment which belonged to Councillor Aziz and give it to  
27 him. So I was - - -

28 But you didn't - - -?---Sorry, I was never - I never thought  
29 I would be in the middle of all that. It never occurred

1 to me and I was kind of surprised when that happened.  
2 But you never referred to it in your communications with him as  
3 a loan repayment, did you?---Well, no, because we  
4 discussed it on the phone and discussed it in person, and  
5 it was told to me it's a loan repayment, and my  
6 understanding always, for a long time, was that it was  
7 actually Councillor Aziz's money that Mr Woodman was  
8 minding for whatever reason and it was going back to  
9 Councillor Aziz.

10 COMMISSIONER: So I think we might be getting a bit closer to  
11 the reality. Your understanding was Mr Woodman was  
12 minding the money? That's not a slip by you. That's the  
13 truth, isn't it, Ms Wreford, that you understood that  
14 Mr Aziz was moving this money into an account which  
15 Mr Woodman would manage because of his divorce  
16 situation?---Potentially, yes.

17 Yes. So - again, let's not beat around the bush with it - you  
18 understood there was a period of time when Mr Aziz wanted  
19 to conceal from his wife that this money was being hidden  
20 somewhere?---Yes. So from Councillor Aziz I'd heard  
21 different stories. Sorry, I'm just - so I was a bit  
22 confused at the time as to what it was all about. So  
23 leading up to this on a number of occasions Councillor  
24 Aziz had told me he had some money to invest. So whether  
25 he's just telling me stories, I don't know. But this is  
26 what I understood. He said, "I've got this money sitting  
27 there. I want to invest it. How can I invest it," and he  
28 would sort of talk around this lump sum of money, and he  
29 didn't - I don't quite know how it got from the talk to

1 his next stage. He came up with this idea that somehow it  
2 would go to Mr Woodman. So I assumed at the time -  
3 because I knew it was a reasonable amount of money, didn't  
4 know what it was. He didn't tell me, and nor did  
5 Mr Woodman. So I was told part of the story; I wasn't  
6 told the whole story.

7 No, but at some point Mr Aziz explained to you that this had  
8 something to do with for a time putting the money out of  
9 the reach of his wife?---That was long time down the  
10 track. It wasn't in the beginning.

11 So why did you use the term Mr Woodman was "minding" his  
12 money?---Well, that was one of the - - -

13 Putting it another way, it wasn't a loan at all. It was simply  
14 depositing some money with Mr Woodman for a period of  
15 time, which would then be returned to him?---I said  
16 "minding" because I thought - in all honesty, I thought  
17 before - at this point in time when he put the money there  
18 that the money was - I didn't believe there was - I didn't  
19 know there were interest payments. I thought - and that's  
20 why I said "minding" it, because if there is no interest  
21 payments, then what are you doing except minding it. But  
22 they had some sort of legal - and it was a loan agreement,  
23 and I just thought that was to protect each other, and  
24 I was told by Mr Woodman that there was a loan agreement  
25 and he had lodged it with his lawyers, Maddocks. So I'm  
26 thinking - sorry, the way it was described to me it was  
27 all legit, and that's what I thought.

28 That's a strange phrase, it "was to protect each other". What  
29 did you mean by that?---Protect - so protect each other

1 from the point of view of he's given - if someone is  
2 giving money, cash, so Councillor Aziz wanted to make sure  
3 he got it back. So I think from that point of view - yes.  
4 Trust me, I was very confused about the whole thing, and  
5 I found myself, as I explained to you before, in the  
6 middle of something I didn't understand, and the way it  
7 was explained to me at the time I thought it was all a  
8 legitimate transaction, and I didn't understand there were  
9 interest payments at that point in time.

10 At the point where Mr Aziz says to you, "I'm going through a  
11 difficult matrimonial process at the moment and this is to  
12 put the money for the time being" - - -?---He didn't quite  
13 put - - -

14 Well, how did he put it to you? What is it that made you think  
15 that that might be the explanation for the money being  
16 deposited with Mr Woodman?---I think because I knew he was  
17 going through divorce proceedings.

18 So you just worked that out for yourself, did you?---Correct.  
19 Then you realised that constructing a loan agreement and so on  
20 was really an artifice; it wasn't really a loan agreement  
21 at all?---I thought they both - in my opinion, I actually  
22 thought they both believed it was a loan agreement, but  
23 that's - that was my belief.

24 MR TOVEY: Could you look at 4023, please. I tender page 4005.

25 COMMISSIONER: Is that part of the WhatsApp communications,  
26 Mr Tovey?

27 MR TOVEY: No, that's - no.

28 COMMISSIONER: 9 May?

29 MR TOVEY: Of 9 May.

1 COMMISSIONER: It's part of exhibit 73.

2 MR TOVEY: If we all start at the top of that page, that's from  
3 John Woodman to you?---Yes.

4 "Lorraine, suitcase coming back on 10 June. All good.  
5 [Heart]." And both you and he have told us that the  
6 suitcase was code for the payment of \$15,000 cash?---Once  
7 again, I didn't know the amount. I didn't know the  
8 amount.

9 But you were telling me just before how you legitimately  
10 thought this was interest?---No, no, I didn't - - -  
11 Why are you using code like "the suitcase" - - -?---I didn't -  
12 sorry - - -

13 COMMISSIONER: I think she said the opposite, Mr Tovey.

14 MR TOVEY: I'm sorry?

15 COMMISSIONER: She didn't appreciate that there was an  
16 interest - - -?---I didn't - that's exactly right.  
17 I didn't realise there was an interest component.  
18 I thought it was just the return of money. Now,  
19 Mr Woodman started using the code "suitcase", and I took  
20 it to believe that it was a bit of his sense of humour  
21 because he had spoken to me about - sorry, this suitcase  
22 turning up from Councillor Aziz and he just referred to it  
23 as the suitcase coming back.

24 MR TOVEY: So then by 20 May you knew that he had been given a  
25 suitcase with \$600,000?---No, I didn't know how much was  
26 in it. Nobody told me.

27 So you knew he had been given a suitcase full of cash?---He  
28 told me - yes, correct. He said there was - he said Sam,  
29 or Councillor Aziz, turned up at a meeting with a

1 girlfriend at the time, he - someone he didn't know, and  
2 he couldn't believe he had this suitcase full of cash.  
3 He couldn't believe it?---That's what Mr Woodman said to me.  
4 COMMISSIONER: So, despite that curiosity, the code language  
5 that Mr Woodman was employing and that you then adopted -  
6 - -?---Correct.  
7 You are ready to say on oath that you thought Mr Woodman  
8 thought this was a legitimate loan transaction; is that  
9 your evidence?---My evidence is I thought it was  
10 legitimate.  
11 I'm sorry, I thought you were saying Mr Woodman - -  
12 -?---I don't know what he thought, but what was told to me  
13 by both parties was it was a legitimate transaction. So  
14 it's very hard for me to say anything else other than what  
15 I was told.  
16 Yes.  
17 MR TOVEY: But you had known for days ahead of time that  
18 Mr Aziz had been - was going to turn up with a stack of  
19 cash because you had in fact been, at least from 8 May,  
20 involved in preparing the agreement?---I had no idea it  
21 was cash. No idea in the world. That was news to me  
22 until after the event.  
23 Mr Woodman must have?---I don't know if he did or not. He  
24 didn't tell me that until after the - no, I didn't know  
25 until after the event. I had no idea.  
26 Did you discuss with Mr Woodman why it might be cash?---I can't  
27 recall having that conversation. The only conversation  
28 I remember is Mr Woodman telling me about this suitcase  
29 and the cash and how surprised he was, and how he took it

1 straight to the bank because he couldn't believe anyone  
2 would have a suitcase full of cash. At no time was the  
3 amount mentioned to me.

4 Did you discuss with him what he thought about it being cash  
5 other than the fact that he was surprised?---No.

6 Did you say to him, "Why would you put a suitcase full of cash  
7 in your own bank coming from Sam Aziz"?---No, I didn't  
8 question.

9 Did you say, "How come I've been involved in arranging for the  
10 preparation of an agreement that turns out to be a stack  
11 of cash that Mr Aziz turns up with"?---The only  
12 preparation is exactly what you have seen on the WhatsApp  
13 of the conversation. That was my knowledge of it. I had  
14 no other knowledge of any details. Both of them kept it  
15 from me.

16 But you knew there was a contract relating to this?---Yes, but  
17 I didn't know cash was involved. I had no clue.

18 All right. So from the moment that you knew cash was involved  
19 did you worry at all about your involvement in bringing  
20 this about?---Well, I don't believe - I didn't see myself  
21 as bringing it about, firstly. I saw it as Councillor  
22 Aziz manoeuvring and bringing it about. Secondly - - -  
23 But - - -?---Well, that's how I saw it.

24 A stack of cash. Did you say to Mr Woodman, "Mr Woodman, you  
25 want to be careful about that"?---I figured that he would  
26 know what it's about. Is it my job to question? I don't  
27 know. My role - I was just doing as I was asked.

28 Just moving to the bottom line, as of that period of time, that  
29 is May 2017, you must have understood that there was an

1 inappropriate financial relationship between Mr Aziz and  
2 Mr Woodman? Think carefully before you answer  
3 that?---I knew there was a financial arrangement.  
4 I didn't think about, and probably I should have,  
5 appropriateness or not. Both parties told me it was just  
6 a simple loan - I'm telling you what they have told me -  
7 and I didn't think there was interest or any other  
8 financial gain from it. So that's as much as I considered  
9 it. I thought it was highly unusual and I didn't believe  
10 that my involvement went any further, but that became  
11 evident down the track that I was asked to return  
12 payments.

13 COMMISSIONER: Just coming back to the term you used earlier  
14 that Mr Woodman was "minding" the money, Mr Woodman has  
15 told us that the money was placed in an account and  
16 nothing was done with it; it just sat there in the account  
17 until it was repaid to Mr Aziz?---Yes.

18 Were you aware of that?---I wasn't aware of what he did with  
19 it, but I do know that his CFO was well aware of it, so -  
20 - -

21 Sorry, who?---Chief financial officer.

22 Who was Mr Daff, was it?---Correct. Because he - when I went  
23 down to pick it up - so I'm assuming it's all completely  
24 legit because people in his company knew about it, and  
25 I assumed there was a logical explanation, and when I - on  
26 the occasions that I went down to Mornington, so he  
27 would - if they didn't have the parcel or whatever you  
28 call it ready Mr Daff would go to the bank and get it out  
29 and come back to me. So I - but I didn't see the money.

1 I only ever saw it in an envelope. I didn't know how much  
2 it was, and I believed it was a legitimate transaction.

3 MR TOVEY: Could you go to - sorry, did I tender - - -

4 COMMISSIONER: That's exhibit 74, WhatsApp communications  
5 between Mr Watson and Ms Wreford of 20 May 2016.

6 #EXHIBIT 74 - WhatsApp communications between Mr Watson and  
7 Ms Wreford of 20 May 2017.

8 MR TOVEY: I just wanted to go on to pages 4026 and 4027.

9 Sorry, before I do that, can I go to 4023. Back to 4023.

10 Just scrolling down, there's something else I want to  
11 raise with you on that page, as exhibit 16. There you  
12 note, and this is two days later, you indicate to  
13 Mr Woodman, "I spoke to SA before I left and he is all  
14 good about the NOM." Now SA is Sam Aziz?---Yes, correct.

15 And the NOM is a notice of motion?---Correct.

16 And does that indicate that you have provided to him a notice  
17 of motion in respect of something that was coming up  
18 before the council?---I'm not sure if I actually provided  
19 him with a notice of motion. I may or may not have, or it  
20 might have just been a conversation I had with him.

21 I can't recall the exact dates because, as you see, I was  
22 just about to travel overseas.

23 Was the process involving Mr Aziz such that from time to time  
24 you would provide him with a draft of a notice of a  
25 motion?---Correct.

26 Yes, and did that happen regularly?---I don't believe over the  
27 time - it happened on a few occasions, but I don't know  
28 what "regularly" means.

29 And would you draw those up yourself or would you - - -?---No.

1 Would you get those from Mr Woodman or Ms Schutz?---Ms Schutz  
2 usually.

3 COMMISSIONER: I'm sorry, you made a point earlier that you  
4 would never, never tell Mr Aziz how he should  
5 vote?---Correct.

6 So you were giving him a draft motion but it was really just a  
7 matter for him what he did?---Hundred per cent. There was  
8 no - well, in my mind there's no doubt about that. He can  
9 rip it up. He could say "it's a good notice of motion",  
10 "it's a bad notice of motion", "I've got better words", or  
11 whatever. Just if I can expand on that, when it comes to  
12 being a councillor it's not unusual to get, I don't know,  
13 advice on a notice of motion. So often when I would write  
14 notices of motion when I was on council I might get  
15 someone else to look at it, put input into it, just  
16 maybe - more for me around wording. In this case, yes,  
17 I provided it. There's no compulsion from me that he had  
18 to do it. It was totally up to him. He could have  
19 reworded it or put it in a different way or said, "I can't  
20 do that because I don't believe in it and I don't think  
21 it's right." I mean, they are all the things. People  
22 have got complete free will, and that's not what's  
23 happening. And I think mentioned to you yesterday that  
24 with notices of motions, my understanding when I was in  
25 local government, some of the notices of motions were  
26 written by parliamentarians who have given them to their  
27 political counterparts. So having someone else write a  
28 notice of motion is probably not a foreign thing, and  
29 I think that's really important for you to understand

1           how - - -

2   It's part of what a lobbyist or a political adviser might do,

3           is to provide a councillor or a member of parliament

4           with - - -?---I'm not sure if a lobbyist would do it.

5           Maybe in some cases. But in other cases it could just be

6           straight members of parliament to someone in their own

7           party.

8   I'm sorry, but weren't you performing - - -?---I was.

9   You were performing a lobbyist or political adviser role

10          here?---Sure. So always it would be my hope, if I'm

11          representing a company, that they would put that forward.

12          However, from my perspective there's no compulsion to do

13          so.

14   I see you went to Vietnam immediately after this exchange. Did

15          Mr Woodman contribute to that trip at all?---Definitely

16          not.

17   MR TOVEY: Would that be an appropriate time, sir?

18   MR CASEMENT: I was going to beat you to it. Yes, I was going

19          to ask the same thing, whether we could have a break.

20   COMMISSIONER: Would you like to have a break,

21          Ms Wreford?---Sure.

22   COMMISSIONER: Very good. Ten minutes, please.

23                   (Short adjournment.)

24   COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Tovey.

25   MR TOVEY: Thank you. So the last document I took you to was

26          on 22 May of 2017. That's the document dealing with the

27          notice of motion, and that's where you told Mr Woodman,

28          "Sam Aziz is all good with that." I now want to take you

29          to 2 June.

1 COMMISSIONER: That will be exhibit 75, 22 May 2017 WhatsApp  
2 between Ms Wreford and Mr Woodman.

3 #EXHIBIT 75 - 22 May 2017 WhatsApp between Ms Wreford and  
4 Mr Woodman.

5 MR TOVEY: This is at page 4026, there's a series of messages,  
6 and 4027. So you are off to Monaco, are you?---No, not  
7 me.

8 Sorry - - - ?---I wish. I've never been there.

9 Mr Woodman is off to Monaco. Sorry, could we go back to  
10 Monaco, please? So this is on 2 June, and you say to him,  
11 "Enjoy Monaco. Are you back in time for the suitcase to  
12 be returned on the 10th? All under control re NOM now.  
13 You were right. GR put in a call to SA today." So you  
14 are reporting back to him that Ablett is all under  
15 control - sorry, that Aziz is all under control in respect  
16 of the notice of motion; yes?---When I say "all under  
17 control" I think - to me that means that he agreed with  
18 the notice of motion.

19 So "under control" is perhaps just an unfortunate form of  
20 words?---Correct.

21 But isn't that the way you saw it, that Aziz was totally under  
22 control at that stage, surely?---I'm going to say this.  
23 I don't think anyone could control him, but that was just  
24 my thought.

25 COMMISSIONER: You thought he was under control?---I thought  
26 that the notice of motion he agreed to, he agreed with, he  
27 agreed with it in principle.

28 MR TOVEY: At this stage in June of 2017 you had been dealing  
29 with him in excess of two years, and in the course of

1           which you can't think of one occasion where he hasn't done  
2           what you asked him to do; isn't that the situation?---Yes.  
3    So he was under control, wasn't he?---My understanding is when  
4           you are texting or how I do it is I shorten everything.  
5           So when I say "under control" - - -  
6    I'm not asking you why you said what you did?---Yes.  
7    At that stage, as you understood it, Aziz was under control  
8           because he always did what he was asked; it's that  
9           simple?---Yes.  
10   Good. Now, "GR put in a call to SA today." I assume SA is Sam  
11       Aziz. Who is GR?---Gary Rowe.  
12   All right. And was Gary Rowe and Sam Aziz, they were often on  
13       different sides of debates in which you were interested;  
14       is that right?---Like - yes, like - - -  
15   Let's just keep it simple. In respect of C19, however, it  
16       happened to be that Mr Rowe saw things the way you saw  
17       them and that is he was in favour of the industrial land  
18       being rezoned residential?---My recollection is that he  
19       wasn't initially, and I think he may have changed his mind  
20       down the track. That's my recollection.  
21   But you are still persisting with the reference to the suitcase  
22       to be returned on the 10th, and that's just a joke, is it,  
23       rather than an attempt to not refer to the reality of the  
24       situation?---Correct.  
25   COMMISSIONER: That's a joke?  
26   MR TOVEY: You didn't think the joke was getting a bit stale by  
27       this time?---It was - the reason I used that language was  
28       because that's how - I'm just repeating the language that  
29       Mr Woodman had used with me.

1 All right. So we go on. If we can just continue scrolling  
2 down a little. Okay. Then he WhatsApps you and asks,  
3 "Lorraine, give a ring when you free re notice of motion,  
4 and Tuesday night do you think Sam has the numbers to vote  
5 through the motion regardless of Gazza and his crew?"  
6 What was that about?---It's a conversation about a notice  
7 of motion that's going up that week and Councillor Aziz  
8 said to me that he has the numbers to get it through.  
9 And who is Gazza?---That's - - -  
10 Gary Rowe?---Gary Rowe, yes.  
11 COMMISSIONER: So part of your conversations with Councillor  
12 Aziz were not merely to pass on information to him but to  
13 ascertain his position and report that back to  
14 Mr Woodman?---Yes.  
15 Which would mean therefore you had to have some clarity from  
16 Mr Aziz by the time you left one of those meetings to know  
17 what he was going to do?---Okay, so most of the  
18 conversations I had with Councillor Aziz were on the  
19 phone. I had as few face-to-face meetings as I could.  
20 Yes. The thrust of what I suggested is correct, is it?---Yes.  
21 Yes, it is. And the language around "do you have the  
22 numbers" that's very normal language in political circles.  
23 And the numbers could refer to anybody in the room.  
24 MR TOVEY: Your expectation was that you would be told in  
25 advance by councillors whether they had the numbers to  
26 push through the motions in which you were  
27 interested?---It was a hope. I didn't know that that  
28 would always happen.  
29 And is this something that everybody is entitled to or do you

1 have to pay to get that special service?---If you had a  
2 vested interest in a motion, it could be a business, it  
3 could be anything, you might talk to that person, that  
4 business, as a councillor you may talk to them and say,  
5 "Look, I think I've got the numbers to get this through."  
6 So that's not necessarily unusual and it doesn't mean that  
7 there's any financial gain in that.

8 All right. Could we then continue down. Then you ended up  
9 reporting on 7 June that a motion of 6 June "went through  
10 last night no problems"; is that right?---Correct.

11 And that no doubt, you would agree, is the motion which you  
12 provided to Mr Aziz?---I can't tell you exactly. It  
13 probably is. I haven't got that in front of me. I can't  
14 see anything other than the conversation I've got here,  
15 but I'm assuming you've got documents that confirms that's  
16 the case.

17 All right, then, if we go then to 8 June, down the bottom of  
18 the page and just bring that up to the top. Mr Woodman  
19 says to you, "Darling, can you please advise the boss that  
20 Abdul will bring his suitcase out tomorrow morning?  
21 Thanks." And that's a reference to the delivery of  
22 \$15,000 in cash, isn't it?---I believe so, but like I said  
23 didn't know at the time how much was involved.

24 And the financial records indicate that the next day Mr Aziz  
25 made two deposits totalling \$15,000. So again you are  
26 still talking about the suitcase?---Yes, Mr Woodman is,  
27 yes.

28 Is there anywhere that, having gone back through your  
29 documents, you can recall these deliveries ever being

1 described in any legitimate fashion as interest payment  
2 or - - -?---No. No, I can't.

3 COMMISSIONER: So, Ms Wreford, at the point of time, whenever  
4 that was, that you came to realise that these arrangements  
5 reflected something more serious and nominally  
6 illegitimate did you ever take Mr Woodman aside and give  
7 him the benefit of your thoughts that he shouldn't be  
8 doing this?---It was really probably in 2018 I - - -

9 But did you ever do that?---I probably didn't do it in the  
10 language that you are saying, but he knew that  
11 I wasn't - I don't know "happy" is the word or at any time  
12 I brought it up he would just shrug his shoulders.

13 What did you bring up with him?---That I thought that  
14 Councillor Aziz was being greedy and always asking for  
15 money and, yes.

16 But by this stage you would have regarded yourself as a friend  
17 of Mr Woodman, wouldn't you?---Yes.

18 Not just in a working relationship?---Correct; correct.

19 Didn't you owe it to him then to say to him if you realised  
20 that this was a crooked arrangement that he really needed  
21 to think about his position?---I think in hindsight  
22 I should have absolutely said that to him.

23 But you understand the argument might be put to me the reason  
24 you didn't do that is because you and he both knew that it  
25 was a crooked arrangement. You didn't need to tell him;  
26 he already knew that you knew that?---I actually had not  
27 come to that conclusion, certainly not then. It wasn't  
28 until 2018 that I really started feeling uncomfortable  
29 about it all. And I think I've said to you yesterday my

1 thought process was that Councillor Aziz had seen an  
2 opportunity and he saw an opportunity to make himself or  
3 recover funds he might have lost through his divorce or  
4 whatever it was, he saw an opportunity of making money and  
5 he was going to do that at any cost. Now, I wasn't  
6 sure - and this is me thinking - that he wasn't trying to  
7 blackmail Mr Woodman, and I only mentioned that to  
8 Mr Woodman that much further down the track. That was my  
9 thoughts.

10 But you have expertise as a financial adviser, don't you?---I'm  
11 not a financial adviser; a broker, I'm sorry.

12 A broker, I'm sorry?---Yes.

13 So one might be forgiven for thinking that if there are things  
14 that are odd about financial arrangements your expertise  
15 would be such that you would be someone, we would expect,  
16 would be alive to that?---Correct, but - - -

17 And you say it was not until some time in 2018 that it became  
18 apparent to you that there was an improper relationship -  
19 - -?---I'd call it uncomfortable from my perspective. But  
20 everything was explained to me in a legitimate way. So  
21 there was always an explanation. And maybe I'm at fault  
22 for not questioning it further and - - -

23 You were already with - - -?---And in hindsight, sorry.

24 You were already working with Mr Woodman when the Ombudsman's  
25 report was released in November 2015?---Yes.

26 Mr Woodman has told me that he recognised from that point on,  
27 even though the Ombudsman had found nothing untoward, that  
28 from that time on he recognised that any dealings he had  
29 with council would be the subject of additional - greater

1 scrutiny. Did he ever discuss that with you?---What he  
2 did discuss - he didn't discuss it in those terms, but  
3 what he did discuss is that Councillor Aziz, this is  
4 during 2018, would need to declare a conflict of interest.

5 But I'm going back to the immediate aftermath of the  
6 Ombudsman's report?---Yes.

7 In which the Ombudsman dealt with allegations which concerned  
8 Mr Woodman?---Yes.

9 And Mr Ablett and Mr Aziz?---Yes. Oh, no, Mr Ablett and  
10 Ms Stapledon, I think, is that right?

11 I don't think it involved Ms Stapledon, but be that as it may,  
12 did you not have discussions with Mr Woodman about how he  
13 needed to manage his affairs?---No. At that point in time  
14 I didn't think - maybe I didn't think our friendship was  
15 enough or did I feel that I was in the position where  
16 I could do that.

17 MR TOVEY: Mr Commissioner - - -

18 COMMISSIONER: I'll make the last two documents, the WhatsApp  
19 communications of 20 June, exhibit 76 and the WhatsApp  
20 communications again of Mr Woodman and Ms Wreford of  
21 8 June exhibit 77.

22 #EXHIBIT 76 - WhatsApp communications of 20 June.

23 #EXHIBIT 77 - WhatsApp communications of Mr Woodman and  
24 Ms Wreford of 8 June.

25 MR TOVEY: I now want to move on to February of 2018, page  
26 3529. Could we just go to 3528, please? Go forward,  
27 thank you. (To witness.) At that stage if you look at  
28 the communication from Sam Aziz to you, "Can't be an email  
29 with Watsons on it".

1 COMMISSIONER: "In it".

2 MR TOVEY: That's on 8 February of 2018. That was, was it not,  
3 reference by him to a communication whereby Watsons was  
4 going to pay a tax bill of his, \$30,000?---It could have  
5 been. It could have been because I seem to remember at  
6 that time there was not going to be any more cash  
7 payments. My understanding is Councillor Aziz wanted the  
8 rest of his money back in transactions, in normal  
9 transactions, I guess.

10 So, in any event, would you - we'll go down and then come back  
11 to that perhaps?---Mm-hm.

12 So if we go down to 3529 you say, "I'll see what I can do. He  
13 doesn't have one." What was it that he doesn't  
14 have?---I'm not 100 per cent sure. I'm not sure if he  
15 asked me for another email address, but I'm not sure. It  
16 could be.

17 Then, "Easiest if you send me the bank details and I'll make  
18 sure it's done"?---Yes.

19 That's the bank details in respect of the payment of the tax  
20 bill; is that right?---I believe so.

21 All right. So you understand then - and did you play a part in  
22 that? Did you in fact organise that that payment would be  
23 processed?---I was just the conduit.

24 And when you say you were the conduit what did you do?---I just  
25 passed on messages to Mr Woodman.

26 Did you send to him an email attaching the receipt for the ATO  
27 payment?---I think, if my memory is correct, that wasn't  
28 from me - - -

29 I will take you to that. 3529. Could we go back to it,

1 please?

2 COMMISSIONER: The WhatsApps of 8 February '18 between Mr Aziz  
3 and Ms Wreford will be exhibit 78.

4 #EXHIBIT 78 - WhatsApp messages of 8 February 2018 between  
5 Mr Aziz and Ms Wreford.

6 MR TOVEY: There are some more. Indeed they will be 8 to  
7 14 February, Mr Commissioner. We will just keep on going,  
8 perhaps.

9 COMMISSIONER: Yes.

10 MR TOVEY: Just keep on going, thank you. Please keep going.

11 If you could just scroll through slowly. (To witness.)

12 And there you see 9 February payment slip?---Okay.

13 On 14 February you say, if we could just stop there, "I've also  
14 sent it in an email to your BigPond account"?---Yes.

15

16 What was that?---Okay, so I can explain about the - first  
17 of all about the payment or the tax payment?

18 Yes?---So from my understanding and from my recollection is  
19 that Mr Aziz was pressuring me to make sure it got paid  
20 and whatever. I had contacted either Mr Woodman or his  
21 CFO. They had paid the tax bill and forwarded to me the  
22 receipt, which I then forwarded to Councillor Aziz. So  
23 I was the conduit. I didn't make any payments.

24 But he was indicating to you that that payment couldn't have  
25 any Watsons identification - sorry, the email couldn't be  
26 linked with Watsons?---I didn't understand what that was  
27 about.

28 That must have been - surely you would have understood that to  
29 mean that he wanted to hide the fact that the money was

1 being paid by Watsons; that's the only rational  
2 explanation?---Yes, but I'm not sure who he was hiding it  
3 from. It could have been to do with his court case,  
4 that's what I'm thinking, and I think that's what  
5 I thought at the time. But once again - - -  
6 If you thought that at the time you must have thought that here  
7 you are, ex-MP as you were, involved in a process which  
8 was calculated to deceive the Family Court?---I had no  
9 confirmation that that was the case.  
10 It's not a matter of getting confirmation. That was the only  
11 thing that occurred to you at the time that you have been  
12 able to tell me about; true?---It occurred to me as a  
13 possibility.  
14 Why would you - sorry, that was the only thing that  
15 occurred - that was the only thing that occurred to you at  
16 the time as an explanation for this?---That occurred to me  
17 as a possibility, without a doubt.  
18 Didn't you ask yourself, "How can I involve myself in what is  
19 an attempt to pervert the course of justice"?---I would  
20 like - I would have liked at this point of time to know  
21 how to get out of the whole thing; you are absolutely  
22 right. But I didn't actually know how to and I didn't  
23 know - - -  
24 Sorry, I just want to explore that. So you didn't know how to  
25 get out of it, and that was because you were aware that  
26 there was an association between Mr Aziz and Mr Woodman  
27 which you couldn't afford to disrupt?---No, that's  
28 not - that's not what I thought.  
29 Why couldn't you get out of it?---I just felt myself trapped in

1 the middle between these two people and that's how I felt.  
2 All right. So you felt like you were trapped in a fraud of  
3 some sort?

4 COMMISSIONER: Whether it was a corrupt payment being made by  
5 Mr Woodman to Mr Aziz for services rendered or to be  
6 rendered by Mr Aziz as a councillor or whether it was a  
7 corrupt arrangement designed to defraud the Family Court  
8 or Mr Aziz's wife, either way it was an inappropriate  
9 arrangement. What is being put to you is why didn't you  
10 extricate yourself from that situation?---So what  
11 Councillor Aziz put to me at the time, that he actually  
12 told me his wife knew about the payments. So I did  
13 question it and - this payment from my understanding and  
14 from what Mr Woodman had told me and what Mr Aziz told  
15 me - I'm telling you what they told me - is the remainder  
16 of that loan or money minded and it was - that's what it  
17 was. So there were a number of amounts to be paid into  
18 different bank accounts, and that was - my understanding  
19 was it was just the repayment of the loan. That's what  
20 I was told. So, you know, quite clearly - well, maybe  
21 I was not told accurate information.

22 But, Ms Wreford, assuming for immediate purposes that one was  
23 to accept without hesitation everything you have said,  
24 then it's clear that you refrained from asking questions  
25 and pressing Mr Woodman about why he was doing various  
26 things?---Yes.

27 Is that not so?---Probably.

28 That's if we accept without qualification what you have  
29 said?---Probably at that point in time you are right.

1 I should have and in hindsight is a wonderful thing, but  
2 I think my gut was telling me it wasn't right, but  
3 I - I think because I was in the employ and  
4 I think - there's many things that happened.

5 You were at that stage dependent upon the financial support  
6 which Mr Woodman was giving you?---I was.

7 How old were your children at that stage, Ms Wreford?---No, my  
8 children were basically - - -

9 They were all grown up?---Off my hands at that point in time.

10 But that's not the issue. I mean, I still had a lot of  
11 financial obligations and it was just - as I said to you  
12 yesterday, after being in parliament I'm not the only  
13 parliamentarian that has trouble - - -

14 Yes?---Getting back into the workforce.

15 Do you want to have a break for five minutes?---I'll be right.

16 Okay. Yes, Mr Tovey.

17 MR TOVEY: I now want to go to March of 2018. On 20 March of  
18 2018 the Pavilion Estate issue - - -?---Yes.

19 I'm sorry - - -

20 COMMISSIONER: The last WhatsApp, 8 February to 14 February  
21 '18, exhibit 78.

22 #EXHIBIT 78 - WhatsApp messages of 8 February to 14 February  
23 2018.

24 MR TOVEY: On 20 March 2018 the Pavilion Estate issue, I can  
25 tell you, came before council for the first time and was  
26 deferred for two weeks. Do you recall that  
27 happening?---I do. Yes, I do.

28 And was it your understanding that in essence the motion being  
29 put in respect of Pavilion Estate at the behest of

1 Mr Woodman was that certain land that had been put aside  
2 as road reserve and public space now be made available as  
3 part of the useable land?---That wasn't the explanation  
4 that I had received or the briefing that I had received.  
5 Was it your understanding that it involved, no matter how you  
6 characterise it, as lessening the amount of road reserve  
7 and lessening the amount of public space in the original  
8 plan?---Can I explain what I understood it to be?  
9 Yes, please?---Because that was the briefing. I was briefed by  
10 Ms Schutz at the time, and my understanding was that  
11 council officers had made a number of mistakes in their  
12 planning and that what they had done is placed a rugby  
13 field, I think, very close to where the road was and  
14 because of that they had decided to make more - just to  
15 take out of the developer's lot - they decided to widen  
16 that road reserve, and that was my understanding. Now, in  
17 that briefing I put forward a suggestion, as I sometimes  
18 do when I come across planning issues in the past.  
19 I suggested that, really, it would seem obvious to me that  
20 they should put up a net, because it was all to do with  
21 balls going on the road. There's many nets in many places  
22 around the state to stop balls going onto the road and it  
23 seemed like the best compromise is the developer might pay  
24 for the net and there's a win/win, everyone's happy.  
25 All right. So, anyway, the net result would be that the  
26 developer had more developable land?---My understanding  
27 was - - -  
28 And you would have a net instead of space to achieve - -  
29 -?---My understanding - - -

1 The problem with balls?---Yes, my understanding was that in the  
2 original PSP that that was all developable land and that  
3 the only reason the council officers had decided to take  
4 some more road reserve was because they had placed I think  
5 it was a rugby field closer to the road. So that was my  
6 briefing.

7 And so were you involved in organising Mr Ablett - sorry,  
8 Mr Aziz to introduce a notice of motion opposing the  
9 council officer's report and recommending that the  
10 relevant land be made developable, made available for  
11 residential use?---My recollection at the time was that  
12 I think Ms Schutz sent me the information, and I passed it  
13 on to Mr Aziz.

14 Did that include a notice of motion for Mr Aziz to  
15 use?---I believe so.

16 Now, perhaps we will just move through this a little bit more  
17 quickly, but on 20 March 2018 did Mr Aziz in fact during  
18 the council meeting send you a message indicating that  
19 they had been ambushed; this is at the time that the  
20 matter first came up because it was deferred; is that  
21 right?---I believe that that is right.

22 And your relationship was such that you didn't think it was  
23 unusual that he would be sending you WhatsApp messages  
24 live?---I don't think it was common practice.

25 And indeed after the ambush could you have a look at  
26 surveillance photos 2 and 3, please?

27 COMMISSIONER: Is this of 20 March?

28 MR TOVEY: This is of 22 March. (To witness.) The situation  
29 was that the motion came before council on 20 March, and

1           this is a surveillance photos - these are surveillance  
2           photos of Mr Aziz meeting with you and Mr Woodman and a  
3           woman who looks like Ms Stapledon?---No, that's Ms Schutz.  
4   Ms Schutz, I apologise, at the Sandhurst Club?---Yes.  
5   Two days after the ambush?---Yes.  
6   Do you agree that that meeting took place?---Yes.  
7   Now, that meeting was the subject of surveillance. What do you  
8           recall being the purpose of that meeting and what was  
9           discussed there?---My recollection is that it was  
10          discussed about the Pavilion - yes, I think it was  
11          Pavilion Estate.  
12   And the strategy going forward?---And the strategy going  
13          forward, yes.  
14   Thank you.  
15   COMMISSIONER: That's exhibit 25, Mr Tovey.  
16   MR TOVEY: I want to take you further down the track to  
17          12 October of 2018. This is at a time of course before  
18          the 25,000 a month arrangement had been entered into.  
19          Could we go to tab 112, please? This was also at a time  
20          after the \$15,000 payments had been - the monthly  
21          so-called interest payments had been completed.  
22                           (Audio recording played to the Commission.)  
23   MR TOVEY: This is October of 2018. This was just after - this  
24          is just before the Spicer payments have to stop. You are  
25          nodding. Do you agree with those propositions?---I'm  
26          recalling, yes, as you're talking.  
27   So you're there - that's Sam Aziz wanting you to talk to the  
28          blood donor in terms of the monthly consultancy fee.  
29   COMMISSIONER: Go back to the previous page, thank you. Yes,

1           thank you.

2   MR TOVEY:   Okay.  Do you see that, lines 5 to 10?---Yes.

3   And asking if it's "possible to cash that because it's caused  
4           me all sorts of trouble with maintenance, child  
5           maintenance"?---Yes.

6   And then line 12 he says to you, "If you can then he can remove  
7           the bit on top that he gives me for you know what."  And  
8           you say, "Yep, yep, okay."  So at that stage he was  
9           getting the Spicer payments, to your knowledge?---I think  
10          so, yes, a small amount, yes.

11   And he was also getting a bit on top for you know  
12          what?---I don't know what that is.  Seriously, I have no  
13          clue what that is.

14   COMMISSIONER:  Mr Aziz plainly thought you did?---He might  
15          have, but I don't know what it was.  I had no clue.

16   MR TOVEY:  During that period of time in mid-2018 were there  
17          additional payments being made by way of cash which you  
18          knew about?---Pardon?

19   During the middle part of 2018 were there additional payments  
20          of cash?---No.

21   When you met with Mr Aziz on 8 October - sorry, with Mr Woodman  
22          on 8 October this year to explain - - -

23   COMMISSIONER:  Sorry, this year?

24   MR TOVEY:  This year.  (To witness.)  To consider your response  
25          to IBAC as to Mr Aziz's evidence, did you discuss whether  
26          or not you wanted to make it look like there was nothing  
27          happening in the middle of 2018?---In my discussions with  
28          Mr Woodman I was trying to get the timing of what  
29          happened.  This is all very complex and it was all - - -

1 I'm just asking you in the course of that conversation you had  
2 with him was there a discussion with you about trying to  
3 hide what had occurred in the middle of 2018?---I don't  
4 believe so, but I think it's more, from my perspective,  
5 trying to find out what exactly had happened in what  
6 timeline because I've had to look back and try and rack my  
7 brains as to what happened when.

8 Did you and he at that time think it was important that it  
9 appear that nothing was happening in the middle of  
10 2018?---I think Mr Woodman thought it was important.

11 For what reason?---Because Councillor Aziz, I think, voted on  
12 something in - I think it might have been H3 intersection  
13 in was it November or late - 2018, and no matter what my  
14 discussions were with Mr Woodman at the time, at no time  
15 was I ever going to try and avoid what happened or the  
16 truth.

17 I suggest to you you would have if you could have; that was the  
18 nature of this discussion you were having with  
19 Mr Woodman?---It might have been the nature of the  
20 discussion. It was never my intention.

21 Is it the case that you've come to realise since that  
22 discussion that a significant degree of honesty is  
23 required because you don't know what's out there?---No,  
24 I think a significant degree of honesty is required  
25 anyway.

26 Mr Commissioner, might I tender that conversation.

27 COMMISSIONER: 12 October '18, phone call between Mr Aziz and  
28 Ms Wreford, an excerpt. That will be exhibit 79.

29 #EXHIBIT 79 - Excerpt of phone call between Mr Aziz and

1 Ms Wreford on 12 October 2018.

2 COMMISSIONER: Could I just ask you whilst Counsel Assisting is  
3 going to his next matter, going right back to the time  
4 when you ceased as a councillor and went into State  
5 parliament you said that you understood that Mr Woodman  
6 had donated to your campaign?---Yes.

7 But you didn't know how much?---Correct.

8 It was a matter for your campaign committee?---Correct.

9 And I think there's evidence that the Commission has uncovered  
10 that the amount was \$15,000, three tranches of  
11 \$5,000?---Yes.

12 Did you have to declare that as part of your campaign in those  
13 days?---Everything - I can't remember what the - I didn't  
14 personally, but I think the party would have or my  
15 campaign committee would have had to declare it, and I'm  
16 sure that they did. I would hope that they had.

17 Yes?---So any money donated doesn't go to me.

18 During your period in State parliament before you left and then  
19 took up your position with Mr Woodman had Mr Woodman,  
20 apart from that campaign, had he supported any aspect of  
21 your period in State parliament in any way at all?---He  
22 had attended functions from time to time.

23 Campaign functions?---Correct.

24 Yes. And pledged donations?---I believe so, yes.

25 And the reason I ask, Ms Wreford, is because obviously you came  
26 out of parliament and Mr Woodman saw you as someone that  
27 he could look to as an ally?---Yes.

28 And that was as a result of your longstanding relationship and  
29 the nature of that relationship?---Correct. At the time

1 I was hoping to stay in parliament. I didn't plan what  
2 happened next.

3 MR TOVEY: Could we go, please, now to tab 211, which I hope is  
4 a conversation on 29 October of 2018. Could we just hold  
5 on there, please. I think we have already, indeed now  
6 that I look at it, referred you to that document and  
7 I won't refer you to it again. Could I take you to tab  
8 194. This is 30 October 2018.

9 COMMISSIONER: The 30th?

10 MR TOVEY: Yes, the 30th.

11 COMMISSIONER: Yes.

12 MR TOVEY: This is a conversation, is it - sorry, this is a  
13 conversation, Mr Commissioner, between Lorraine Wreford  
14 and Sam Aziz on 30 October of 2018. (To witness.) Could  
15 you listen to this, please?

16 (Audio recording played to the Commission.)

17 MR TOVEY: Now what's happening there is that you are  
18 discussing with Mr Aziz what influence those people who  
19 declare a conflict might still exercise by voting in the  
20 chair in their absence?---I think the conversation was  
21 about who takes the chair if someone leaves the room for a  
22 conflict of interest.

23 Mr Aziz said to you - you ask him, "Can we pick and choose who  
24 the deputy is going to be?" Rather than just nodding  
25 would you say "yes"? We need to record this on  
26 transcript?---Yes.

27 So you ask him at line 9 - or perhaps I should start at line 3.

28 What you're concerned about is a vote for the deputy mayor  
29 to take the chair; is that right?---Correct.

1 And then you say, "Is she part of the vote?" Now, who is the  
2 deputy mayor?---I'm actually not sure at that point in  
3 time.  
4 Was it Amanda Stapledon?---It could be. I believe so.  
5 And then you say, "Well, that's good because we should have the  
6 numbers." Who is "we"?---Well, I'm representing Watsons  
7 or Mr Woodman, and that conversation that I had with  
8 Councillor Aziz was a direct conversation - I had a  
9 conversation with Mr Woodman, who asked me those  
10 questions. I then rang up Councillor Aziz and had another  
11 conversation.  
12 So this is something that you were conveying directly - when  
13 I say "directly" - immediately before and after to  
14 Mr Woodman; is that right?---Yes, I believe so. Yes.  
15 Okay. And then you say, "So we can pick and choose who the  
16 deputy is going to be," and you use the "we" again as  
17 referring to Woodman interests?---Yes.  
18 And then Sam Aziz says, "Yeah, you continue to vote on an issue  
19 and you - you continue to vote on any other issue until  
20 the issue of your conflict comes up"?---Mm-hm.  
21 So what he is there talking about is the fact that you can sit  
22 in council and - - -?---Yes.  
23 Deliberate in respect of - - -?---Yes.  
24 All the matters that are before the meeting that night until  
25 the vote comes up in respect of the matter in which - on  
26 which you are conflicted; is that right?---That is  
27 correct, and that was the way it was when I was in council  
28 for eight years, and I think we discussed this yesterday.  
29 And then - - -

1 COMMISSIONER: Nothing has changed in the legislation,  
2 Ms Wreford?---No. I wasn't sure, and that's what the  
3 conversation was about.

4 MR TOVEY: And then he said, "You vote on who takes the chair";  
5 is that right?---Yes.

6 And the person who takes the chair is a person who has the  
7 possibility of two votes?---Yes.

8 They will have a vote on the issue and if the vote is even they  
9 will have the casting vote?---Correct.

10 So that's an important thing to have under your control, is  
11 it?---It is, but I'm sure we might have some  
12 recommendations come out of this around that; yes.

13 So you go on to confirm with him that those people who are  
14 conflicted get to vote on who's going to chair, even if  
15 they are - even if they can't vote on the issue  
16 itself?---Yes.

17 All right?---Yes, that's correct.

18 COMMISSIONER: That feeds into what you said yesterday that  
19 there's nothing to stop, other than perhaps a sense of  
20 good ethics on the part of a councillor - - -?---Correct.

21 Nothing to stop a councillor who's plainly got a conflict from  
22 seeking to influence all the other councillors?---So,  
23 Mr Commissioner, as I said yesterday, this is common  
24 practice for political parties to use this to get numbers.  
25 It needs to cease, doesn't it?---I agree with you.

26 MR TOVEY: But there is a problem here, isn't there, that the  
27 Woodman interests aren't a political party;  
28 true?---Absolutely, but I'm trying to explain that it  
29 happens with other interests as well.

1 COMMISSIONER: Are you moving on, Mr Tovey?

2 MR TOVEY: I am.

3 COMMISSIONER: That's exhibit 80, excerpt of conversation  
4 between Ms Wreford and Mr Aziz of 30 October 2018.

5 #EXHIBIT 80 - Excerpt of conversation between Ms Wreford and  
6 Mr Aziz of 30 October 2018.

7 MR TOVEY: Mr Commissioner, there was a matter that was raised  
8 with me this morning which I just need to check on.

9 COMMISSIONER: Yes. (To witness.) While Counsel Assisting is  
10 doing that, we have touched on the H3 intersection, C219,  
11 and the Pavilion and also Brompton Lodge. During the time  
12 that we are speaking at between 2010 and now were there  
13 other planning issues where Mr Woodman or his companies  
14 had an interest?---Possibly. I don't think they were all  
15 in Casey, though.

16 No, I'm just speaking of Casey?---Oh, okay. Well, they were  
17 the only ones that I can recall being involved in.

18 Very good.

19 MR TOVEY: Do you have any knowledge of Botanic Ridge?---From  
20 my days in council I do.

21 And was that something that had anything to do with the  
22 Woodmans, with Mr Woodman, to your knowledge?---To my  
23 knowledge when I was on council I didn't know that he was  
24 involved.

25 But did you come to know that he was involved?---I think I've  
26 seen that recently, but I didn't realise at the time.

27 How regularly did Mr Woodman have matters coming before council  
28 for consideration? Was it most meetings that there was  
29 something that was happening which affected him?---Are we

1 talking about while I was in local government?

2 No, not while you were in local government but once you became  
3 a lobbyist and consultant?---I don't believe so.

4 There was, was there, an ongoing need to lobby not just  
5 councillors but also to lobby the CEO and council officers  
6 to try and convince them to approve the things you wanted  
7 approved?---Potentially, and I did offer to go and speak  
8 to officers if I was required to, but Mr Woodman said no.

9 COMMISSIONER: Had Mr Woodman conveyed to you in the last  
10 couple of years, had he conveyed to you that he was  
11 dissatisfied or unhappy with the way some of the council  
12 officers were treating issues in which he had an  
13 interest?---Yes, yes.

14 And any particular officers?---There were a number of officers  
15 in the planning department and also he wasn't happy with  
16 the previous CEO. He believed that there was a bit of a  
17 conspiracy at a council officer level for any of their  
18 projects.

19 Right. And do you know whether he played some part then in  
20 events that immediately preceded Mr Tyler, the former CEO,  
21 retiring?---I don't believe he had any - to my knowledge  
22 had any input in the appointment of the new CEO - - -

23 No, not the appointment of the new CEO?---I'm sorry.

24 Did he have some input into what was done to try and get the  
25 retirement of the former CEO?---I think he would have  
26 liked to. I'm not sure if he actually - he didn't discuss  
27 that with me.

28 If Ms Schutz had been engaged to do that that's not something  
29 you were privy to?---I don't believe so, yes. Look, we

1 have had general discussions around the previous CEO.

2 MR TOVEY: Did you discuss Councillor Ablett's involvement in  
3 the demise of Mr Tyler?---You know it's very hard for me  
4 to answer, and I'll tell you why, because I've seen the  
5 press and it's very hard for me to give an answer because  
6 there's been so much in the press recently, over recent  
7 times, as to whether what I remember is actually what  
8 actually happened. So it's a bit of a blurred area. I'm  
9 not sure.

10 Doing the best you can, what can you recall about what was  
11 being said about that?---The best I can, I would think  
12 that there might have been some bragging involved from  
13 Councillor - - -

14 By Mr Woodman?---No, no, not by Mr Woodman.

15 By Mr Ablett?---Yes, potentially, yes.

16 COMMISSIONER: After the former CEO retired?---Yes. I know  
17 I spoke to a number of councillors at the time about the  
18 CEO and just in general terms, nothing to do with - sorry,  
19 I wasn't doing this on behalf of Mr Woodman, but because  
20 I had had a long-term professional relationship, I guess,  
21 with Mr Tyler and the councillors themselves had told me  
22 that - or one or two of them have told me that just seemed  
23 to change in the last few years, and once he was a really  
24 passionate, dedicated man towards the City of Casey, in  
25 the last couple of years he was more interested in riding  
26 his bike and travelling around the world than actually  
27 doing his job. So I think from a general council  
28 perspective they felt his time was up.

29 MR TOVEY: Were you aware of whether there was any

1 communication between Mr Ablett and Mr Woodman in respect  
2 of Mr Tyler and in respect of the way in which council  
3 staff should be treated?---I wasn't aware of any direct  
4 conversations, but it wouldn't surprise me if that  
5 was - that actually happened.

6 Did Mr Woodman ever tell you or suggest to you that Councillor  
7 Ablett was claiming responsibility for Mr Tyler  
8 leaving?---You know, he may have, and I can't - I can't  
9 tell you exactly, but it may have been part of  
10 conversations. That may have happened.

11 Mr Commissioner, I have virtually finished questioning this  
12 witness. There's just one matter I need to check on.

13 Would now be an appropriate time to adjourn for lunch?

14 COMMISSIONER: Is that going to - that matter that you are  
15 wanting to still consider, will that take a little time,  
16 will it?

17 MR TOVEY: No. Once I have considered it - look, it could take  
18 15 minutes. I need to refresh my memory as to the detail  
19 of something.

20 COMMISSIONER: Very good. So I'm sorry, Ms Wreford, we will  
21 still have to get you to come back for a very short time  
22 after lunch. Go away and have some lunch and we'll see  
23 you at 2 o'clock.

24 <(THE WITNESS WITHDREW)

25 LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

26

27

28

29