

# **LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

## **ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

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**At Sydney on Tuesday 16 July 2013**

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**The discussion commenced at 10.10 a.m.**

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### **PRESENT**

Mr David Blunt  
Dr David Clune  
The Hon. John Hannaford

**Mr BLUNT:** Mr Hannaford, thank you for joining us today, and accepting the invitation to come and share your recollections and reflections on the establishment of the modern committee system. Those 25 years seem to have gone by almost in the blink of an eye. By way of background, you are one of five former members we are interviewing for this project. In a sense, on one hand it is a discrete project, looking at the events that shaped the committee system that we have today. On the other hand it is a bit of a pilot in that I have thought for some time, and in discussion with David we think it is a good idea that we look at the opportunities that oral history provides to record the reflections of former members of the House in relation to the work they have done in the House generally and in what the Legislative Council was like in the past.

Arising out of this quite discrete project, and it may well be a larger one in future, we may be bothering you again at some stage in the future for some general talk about what the Legislative Council was like when you were first elected and your expectations and how they were met. To some extent we will be able to deal with some of those issues today, but the focus today is very much on the committee system. With that brief introduction, we might make a start with the written questions. They are just a guide. There will be follow-up questions that we will ask and no doubt we will go down various paths as the morning continues.

**Dr CLUNE:** David and I will ask the questions, give it a framework, but feel free to digress or jump ahead or say whatever. It is just a rough guide. To get started, what was the Legislative Council like when you were first elected in 1984?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** My recollection—and again I have not gone back to check it—I think that in 1981 we started the transition to an elected House so that brought me in in 1984 was the second of that phase of elections. We had a mixture of elected members and the remainder of appointed members. We were still coming out of the push of the Wran Government for reform of the upper House. There still existed a concern that the upper House would be abolished, consistent with Labor policy. In the Liberal Party we were going through the throws of reform with the selection of candidates, with still the memory of what might best be described as almost manipulated selection of candidates into the upper House so that the whole concept of a democratic institution was still in the throws of being developed. You had reasonably established processes with committees in the Senate. We were still influenced by the circumstances in Queensland of a unicameral system and the way in which absolute power had the potential to corrupt the democratic process. So we had all of those elements together.

Certainly within the Liberal Party coming into my preselection, which I think was nearly two years before the election, there was a strong desire to ensure that we did not embrace the Queensland option, that there had to be appropriate checks and balances. The New South Wales upper House was referred to as a club, an ineffective institution. Unless it was made to be an effective institution, then it would be almost impossible to resist the pressures to abolish it. Within the parliamentary Liberal Party there was a desire amongst some, particularly in the lower House, to have the upper House abolished, and elements of that still remain to this day. I think that if it was at that time left to a free vote of the lower House members, they would have happily supported the abolition of the upper House. All of those elements were in the throes. Lloyd Lange, as the leader of the upper House prior to 1984, had made a speech advocating reform of the upper House in terms of its relevance, and that was part of that initiating debate.

In the preselections of the Liberal Party that led to my election in 1984 the issue of developing a strong relevance for the upper House to try to sustain its existence was an essential ingredient for all of the candidates. It would be fair to say that those who came into the Parliament with me in 1984 wanted to see a change and knew that something had to be done in order to be able to sustain it and to resist the Labor Party's strong policy that it should be abolished and what elements we were aware of within the parliamentary Liberal Party for abolition. I think it would be fair to say that within the organisation there was no strong support at that time for its abolition. So that is the background. What was the Parliament like when I arrived? It was just an institution. I do not think that there was in the early part of my period a strong sense of the power of the upper House to exercise discipline and control. But then political issues arose, which altered that focus. The one that particularly comes to mind is the issue involving the judges and the establishment of the judicial tribunal. I have forgotten the actual name of it now.

**Dr CLUNE:** The Judicial Commission.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** The Judicial Commission. You might recall that that really started to coalesce; there were a whole lot of community interest groups. There was a lot of theatre in the upper House, but it identified the extent to which the upper House could in fact actually try to influence the agenda. I think

then there were a couple of other issues that arose during the course of that period because we had some independence in the House at that stage in the legislative agenda. It became reasonably clear that a Government no longer had the ability to totally control the House even though it might have had the numbers. So there was a focus on the upper House and I think there was community awareness amongst organisations—interest groups—that if you had lost the debate with government then you may be able to influence the debate in the upper House. That started from that 1984 to 1988 period and then dramatically changed from the elections after that.

**Dr CLUNE:** You mentioned candidate preselection manipulation. Did you mean within the Liberal Party or generally for the whole Council under the old system?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** There were urban myths—whether they were realities—that the process of selecting Liberal Party candidates was open to manipulation. Some suggested that it might have been. I have no idea what the processes were within the Labor Party, but they certainly were not regarded as edifying within the Liberal Party.

**Dr CLUNE:** The whole system was open to manipulation because the number of votes you needed to get elected was so low that, quite frankly, money changed hands at times to buy votes.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** There were stories to that effect. Whether it was true is something I am not aware of.

**Dr CLUNE:** There was a case in the late 1940s where four Labour votes went astray and I understand pretty strongly from people I talk to that money did change hands. I gather one way it was done was that you would go up to someone who had a vote and say, "I bet you a hundred pounds I don't get elected" and you went round to a number of people.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I have heard those stories. Whether they are true, you would only know from the people who were there at the time. It certainly was a myth and myths can affect reputations and certainly affect the body politic. That is why there was a fairly strong level of support for trying to drive—certainly within the Liberal Party—reform within the Legislative Council and to make certain that it was so sufficiently relevant to the community that it would be very difficult for a Government to be able to abolish it. I think it was into the lead-up to 1988 elections I had been invited by a community organisation, which I will not name but which has branches in almost every city and country town, to come around and talk to them about the upper House.

I was quite amazed at the high level of ignorance of, firstly, the existence of the Legislative Council and its role. It certainly would have been into the move up to the 1988 elections because I remember having a discussion with John Johnson about it. He said to me, "John, why are you bothering to talk to them? They're a constituency that's almost welded onto you." I remarked that it is not just about the elections but actually about the upper House; that it is a matter of making certain that there is an understanding that there is an upper House because in a sense in those days it was just a case that people voted just a ticket. They did not really show an awareness, as they do with the Senate, of the significance of upper House voting. I do not really think there was an understanding of the relevance of upper House voting until 1984 or 1991 when all of the Independents came in when we had the tablecloth paper.

**Mr BLUNT:** The tablecloth ballot paper was in 1999.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Was it 1999?

**Mr BLUNT:** Yes. We ended up with 13 on the crossbench.

**Dr CLUNE:** As many as in the Opposition I think.

**Mr BLUNT:** Yes.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** There was then an understanding of how you can manipulate the voting in order to maximise the numbers in the upper House. It then took 15 years but I always took the view that it was going to take time.

**Dr CLUNE:** Certainly the old system was really indefensible if you wanted to protect the indirectly elected upper House. But I get the sense that although the Liberal Party and The Nationals at one stage were opposed to the reforms, they realised it was inevitable if the upper House was going to survive.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I think if it had been left to the politicians on both sides at the time there could have been support for its abolition. But there were entrenched interests in the Liberal-National Party in the upper House that did not want abolition. Within the body politic there was not support for abolition because of the Queensland experience. It was an interesting period.

**Dr CLUNE:** That brings us more or less to the third question.

**Mr BLUNT:** Yes, I would like to explore this in some detail. How did the Council change after the 1988 election?

**Dr CLUNE:** No Government has had a majority since 1988.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** You had to focus in on how you governed. I think by and large we had to put in processes to negotiate with the crossbenchers. I think I did a lot of the negotiating for the Government, even though I was not a Minister on a lot of the critical issues. We had to put in place better communication measures between the upper House and the lower House Ministers, and we had to understand that it could take time. Did we fully appreciate that? No. I do not think the Government through to the 1991 election fully came to grips with the need to take time.

It was a government that was driven with aspirations for reform. It was focussed in more on reform than the process of community governance in governing. A consequence of that was effectively the Government lost the 1991 election. It did that, I think, to a large extent because it had not developed appropriate relationships with the crossbenchers and that further deteriorated between 1991 and 1995. Really the art of governing changed and there was a need, even for the crossbenches, to develop benchmarks for their behaviours so that some of them took the view that the Government had the right to govern but there had to be accountability.

If you were going to oppose something, what were the principles the minority crossbenches were going to use to oppose? It was a question of trying to get to understand those. I think from 1988 to 1991 the Government was still too much focussed on an agenda of reform and had not completely come to grips with dealing with a new dimension. It was easier to focus on an Opposition but not easy to understand how to deal with the crossbenchers. I do not think the Government of that day did it very, very well. But it was an interesting period in terms of negotiations. I think the largest area of negotiation was over the education reform Act. That went for ages—masses of negotiations, trying to provide an ability to negotiate with a Minister who was a focus of community antagonism, and how do you get significant legislative reform through dealing with the principles of the reform whilst dealing with the principals of that cross bench group which was being very solidly lobbied by an organised lobby group? I think that education reform bill was a period of massive learning for the crossbench.

**Dr CLUNE:** The other big one was the Industrial Relations Bill where John Fahey actually went into the Legislative Council to try to defend his bill.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** It was the experience out of the education reform Act that led him to insist that he wanted to be in the upper House with a lot of differing views as to whether that should have been but it occurred. I will not comment on the wisdom of it but when it comes to negotiating changes in a legislative package it is always better if the principal can be out of the caldron and not in there under the pressure so that it allows time for objective consideration. As one of the pressures that are always on Ministers in the upper House, particularly the leaders of an upper House, is that they are also driving and managing legislation, of being able to be on top of all of the issues, being able to objectively look at the issues and make judgement calls. I would never be advocating again for an upper House Minister or to have Ministers coming into the upper House to deal with that sort of situation in what is a very volatile environment, a very confrontational environment. There are a lot of lessons to be learnt in managing a Parliament in that sort of an environment.

**Dr CLUNE:** Are you saying if the Minister is in another House it gives you a little time to negotiate, but if the Minister is in the upper House you can say, "I'll go and see the Minister and see what he thinks".

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Yes, the issue in the upper House is before the Minister who is also driving the agenda. You cannot really be seen to say, "Look, I want to stop and I want to think about this. Let's take a breather." With significant pieces of legislation sometimes a time-out is beneficial.

**Mr BLUNT:** Do you have any comments or reflections as to how that challenge of negotiating with the crossbench was handled by the Government that followed in 1995, particularly during the time that you were the Leader of the Opposition?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** From my perception they developed a much closer relationship with the crossbenches. I suspect it is a skill that is developed within the Labor Party of dealing with union negotiations and the art of negotiation. The skill of compromise underpins the life of an industrial negotiator, something that is not within a lot of the experience of Coalition members. I think that the Labor Party did it very, very well. It was able to govern, I think, much more effectively. I think also it had learnt from the experiences of the previous Government. As an Opposition they had from 1988 to 1995 the opportunity of experiencing how to deal with crossbenches who are able to undermine a government or who try to mitigate a government's agenda. Once you have had the opportunity to learn that then you can apply it when you come into government. I think that it applied it quite well. It gave the crossbenches more resources to deal with that. The art of negotiation, I think, was more significantly applied by it.

**Mr BLUNT:** One of your former colleagues whom we interviewed as part of this process made an interesting observation about the legislative process dealing with those big pieces of legislation—the industrial relations bills, both the Coalition's one and the Jeff Shaw one in 1996, and also the education legislation. Mr Ian Cohen made an interesting observation in his valedictory speech just before he left the Parliament before the last election about sitting on the crossbench with you on one side and Jeff Shaw on the other speaking to dozens and dozens of amendments in the Committee of the Whole, speaking directly to them, seeking to persuade them on the floor of the House of the merits of your argument or Jeff Shaw's argument and being placed in the situation of having to make a call when a division is called on each of those amendments. I found that a fascinating observation because I get the impression that today when we go through that same process in the Committee of the Whole, decisions have already been taken elsewhere as to what position would be taken by the crossbench on a particular amendment or a particular vote. Those decisions are being made in negotiations with parties outside of the House. Do you have any comments?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I certainly know that the art of debate on the floor was critical on many issues. In certain areas—critical areas—yes, deals had been done with certain members of the crossbench, but you could work on the basis that if you put up a good argument then there was a chance that you might be able to change the vote, and I got that impression from things that crossbenchers had said to me. So you had to be prepared to articulate a debate—an argument—on the floor. It may well be that things have changed today, that everything is being negotiated outside the House—and that would not surprise me.

We had moved, as I said, from crossbenches having influence in 1988—the Government had not really learnt how to deal with that—and it went right through to 1995 and it is still going through a learning process. The Government changed in 1995—better understanding—and in the 1995 to 1999 period I got the impression that a lot of issues had been bedded down before you actually got to the floor of the Chamber. It would not surprise me if over the ensuing years governments had got to the stage where they were not going to be bringing things into the Parliament until they were fairly certain as to what the position was going to be.

**Dr CLUNE:** In that period from 1988 to 1995, do you think the outcome in terms of the legislation was actually better than, for example, if you had had the numbers in the House?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I think so. I think that the enthusiasm of some Ministers and the enthusiasm to drive agendas get tempered and therefore you look for what might be a more moderate reform. So you do not get the extremes of positions that get driven and it means that a government has to look at governing to the mid ground. If it wants to drive a significant agenda then it has to be prepared to do a lot more work in conditioning the community and therefore conditioning the crossbenches.

I think that in the period 1991 to 1999 community interest groups understood how to manipulate the crossbenches, so that there was a lot of minority interest issues that were able to be driven. An Opposition will perhaps seek to exploit that for two reasons: one, to destabilise the Government; but, two, to try and engender political support coming towards the next election. That is a factor which I think is a significant issue in terms of the stability of good government, that you end up governing to the interest of interest groups rather than

governing to the interest of the community. I could name a couple of crossbenchers, but I will not, that significantly pandered to minority interest groups and tried to drive those particular interest groups' agendas into legislative reform and therefore made the process of governing not easy.

**Dr CLUNE:** From what you are saying there were some Independents in your day who you had a chance of persuading on the floor of the House rather than having them captured by an interest group and voting no matter what.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I took the view that if you put the arguments onto the record, then if the arguments are on the record it means that you have an opportunity of going out and explaining to the community just exactly what has gone on. Major organisations do, in fact, look at the *Hansard*—they want to know what has gone on, why have things happened—and I took the view that a government must be prepared to articulate the position that it stands. You might win, you might lose, but at least know why you are doing something and articulate that. Again, it affects the process of government.

I can recall some Ministers saying, "Never introduce a measure into the Parliament if you think that you are not going to get it through the upper House". I lost the argument but I took the view that a government ought to be articulating the issues that it wants to pursue. So if you believe that there is a need for legislative reform, put it on a plate and see what happens with it, and if you lose it then at least people knew what you were going to do. I can give you an example of something that was said that we would not achieve.

The Keating Government had introduced the superannuation scheme, the 5 per cent to 9 per cent scheme, which had the potential to cap public sector liabilities. I went to the Premier because looking at State liabilities, the State debt, as a result of an ageing public service, it was going to be monumental unless something was done to control it. I said, "You have now got the opportunity. Don't criticise the Federal Government"—as the Federal Opposition was—"Embrace it and then use it". But it meant that you were, in fact, cutting off massive benefits to the public service and the expectation was the Labor Party would oppose it and so would the crossbenches. The Premier said, "Right, you can go for it". Michael Egan was the shadow Treasurer and surprised everybody; he came out and said, "We are going to support it but it is not going to be retrospective, it is going to be prospective". That was put in in the hope that if you lost that you have still got the game. Well, we were happy to lose that.

After that, all of the governments across Australia moved to implement that sort of reform and brought the national debt slowly under control compared with what it used to be. That is an example of where I took the view of identify where you want to go, articulate that and at least the community will know what you are doing. But if you do walk away from something because you think you might lose it in the House because of the crossbenches, effectively you are not going to be seen to be standing for very much.

**Dr CLUNE:** With that superannuation matter, if you or the Government had taken the approach that we cannot get it through so we will not put it up nothing would ever have happened.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** We may assume somebody would have had to do something at some stage or other, but that was the catalyst for very significant financial reform of public sector finances nationally. I still see elements of that happening. We have seen it just recently with the Federal Government. Would you pursue something if you think that you will lose it? You should pursue it. Were there things that should have been pursued during the 1991 to 1995 period? Yes, there should have been, in my view, because you have got to be seen to be standing for something. I think the same has occurred during each of the governments since. I think there is still a learning yet to be gone through for governments in how to govern when you do not control either the lower House or the upper House. Keep in mind also that in the 1991 to 1995 period the Government did not necessarily control the lower House.

**Mr BLUNT:** No.

**Dr CLUNE:** Perhaps we should move to the committee questions?

**Mr BLUNT:** Yes. That has been a fascinating discussion. What was your attitude to creating a modern committee system for the Legislative Council?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** As I said, coming into the Parliament in 1984 the view was that that is something that had to happen and that the Senate model was the model to proceed with. It was never, I think,

articulated in the policies of the Coalition leading up to an election. I do not think that there was an upper House policy. If there was, I do not recall it. But in what might be described as sort of the leadership group within the upper House there was a view that we were going to move and move fairly quickly on trying to implement a Senate-style committee program. When we came into Government I was given the task by the then leader, Ted Pickering, to draft proposals for a set of policy committees. With the assistance of the then Clerk we drafted a letter to the Government, to the Premier, with proposals for five upper House policy committees modelled on the Senate system.

I still remember the discussion with the then head of the Premier's Department, Gerry Gleeson, about the concern of allowing such committees to exist, the danger that could arise from allowing such to occur and the cost that might arise as a result of it. The compromise was that there would be two committees, that they would be funded. That is how we ended up with the State Development Committee and the Social Issues Committee, which led subsequently to the 1995 Government introducing one of the other committees, which was the Law and Justice Committee. Looking at some of my comments on retirement, I think I made comments along the lines of that I suspect the same approach was made to the head of Premier's for support and funding and they got one of the three that they were after. The underlying thinking that was in my mind I suspect was in the mind of the leadership team at that stage. That was that policy committees were a tool to be available to government to drive debate on significant issues which were going to be difficult to manage. It was the issue I referred to earlier of taking time to govern so that if you had major reforms that you wanted to pursue then, to take the community with you, you would use the committee processes.

The example of that was the very first reference which was made by Virginia Chadwick to the Social Issues Committee on adoption reform. Both Virginia and I had a very strong view as to what should be happening in that space and had had that view for some significant period of time in Opposition. But there were a lot of very entrenched interests that would be not happy with the reform. Keep in mind that I had adopted children and there were other members in Parliament with adopted children and they all had very strong views about reform. We took the view that one of the very first things that would be done—it was a view of Virginia and mine—was that we would send the adoption issue off to that committee so that you could engender a community debate. If you won the community debate and you got appropriate recommendations that reflected the community attitude then you would get reform, and that happened. I regarded that as a big breakthrough in the establishment and operation of committees. But the concept has not been, I think, utilised extensively by Government during my period. I do not know what has happened in the last 14 years.

**Dr CLUNE:** When you were drawing up the guidelines for these committees did you think at the time about giving them a self-referencing power?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Yes, and the view was no, that there had to be some government guidance to what ought to be the agenda and that it should be government that tries to use the committees to develop very significant policy initiatives. I do not think the State Development Committee, to the best of my recollection, ever really achieved that agenda of significant policy reform. But certainly the Social Issues Committee has been useful. Law and Justice I think has been useful, but I do not think Government has understood the way in which these committees could be used to gauge and to funnel community ownership of reform.

Even out of the adoption reform issues I was headbutted by people for years afterwards as a result of those changes, and I came to learn that what we did there was absolutely right and that the level of headbutting would have been monumental if there had not been an opportunity for people to vent and to understand all sides of the picture. When all sides of the picture are out there and people understand differing views then you can mellow out of that a way forward. That was, in my view, the greatest value which would come out of policy committees.

**Dr CLUNE:** A committee can make things not so much the property of the government or driven by the government but, as you say, more of the community feeling and input.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Reform is driven by the momentum which is within the community. If it is done well by the committee, led well by the committee, then the sense of that direction can mellow radical reform or can identify the extent to which reform ought to go but provide a staged process by which it can be achieved. Or it can identify that absolutely nothing should be done.

**Dr CLUNE:** I am interested that you said you did not think the State Development Committee was quite as significant as the others. What is your assessment of the committee and how it worked or why it did not work?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I was the first chair of the committee. We started out by looking at contracting and coastal development, which were two significant issues at that time. I think possibly they were two significant issues that were heavily politicised at the time. That committee took on almost politicised issues and therefore was not able to operate in a way in which I envisaged. But it did have the impact of taking the heat out of the debate on coastal development. You might remember the Labor Party's campaign against the then Wal Murray when they said he was going to concrete beaches up and down the coast. It is interesting that it was based upon a document which had been released by the previous Government, the previous Premier, on coastal development. That was a document that was out there that was going to see massive development all along the coast. That was picked up by the new Government. It became a significant political tool against the new Government. We were brought in, in a sense, to try to take the heat out of the issue. I think it did take the heat out of the issue.

**Dr CLUNE:** I think they adopted some of your recommendations. Did they not bring in some new guidelines for coastal development?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Yes. There was a fair amount of reform as a result of it and also a lot of reform in the contracting area. Yes, reform occurred. But I do not know very much about what has happened with it since. Keep in mind my philosophy of it was to take significant issues which would be difficult for a government to manage. The committee ought to take those issues, take them into the community, and formulate a way forward. That takes time. You have to be looking today at what might be an issue that you want to deal with in 18 months' time. If governments want to react immediately they will not make much use of these particular committees.

**Mr BLUNT:** In due course you became Minister for—

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** State Development.

**Mr BLUNT:** Obviously, as Minister you would have had a whole range of responsibilities and pressures, and so on. How significant were the Legislative Council's committees—particularly the State Development Committee? Did they have responsibilities?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** As a criticism of myself, it did not. I think that, again, was a significant failing on my part. As the Minister for State Development I identified five areas that we needed to drive a policy program, a policy agenda, on. I will take one of them in hindsight. We are going back to 1990. I identified in 1990 that education exports would be a critical policy area for the economy, and that one of the great advantages that New South Wales and Australia would have is in education exports. Nobody had ever debated it at that stage. But education was not a State development matter; education was an Education Department matter. The Education Department did not want to know. Perhaps what we should have been doing is taking the standing committee and that policy agenda item and saying, "Right, you have this policy. How do you implement that policy?" I think we would have changed the face of the economy on education exports possibly 10 years ahead of when it was.

Education exports did not really become a significant issue until the early 2000s. Again, not understanding and not using the tools you have created—you look at those things in hindsight. And I think there are lots of other areas where these committees could be used to take particular agendas which are long-term agendas and work up the community into supporting and developing policy to advance those agendas. State Development still has an opportunity because governments develop a strategy. But how do you implement the strategy? That is policy, which is what the policy committee should be looking at. In the lead-up to that, which is not in the papers here, have you spoken to people about that period of 1988 to 1991-95 of one of the budget estimates committees and the nature of the tensions between the upper House and the lower House?

**Dr CLUNE:** We have touched on it; we have not talked about it in detail. I suppose because it was the lower House that really drove the setting up of the estimates committees thanks to John Hatton and company. As soon as the Government got control it would not reappoint them.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Remember general estimates committees came in during our period.



**Mr BLUNT:** Joint estimates were from 1991 to 1995.

**Dr CLUNE:** The joint thing was a product of the fiftieth Parliament.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** If my recollection is correct, that came out of the leadership team in the upper House taking the view that they should be Legislative Council estimates committees.

**Mr BLUNT:** Right.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Hatton had already had estimates committees in the lower House. I do not know if there were representatives from the upper House on those?

**Mr BLUNT:** Yes, they were joint committees.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I know there was a drive to try to get separate committees. That got compromised. I have forgotten the details of that compromise. People who remember that would be Pickering—

**Mr BLUNT:** We did explore that a little bit, 1995 and 1996, with Lis Kirkby. I think she moved the motion for the Legislative Council estimates committees but they were then subsumed by the general purpose standing committees.

**Dr CLUNE:** My recollection is that as soon as Carr got in with a majority in the lower House he wanted nothing to do with estimates committees. Whelan was told to make it so difficult that it does not happen, and I think that is basically what happened.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** That was the situation. They became almost irrelevant. The general purpose committees came in. You might recall when I moved them I said something about them not to look at policy but they were to look at administration.

**Dr CLUNE:** Just before we get on to the general purpose committees, one thing about the State Development committee was that the issues you looked at under your chairmanship were very politicised. Was there bipartisanship on the committee? Was the committee politicised, or could it stand back?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I think it would be fair to say that it was not politicised, but that was because of the nature of the people who were on it, that they were trying to find a solution. I think there might have been a dissenting committee report in relation to one of them but that was pursued for political reasons, because of the political dynamics of that period. But coming up with the report, I think Brian Jinks was the secretary of the committee—

**Dr CLUNE:** Yes, he was a former academic.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** A former deputy Ombudsman, I think.

**Dr CLUNE:** He was a lecturer when I was a student at Sydney university.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** It was his craftsmanship of the report and the recommendations that I think got the report through. You see, basically it is the skill of the writer in those committees which is so very important.

**Dr CLUNE:** But aren't you selling yourself a bit short? The chairman has to bring the members along and persuade them as well.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Oh, that would be a matter for committee members to form a view on that, I think. Yes, the chairman has a role. I do not think we have ever had a problem with a committee through the activities of chairmen. I think they have all generally operated quite well. But then I think that is because members also want the committees to work well.

**Dr CLUNE:** I remember Max Willis said that with the adoption thing he adopted the attitude that he was not going to be heavy-handed. He just let members talk and he let a consensus naturally form on the committee. That was the way he approached it.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Yes. That is his management style and it was appropriate for that particular reference. If you had tried to drive any agenda on that particular reference, it would have made the outcome of the committee quite difficult and quite different. I remember that issue went back to that committee a few times.

**Mr BLUNT:** Yes.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** We got legislative reform and then there had to be another committee review of it. That committee on that particular subject is almost a good example of the utility of the committees.

**Dr CLUNE:** I think it was textbook example of a committee achieving a good outcome.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I do not think there would have ever been reform in that area if it had not been for the committee undertaking that study.

**Dr CLUNE:** And you were the person who moved the motion for the general purpose standing committees.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Yes. Again, that came back to dissatisfaction with the way in which the estimates committees were operating and that there needed to be a better ability to examine the administration of government. To the date that I left, I have to say that I am not quite confident that we had yet got to understand how to use those committees, and I do not think that shadow Ministers had got to understand how to use those committees. I noticed when I went back and had a look at it I was reminded of a particular provision in them which allowed individual members to come and sit in on committees and to question public servants, but not to have a deliberative vote. I do not think we have used that particular provision.

**Mr BLUNT:** It has been used very sparingly, yes.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Just go back to my philosophy around it. It is interesting that I did not articulate the philosophy in the debate completely, I do not think. You get better government, you get better oppositions and you get better transitions of government if there was a more comprehensive understanding of how departments actually operate and if there was not the questioning of the budget in a political point-scoring manner, but if there was a critical questioning of the way in which the bureaucracy actually operated. People think that Ministers control their departments; they do not. The department heads control the department. A Minister is meant to set a policy agenda. A lot of Ministers, I think, go in there thinking they are going to take control of the department and they are going to become the departmental head. There is not a good understanding of governance, I think, in transition to governments. They learn.

I took the view that if we could actually use the general purpose standing committees to look at very critical departmental operations and understand how those departments operate, then that would be a salutary impact on administrations, it would significantly assist government to perhaps drive reform agendas, and it would also assist the body politic in better understanding how governments work. I do not think a lot of politicians actually understand how government departments work and what is the system of even creating budgets or budget controls—all of that. You could take particular areas of public sector administration and question it and get to understand it and try to help governments. An opposition might think that it is points-scoring against the Minister, but it is actually about getting the public sector to be more accountable.

I will go back to a period when I was Minister and we were getting prepared for budget estimates committees. I actually had departmental heads saying to me that it was only through getting prepared for budget estimates committees they actually got to understand what was happening in some areas of their own departments because some of them were so big. So having to focus in on what could be questioned about, they had to get to understand their own departmental operations. That is understandable in the size of government.

**Dr CLUNE:** Certainly.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** It is what conditioned me in terms of the thinking of a role for the general purpose committees.

**Dr CLUNE:** You were thinking it could be almost a nursery for a shadow Minister to learn about a department and be prepared when the day came to take over.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Absolutely. You would be wanting to understand what are all the operational procedures of the department—things that at that time were not in the public domain, such as a better understanding of expenditure within the department, to get to understand where there is room for improvements within government agencies. But our general purpose committees did not sit for very long. They were still very much politically driven. If my recollection is correct, with a lot of them the Ministers were turning up to general purpose committees. That was never the intention. This was about looking at the administration of government, not looking at the policy of government.

You might recall that in my speech I made it very clear that these were not policy committees; that as a result of looking at the administration of government, it might result in policy changes. But it was to actually look at how was policy being implemented, and if there were problems, then why were those problems arising. Therefore in a sense it was a tool that governments could use, but committees became more of a focus on destabilising government and being able to confront the Minister rather than being seen as the Parliament actually having a tool to oversight the administration of government. If there was a controversial area of administration, then you could have those people come in and answer to the Parliament. If it was done that way with the Minister sitting out, then they Minister might well be able politically to drive reform or improvements and then be responsive to what was being articulated.

**Dr CLUNE:** Regrettably I think it got to the stage where the public servants were being politically attacked too. I remember one episode that you would remember too when a number of public servants were asked at estimates hearings if they were members of a certain political party.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Again, that is a political weapon and not administration. That would be, in my view, a failure.

**Mr BLUNT:** There is one example I can think of where one of your former colleagues, Dr Pezzutti, was chairman of the relevant general purpose standing committee that had responsibility for the Health portfolio. I remember, I think over a couple of years, the Minister and the department heads would come to the initial estimates hearing and then time and time again the department head would be called back for supplementary hearings and there was not necessarily a single hot political issue that the committee was exploring. It was generally exploring the administration of the enormous Health Department.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I was Minister for Health at one stage and I think it was drawn to my attention that, apart from the health department in Russia, the New South Wales Health Department was the largest unitary health administration service in the world. It was massive, and I had the pleasure of having both Health and Community Services at the one time. I am sorry, I interrupted you.

**Mr BLUNT:** No.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Again it comes down to understanding how to use the committees and developing a clear philosophical approach or a policy approach to the role and use of the committees. I think—I have forgotten when now—I moved the motion to introduce those committees. It must have been about 1997 and I retired a couple of years later. They really had not got bedded down. Whether they have been bedded down now, I have no idea. But in terms of what was the policy approach, as far as I was concerned in terms of better administration of government and an appropriate use of the Parliament in the administration of government, that is what I had in mind and that is why I noticed when I reread the speech I obviously spent some time emphasising that these were not policy committees. They were committees that were intended to look at the administration of government, out of which then policy decisions might ensue.

**Dr CLUNE:** You got that resolution up in spite of the Government. Jeff Shaw, as I recall, opposed it pretty strenuously.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** The Government had a very strong policy position against it, if my recollection is correct. But they also knew that they did not have a single vote to support them. This was about

accountability of government. I think it was also the time—1997 might have been the first time when we had started calling for papers and so there had been a series of steps that were being taken to say that the Government is in fact accountable to the Parliament. I can sense, from what I read in the papers, that we are still going through a better understanding of that process. Remember that the Government had been fighting tooth and nail against this whole concept that the Government and Ministers were accountable to the upper House.

**Dr CLUNE:** It is your claim that there were not enough members to service the committees. Do you remember that?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I do. I have to say possibly in hindsight that he might have been right. I think that had there been possibly fewer committees but a better understanding of the way in which the committees should work and to have a better policy framework around the role of the committees might have been more beneficial. As I said, I do not know what the committees have done in the last decade, but I sense from what I have read in the papers that they have not achieved the objective and that is to look at areas of administration that are the subject of controversy and to deal with it. However, I have a recollection that the House did take a controversial one involving the Minister for the Environment and the response to various pollution outbreaks. My recollection is that a lot of the focus of that was on the Minister.

Again, it is the art of politics. You take advantage of it wherever you can, but in terms of these committees they ought to have been looking at what actually was going on within the administration of the agency. Yes, a Minister is responsible for it, but a Parliament ought to be saying that if the policy is unsound then you run a policy debate. But if the policy is sound and there are problems, then what is happening in the administration of government that is leading to a breakdown in the administration of policy? And making certain that the agencies of government understand that they are not just answerable to the Minister but they are ultimately answerable to the Parliament.

**Dr CLUNE:** I think it is a fair point that if committees expect governments to take notice they should be constructive in their criticism and not just use the committees as a means of partisan attack. It is a two-way street, I would think.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** If you want the Parliament to gain respect. If you are just going to use it again as a political tool then a political tool is always a two-edged sword. If you have used it as a blunt instrument then expect that either it will be used as a blunt instrument against you or the disposition will be to abolish it when the opportunity arises. You are better off trying to use the tools to entrench the authority of the Parliament. I am not quite certain that we have got there yet with the general purpose committees.

**Dr CLUNE:** Perhaps we could move to the tenth question. Just your reflections, you could probably lead off from that.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** That would require me to address my mind to actually what has happened and I have not done that.

**Dr CLUNE:** Just talking about your time, your personal experiences, just focusing on that.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** In terms of the committees, I have to say that for me the most important event was the adoption reforms. The fact that we got the policy committees up and in a significant area of social reform achievements were attained when I do not think they would have otherwise been obtained using the usual body politic. If you look at the issues that the social issues committee has looked at, that the law and justice committee has looked at, areas of significant social reform are areas where you will be able to achieve reform with the least disruption if you have carried the community with you. I remember Neville Wran once saying, when he was Premier, that it is the role of a Premier to lead but also make sure that you are never so far ahead that you have left everybody behind.

In areas of social change you have to take the community with you, and these committees are the way in which you can do that. Some people accuse me of social engineering. Social change is in fact social engineering. But you have to understand the community and the community issues that need to be addressed. In my view that was the most singular significant reform. My greatest disappointment with a lot of these was that we were never able to resurrect the Public Works Committee. Government is able to make decisions about significant public works years ahead, but many of the public works are highly controversial.

If there were a capability of being able to look at very significant public works and allow for significant community input, I think a lot of the controversy around those public works would be dissipated and possibly some of the public works might be reconsidered. I use modern day the example of the desalination plant. Had all the facts about that been aired and there had been greater transparency about it, then there might have been the opportunity to walk away from that without a government being politically tied into it. We might have got better results out of things like the airport rail tunnel. We might have got things like something that never happened: the debate in the 1990s of a VFT to Melbourne where there was a fairly strong level of support within Government to look at that quite seriously, but a Minister who was absolutely totally opposed to it because his department wanted to have tilt trains. We now have no VFT and we do not even have tilt trains. They are significant public spending initiatives.

The current debate about second airports, I know what happened back in the nineties because I was the Minister responsible for the third runway and what is there. The public is not aware of what is there. I think that if you actually had a parliamentary committee that had all the reports, significantly different decisions would be made and the politicisation of that decision-making would be significantly dissipated. And I suspect there would be different decisions made than what has been projected. I regard that as a significantly missed opportunity but, again, governments want to be in control of public expenditure on capital works.

**Dr CLUNE:** The old Public Works Committee did a tremendous job. It went round the country and held hearings in all these country towns where local people and local members could say, "That's not where you should build the railroad." It did a tremendous job in that sense.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I still think it could do a tremendous job today as well.

**Dr CLUNE:** You probably would not have got the hospital in Bathurst built the wrong way round if the committee had held a hearing up there.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Or fire stations that I know of that have been built the wrong way round and the trucks could not get into them. How they did not know that once they put the footings down, I do not know. That happened just recently. But again, they are the small items. I am looking at, in terms of public works, the big expenditures and looking at the debate on the needs for them. The Greiner Government went through massive political disruption in putting in the M2 tunnel to Epping. Had that been the subject of public works studies I think there would have been an opportunity to vent. The Carr Government would not have gone through the pain it went through with the M5 extension and the issue over stacks. I remember that the people connected with the design and construction of it came to me and said, "We don't understand why the Government is building only two lanes when we could actually build three lanes for only a minimal amount of additional expenditure." But the Government had, by way of policy, tied itself into two lanes and politically it could not move. Had the public works committee looked at that, you might have got a better outcome and we would not now be talking about the need for almost a duplicated M5—and perhaps you would not have got the decisions about tolls.

**Dr CLUNE:** The legislation was on the books until recent years and just needed to be reactivated, in fact. It provided that any public works over a certain amount of money had to go to the committee automatically. They did reform the committee, did they not, David?

**Mr BLUNT:** Briefly, but it never really took hold. It was a lower House committee and political events overtook it really.

**Dr CLUNE:** It did not have the power of the old committee where everything over a certain amount of money had to go to it?

**Mr BLUNT:** No.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I remember the public works committee had the referral of the Port Macquarie Hospital when I was health Minister.

**Mr BLUNT:** It was the Public Accounts Committee.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Oh, public accounts caught that?

**Mr BLUNT:** Yes.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Again, that sort of thing should have been the subject of a public works committee. A better understanding of what was going on in that particular contract might have resulted in the contract being different. But it certainly could have seen a significant change in the way in which governments administered public works contracting arrangements, keeping in mind that was 1990 and we are here in 2013 still talking about the shape and structure of public-private partnerships. So 24 years later we are still trying to learn. I suspect that had there been a parliamentary committee looking at that—looking at it dispassionately and not trying to score political runs out of it—we possibly would have got better public administration in that area much earlier than we are now.

**Dr CLUNE:** What members do you recall made contributions or were significant in some ways?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** If I pick on any one, then by inference I have excluded others. I think the only comment I will make is that every member of the committees that I ever spoke to or worked with actually tried to make the committees work. I do not exclude anyone from that. I do not actually have any recollection of anyone who sought to disrupt the work of the committees because I think most of them actually understood that if you have an effective committee system it enhances the reputation of the upper House. Do I think the same view was held by members of the lower House? No. I still think that many members of the lower House would have liked to have seen these committees go; that they were an impediment in their view of the unique role of Ministers to govern. Some of them saw them as a further argument for getting rid of the upper House, but not so with upper House members. They took their duties very seriously.

**Dr CLUNE:** We have reached the stage I think where the scrutiny, the executive function, has more or less devolved completely to the upper House; the lower House basically is a partisan House and for various reasons it probably has to be. However, an upper House—particularly as the upper House is now—is well suited to be the scrutiny, the executive agency.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** That comes back to what you mean by that. If it is meant to be the scrutiny of Ministers, then it will be politically partisan committees because the aim of them will be to try to break and bring down a Minister. But if it is to scrutinise the administration of the Executive, which is the public sector, then I think that would make the public sector much more accountable. I put on my hat as a person who, for the last several years, has had a role, certainly not a public role, in federal administration where public servants very strongly respect the oversight of the Parliament to federal administration. It tempers significantly public sector administration.

I am not quite certain that we are at that same level in a State sphere. I think the committees still see themselves as a tool in the political law, rather than understanding that they are committees of the Parliament and that it is the Parliament exercising an oversight of the administration of government. If you look at what are the tools for oversight of the administration of government there was the Auditor-General and the Ombudsman and then the Independent Commission Against Corruption but none of them, except really the Auditor-General, has the ability to trigger policy changes and each of them deals with maladministration.

The Parliament is able to look not necessarily at maladministration but appropriate administration. What is going on? Are there areas that really need to be still done the way they are? Is there a way to improve the administration of government rather than say it is the role of the Minister to drive improvement in the administration of government? I think that there is space for the Parliament to be able to say, "We have got a role in understanding better the way in which policy is administered and can it be improved?"

**Dr CLUNE:** I think you are right. I think those agencies have more of a reactive function that when there is a problem they go in to sort it out, but the Parliament can be more positive and proactive in trying to prevent problems and improve policies.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** Yes. I will give you an example. I had the responsibility for prisons and without the need for legislative fiat we drove massive reform in the administration of prisons. I am told there is a book out—I have never read it—but I was told by one of my Opposition colleagues that during that period more reform was driven in the prisons in my three years than had occurred in the century beforehand, much of which was for political reasons wound back. Nobody has ever looked at prisons, for instance, to understand what goes on in administration. How do you deal with social issues within a prison environment? What are the appropriate approaches? Yet law and order has always been a political battleground.

I think that there is room for massive reforms in some of these areas if there was a better understanding of what actually goes on within the Parliament. The Parliament has never seen its role as, "Let's look at an area of administration of government and understand what is going on, why is it going on and could there be ways in which it might be improved." You will see it today in terms of childcare. It has been an ongoing issue back to the days when I had administration responsibilities for those in 1990, and it would go back into the 1980s. But nobody in the Parliament has said, "Let us try to understand the administration of government." The focus has always been on the Minister. I think that has been a significant failure of an understanding of the policy use to which the Parliament should be using its committees.

**Mr BLUNT:** Is any structural reform required to achieve that aim? Do we need to tweak the resolution establishing the general purpose standing committees, for instance, or is it about the understanding that members have of the opportunities that are—

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I think it is the latter, and actually having a clear understanding of where they fit in with the structure of the governance of the body politic. I do not know that anybody has ever written anything on the role of committees. There has in the Senate—I have not ever seen it—but certainly not in the State. Keeping in mind, if I am correct, a lot of what we have done here in the past 20 years under the committees has started to be picked up in other States. They have been modelling it on here yet there has never been an articulation of governance and the way in which the committees are a tool in good governance of the public sector. You have got that framework here through the general purpose committees. I said in my speech on it, it is about looking at the administration of government out of which there may be policy improvements. You have got those tools and then you have got your policy committees. Again, it is the question of debate around these so that governments get a better understanding of the tools and how can you use these tools to improve governance.

**Dr CLUNE:** I think there is a cultural thing. Your point about Canberra and the respect of Parliament, if you take it a step higher, the House of Commons and the House of Lords, there is huge respect from governments of public servants of Parliament and a much greater acknowledgment of the power of Parliament. I do not think that does exist in Macquarie Street and it has been diminished in recent years too.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** If members of the committees fail to provide appropriate respect for the people who appear before them then they will get back what they have exhibited. During my period I saw certain members of Parliament exhibit disrespect. If you exhibit disrespect then you cannot expect respect to be reciprocated. It is an understanding of what is your role. I do not know whether we do much in that regard. I had discussions at one time with Prime Minister Hawke and Keating about trying to set up within the academic sphere a centre of public sector governance. I tried to get Prime Minister Howard interested: there was none but other things happened subsequently. But we were looking at trying to engender an interest in hearing an appropriate centre which would provide a forum for skills development both for public servants and primarily for politicians to understand better public sector governance. Sydney university set up a centre with Gallop as head.

I had a hope that out of that this governance facility would be engendered and that we would get to the stage of members of Parliament getting to better understand how government budgets get formulated and administered, what is the structure of governance within the public sector, and what is the role of the Parliament and its committees in that governance. I think just about everybody who ever gets elected has no understanding of that; they have got to learn it. But you learn by experience not by discussions and frameworks. I had a discussion with one of your predecessors, John Evans, about doing this, but they still have not done it and it is still not there. Politicians learn by the experience of their failures, and I think it is something that we have still got to get to so that when you create institutions such as these parliamentary committees we understand the framework within which they have been established and the framework within which they should operate in the system of governance.

Remember we went through a lot of steps during that period of 1995 to 1999 of putting in place appropriate governance frameworks for the accountability of Ministers and the administration to the Parliament or, more particularly, to the Legislative Council, because the lower House did not want to know. I am not quite certain that a lot of people still understand the concept of that governance framework that has been put in place. So that if you are going to have a call for papers it actually does mean that people need to be looking at them.

**Dr CLUNE:** Not forgetting papers.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** But that again comes down to the fact that there has got to be an understanding that even people within Ministers' offices are public servants that are answerable to the Parliament; they are not answerable to their Minister, they are ultimately answerable to the Parliament. I know in relation to that issue the Parliament has set up a committee to look at it. That took a different view as to whether or not they should have been in some discussions with people because the parliamentary inquiry process is a politicised process. That would occur to you as something I would have disagreed with; I would have sent that off to the ICAC to undertake an investigation, because it has got the skills to undertake that investigation, and then to report back to the Parliament so that the Parliament could act appropriately in dealing with a failure to respond to the Parliament. But again it is using the tools that have been put in place to provide information.

Be that as it may, things will happen as they have, but again it comes down to the question of governance and the frameworks of governance. That period of 1995 to 1999—alright, I was Leader of the Opposition and responsible for driving a lot of that, but it was within a framework and I do not think anybody has actually written about or articulated what was the framework that has been achieved and then how should it be exercised. Does that help you in terms of your thinking?

**Mr BLUNT:** It certainly does, yes.

**Dr CLUNE:** Is there anything else?

**Mr BLUNT:** That is a good place for us to conclude, but is there anything else that you wanted to talk about?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** If the committees are going to go forward there needs to be articulated a governance framework. You do not set them up for political opportunism; you set them up to operate within the accountability and the role of the Parliament and how can that be enhanced. If the understanding of the purpose is articulated, and I do not think we ever did articulate the purpose, then one might well want to do a review. It is always good to understand why you have achieved what you were wanting to achieve. If you have articulated what you wanted to achieve, then go back and review whether it has been achieved. If it has not been achieved, why not? Perhaps that might be a part of what this document might achieve; I do not know what you are wanting to get out of it.

But I would advocate that you look at the governance framework within which it was placed. What was the governance framework and what were you trying to achieve out of the establishment of these committees? Then look at almost a performance audit. Have you achieved the objective? If you have not achieved the objective, why not? Perhaps an internal review is not the best way of undertaking that. I do not know of anyone who has actually looked at that governance framework in relation to that period of 1995 to 1999 when all of this was being done—really it was 1988 to 1999—and looked at it in terms of what I said: the framework of governance of the public sector, what was their policy purpose behind it, what were the objectives? Looking at it, those objectives were never articulated. Even in the setting up of the policy committees, there was never a speech in Parliament. There were reasons for that, but they were party political reasons.

We have never actually had clearly articulated policy objectives. It is easy to look at that in hindsight but a lot of this was being driven by individual politicians who were trying to drive reform. None of these were policy positions that were being driven by government and therefore you did not have the assistance of the administration to prepare speeches to help focus on articulated objectives. Perhaps out of this particular study that you are doing, there might be able to be identified objectives. What were the objectives? Articulate the objectives. Are they, in hindsight, the sustainable objectives and have they been achieved?

**Dr CLUNE:** I think one aim of this is to create a rich database, one might say, of all these ideas and thoughts about what happened when the committees were set up and how they have devolved, and it can be a source of material for someone to do some studies in the future, I think. It is also very enlightening to have your perspective on what you were thinking at the time. We have talked to Max Willis and Lloyd Lange who were on your side and who were very interested in this, and Ron Dyer who on his side was very interested too. As you say, it was a group of people who were driving this rather than a government. So it is very good to get all the thoughts of people on the record.



**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I do not know the extent to which you are talking to him or getting him to go on the record but remember that John Evans might now feel that he is no longer constrained, because John was very much in the heart of talking these things through and trying to develop almost a policy framework in which they would be pursued. I do not know whether or not because of the fact that he gave independent advice he feels now that he cannot articulate what it was all about, but I think it would be most beneficial to have that neutral perspective.

**Dr CLUNE:** All these Clerks lived to a ripe old age, you know. Les Jacklin is still around.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I do not think Les was involved when we were driving the first draft of changes. Les retired, I think, before 1988.

**Mr BLUNT:** 1988, 1989—I think John took over in 1988. So it would have been during that sort of transition period.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** It comes down to this whole agenda of Legislative Council reform. It really was during John Evans's period.

**Mr BLUNT:** Have you been invited to the events on 19 and 20 September?

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I think it is in my diary, yes.

**Mr BLUNT:** The sort of things that you just articulated at the end of our session this morning about the roles that particularly the general purpose standing committees can play in good governance, the administration of government, their place in the governance framework, the potential they have in the training of shadow Ministers in the lead-up to transition to government and so on, it would be fabulous if you could bring all those ideas, if you were available and able to participate in our celebratory seminar on 20 September.

**The Hon. John HANNAFORD:** I think that I had framed it on the basis that I would show a face and that was all I was going to do.

**The discussion concluded.**