

TARLOPUB00001  
01/05/2017

TARLO  
pp 00001-00046

PUBLIC  
HEARING

COPYRIGHT

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

THE HONOURABLE REGINALD BLANCH AM QC

PUBLIC HEARING

OPERATION TARLO

Reference: Operation E15/1982

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT SYDNEY

ON MONDAY 1 MAY, 2017

AT 10.10AM

Any person who publishes any part of this transcript in any way and to any person contrary to a Commission direction against publication commits an offence against section 112(2) of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988.

This transcript has been prepared in accordance with conventions used in the Supreme Court.

THE COMMISSIONER: The general scope and purpose of this public inquiry is to gather evidence to the allegations being investigated for the purpose of the determining the matters referred to in section 13(2) of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act of 1988. The first of these allegations is that between 1 July, 2009 and 17 February, 2016 Eman Sharobeem as the CEO of the Immigrant Women's Health Service dishonestly exercised her official functions by submitting invoices and receipts, which in some instances were falsified, for reimbursement for goods and services to which she was not entitled by directly using funds to pay for goods and services for private purposes and by using an IWHS credit card to pay for personal expenses. The second is that between 2014 and 2015 Eman Sharobeem as the CEO of IWHS dishonestly exercised her official functions by submitting and authorising payment by IWHS of false invoices for facilitation fees and other services to herself and other persons to which they were not entitled. The third is that between 2011 and 2015 Eman Sharobeem as the CEO of IWHS dishonestly exercised her official functions by submitting and authorising payment of invoices by IWHS for the renovation of her property at 92 Smart Street, Fairfield thereby obtaining a financial benefit. The fourth is that between 2012 and 2015 Eman Sharobeem as the CEO of IWHS dishonestly exercised her official functions by falsifying IWHS statistics to New South Wales Health and to the Smith Family. The fifth is that between 2006 and 2016 Eman Sharobeem dishonestly exercised her official functions by claiming to be a psychologist holding two PhDs and a Master's degree and further used those qualifications to treat IWHS clients. The sixth is that between 17 December, 2013 and 23 November, 2015 Eman Sharobeem as the CEO of Non English Speaking Housing Women's Scheme dishonestly exercised her official functions by authorising payments from that organisation to be made to IWHS then subsequently into her own account to which she was not entitled and by causing NESH to contribute \$18,000 towards the purchase of a motor vehicle for her husband, Haiman Hammo. The seventh is that in 2015 Eman Sharobeem partially exercised her official functions by arranging for her son, Richard Sharobeem, to be hired as an employee of NESH and to use a NESH vehicle for his private purposes. The eighth is that between March, 2011 and November, 2016 Eman Sharobeem fraudulently obtained and retained appointment as a board member for the Community Relations Commission, now Multicultural NSW, and the Anti-Discrimination Board, now part of the Department of Justice, by using false academic qualifications.

40

Mr Rajalingam is appearing as Counsel Assisting, and can I take other appearance.

MR EURELL: May it please the Commission, I seek leave to appear for the first witness, Ms Julie Watton. My name is Eurell, E-u-r-e-l-l.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I grant leave.

MR CHHABRA: May it please, I appear for Ms Eman Sharobeem, Mr Richard Sharobeem, Mr Charlie Sharobeem, Mr Haiman Hammo. My name is Chhabra, C-h-h-a-b-r-a, instructed by Mr Wassef.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Chhabra. I grant leave. Mr Ekstein, will you - - -

MR EKSTEIN: Your Honour, I appear with Your Honour's leave for Ms Maric, M-a-r-i-c.

10

THE COMMISSIONER: I grant leave. Thank you.

MR CHEE: Commissioner, my name is Chee, C-h-e-e. I seek your authorisation to appear for the Department of Justice.

THE COMMISSIONER: I grant leave, Mr Chee.

MR CHEE: Thank you.

20

MS BOYD: Commissioner, Ms Boyd, solicitor. I seek Your Honour's authorisation to appear for the South Western Sydney Local Health District.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I grant leave. Yes.

MR SULLIVAN: Commission, Sullivan, solicitor. I seek authorisation to appear for the Department of Family and Community Services and witness, Eleri Morgan-Thomas.

30

THE COMMISSIONER: I grant leave, Mr Sullivan.

MS HUGHES: Commissioner, my name is Hughes, solicitor. I appear – seek leave to appear on behalf of Ms Audrey Lai.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Ms Hughes. I grant leave.

MR STEWART: Yes. Good morning, Commissioner. Stewart, solicitor. I seek leave to appear on behalf of Ms Chen.

40

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Stewart. I grant leave.

MR STEWART: Thank you, Commissioner.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Mr Rajalingam.

MR RAJALINGAM: Thank you, Commissioner. This inquiry principally concerns the activities of Eman Sharobeem whilst she was in her position as the chief executive officer of two state based publicly funded organisations, the Immigrant Women's Health Service and the Non English Speaking

Housing Woman's Scheme Inc. They were both organisations originally set up to provide funding and support to essentially women and children from disadvantaged and low socioeconomic groups. I will speak more about the organisations, the subject of this inquiry, later in my opening.

10 The inquiry is being held pursuant to section 31 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act. The purpose of the inquiry is to establish whether any person has engaged in corrupt conduct as defined by sections 8 and 9 of the Act and whether any changes should be made to laws, practices or procedures to prevent the likelihood of corruption occurring.

The Commission has jurisdiction in relation to the activities of Ms Sharobeem and others in the context of their function as either board members or staff members of IWHS and NESH because whilst they were not government officers themselves, they were acting in a public official capacity and the functions exercised by them were in the nature of public official functions.

20 The Commission also has jurisdiction with respect to the conduct of any person, whether or not a public official, that impairs or could impair public confidence in public administration and which could involve for example conduct involving dishonestly obtaining or dishonestly benefitting from the payment of or application of public funds for private advantage or the disposition of public assets for private advantage and conduct involving fraudulently obtaining or obtaining employment or appointment as a public official.

30 The Immigrant Women's Health Service was a non-government organisation, an NGO, it was a not-for-profit women's health service established in 1987, well prior to Ms Sharobeem's time there which was in 2004. The service provided free educational, recreational and developmental programs and services for immigrant and refugee women from what was referred to as culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, or the acronym C-A-L-D, CALD. The service was primarily funded by the New South Wales Department of Health, by the Southwest Sydney Local Health District. Since these allegations, Ms Sharobeem resigned in 2016 as the chief executive officer and the grants to the service have since stopped. The Non English Speaking Housing Women's Scheme  
40 Inc was also a not-for-profit organisation which was funded by the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services to provide housing services to women and children coming from essentially disadvantaged groups of the community.

Eman Sharobeem commenced employment with IWHS as a project coordinator at the service's Cabramatta office on 4 January, 2004. By August 2004 she was employed as manager of the service and worked at head office at 92 Smart Street, Fairfield. At some later date she changed her

title to chief executive officer but with little to no change to her roles or responsibilities. Part of her responsibilities was to oversee the day-to-day financial and administrative management of the service.

In 2006 Ms Sharobeem informed staff at IWHS she had completed a degree and was a practising psychologist, referring to herself as Dr Sharobeem. Ms Sharobeem promoted herself as a psychologist but these qualifications were false. I'll turn to each allegation separately.

- 10 Allegation 1. The Commission holds evidence that between 2009 and 2015, Ms Sharobeem sought reimbursement from IWHS for private expenses of up to and potentially exceeding \$200,000. Public funds were effectively used for the purchase of a Mercedes Benz registered in the name of Ms Sharobeem's husband, Haiman Hammo. Jewellery was purchased, furniture as well, holidays and holiday club memberships were paid for, hair and beauty treatments were reimbursed to Ms Sharobeem on a regular basis and clothes and food, domestic items.

- 20 A search warrant executed at Ms Sharobeem's residence on 17 August, 2016 located numerous items she had purchased using IWHS funds, including the items just referred to and an electric security gate which had been installed at her home residence which had been reimbursed to her as a work-related expense. It should be noted that some of the invoices which were submitted for reimbursement by Ms Sharobeem appear prima facie to be false documents. Between 2009 and 2011, 42 reimbursements were made by IWHS to Ms Sharobeem's personal accounts for receipts submitted by Ms Sharobeem. The total reimbursements over those two financial years was \$166,345.

- 30 An analysis of receipts submitted over that period reveal the following trend. The number of claims increased over the relevant period. Receipts which had been submitted had been cut to remove details of what had been purchased. Sometimes only credit card receipts were submitted. Many receipts related to groceries purchased on the weekend, a number of receipts related to the purchase of men's products, other receipts related to women's clothing, jewellery and hair and beauty services. Receipts were also submitted or purchases on accounts relating to her sons and husband, receipts for purchases on the IWHS credit card were also submitted for reimbursement. Reimbursements were made even where retailers had
- 40 refunded the amount to Ms Sharobeem and claims for reimbursement of penalty notices and State Debt enforcement orders were also made. The total reimbursements to Ms Sharobeem's accounts over 2012 to 2014 totalled \$168,917 and the total reimbursements to her account over the 2014 to 2015 financial year, just one year, was \$107,776.

Between 2010 and 2015 Commission investigators discovered regular reimbursements for purchases from the following retailers, Harvey Norman, approximately \$17,000, Bing Lee, \$7,700, iConcept, \$2,100, Andrew's

Designer Jeweller, \$14,500, Eternity Jewellers, \$26,900, Lily Room Cosmetics, \$11,000, S AND S Hair and Beauty, \$7,400, for dental work, \$1,800, items were purchased using her husband and children's credit cards at Ikea amounting to \$3,700 and at David Jones, \$3,400, Myer, \$15,400 and the Bonnyrigg Garden Centre, \$5,400.

10 In addition to that, Ms Sharobeem used a credit card and/or credit card account issued to the IWHS to make annual payments for memberships with Fitness First, Lite and Easy and Foxtel for the benefit of either herself or family members. She also used the IWHS credit card to make payments to Sydney Water for services connected to a number of properties that she owned. She also used that credit card to settle her eWAY account on a regular basis and of even more concern are payment made on the IWHS credit card for penalty notices and State Debt Recovery enforcement orders.

20 Allegation 2 relates to facilitator fees. In the normal course of IWHS activities, various people would be employed as facilitators to organise groups and programs for clients of the service. Facilitators were required to complete a timesheet listing their name, days and hours worked as well as their ABN or tax file number. The investigation by the Commission revealed that the majority of these timesheets were not correctly completed. Ms Sharobeem received significant payments for facilitation fees in addition to her salary from IWHS and NESH. Between May of 2014 to March 2015, Ms Sharobeem prepared and submitted false IWHS facilitator timesheets in various false names. She used aliases such as Emmy Adly and Emmy Adel to submit timesheets and authorise payments to her personal accounts. The estimate of total payments made to Ms Sharobeem in this way is \$98,965.

30 Ms Sharobeem also authorised payments to be made to her son Charlie Sharobeem's account, facilitator timesheets were completed by Ms Sharobeem in the name of Charlie G and Charl Gamal. The payments totalled approximately \$7,700. Payments were also made to Ms Sharobeem's other son, Richard. Notwithstanding that he worked at IWHS for some period of time there are a number of reasons why payments made to him are also suspected to be improper. The payments totalled approximately \$34,000.

40 Allegation 3 relates to property renovation. In June 2011 Ms Sharobeem purchased the IWHS office located at 92 Smart Street, Fairfield, for \$660,000. She collected rent from IWHS and used that rent to service her mortgage. In 2015 the service itself paid for renovations totalling \$51,192. The service paid for water rates, council rates and maintenance, contrary to the lease agreement in place. In an application in 2014 to the State Government for special funding for the purposes of upgrading and maintaining the premises, Ms Sharobeem falsely indicated the premises were owned by IWHS. \$33,000 worth of funds was obtained from the State Government for the upgrade, however since the present allegations have

come to light, the remainder of the proposed \$60,000 worth of funds was not provided to IWHS.

In September 2016 Ms Sharobeem sold the premises for \$1.3 million. Settlement occurred on 31 October, 2016. Ms Sharobeem paid her mortgage of approximately 540,000 and the balance of funds of approximately 620,000 was deposited to her offset account. A cheque for approximately \$117,000 representing the deposit has not yet been presented.

- 10 On 1 December, 2016, \$499,000 was transferred from Ms Sharobeem's account to her son Charlie's account. Some days later on 8 December, \$529,485 was withdrawn from his account and remitted on the same day to a person called Dalia Saeed Kamel in Nasr City, Egypt.

- 20 Allegation 4 relates to the falsification of statistics. The Commission believes that Ms Sharobeem pressured IWHS staff to falsify the number of attendees of groups and activities organised by IWHS. An administrative officer provided investigators with a copy of the IWHS annual report for 2012 to 2013. The document has what the Commission believes to be Ms Sharobeem's handwriting indicating the figures she wanted changed in the report. The numbers were grossly exaggerated. The numbers of attendees for groups related to anxiety and panic disorders was changed from 12 to 481. A group referred to as finance problems was changed from simply one attendee to 828 attendees, and the number of attendees of a group on domestic violence was changed from just four to 851. The Commission believes that this practice may have started from as far back as 2004 when Ms Sharobeem commenced at the service. It is alleged that Ms Sharobeem intentionally falsified these figures to assist her with further applications for government and non-government funding, justify payments made to her sons for purportedly assisting with the service and to also increase her own profile and public standing by misrepresenting the extent of the organisation's success.
- 30

- 40 Ms Sharobeem further applied for funding to the Smith Family to set up both the Multicultural Parenting program and the STEPS to Employment program. There is evidence to show that these programs ran only until a certain period of time, yet IWHS continued to receive funding until mid-2015. It is alleged that Ms Sharobeem also intentionally falsified relevant statistics relating to these two programs in IWHS's reports provided to the Smith Family.

Allegation 5 relates to Ms Sharobeem's academic qualifications. Ms Sharobeem does not hold a doctorate, nor is she registered to practise as a psychologist. She has never completed a master's degree. The original curriculum vitae Ms Sharobeem submitted to IWHS when she first applied for the position in 2003 does not contain a reference to a master's degree or completion of PhD, however she listed a Diploma of Psychology in her cv dated 2006 and the completion of PhD in psychology at the American

University in Cairo. She also listed a diploma in community organisations, purportedly completed at the University of Technology Sydney, however inquiries with the University of Technology reveal that Ms Sharobeem had only completed two years of the course, later abandoning it. Notwithstanding that, the diploma in community organisations was upgraded in her curriculum vitae in 2007 as a master's degree in community management, but obtained at the American University.

10 There are a number of other issues relating to these document but which I won't refer to now.

Ultimately it is contended that Ms Sharobeem used her false qualifications to promote herself publicly and also in applications to funding bodies to receive funds on behalf of IWHS. Many of these applications disclose the existence of an onsite mental health worker. Members of IWHS staff I expect will give evidence that the only person they thought was qualified or used by IWHS for psychological counselling was Ms Sharobeem.

20 There is evidence that Ms Sharobeem saw and counselled her clients as a psychologist. They were referred to her informally and through actual doctors' referrals. Ms Sharobeem promoted false qualifications not only in the context of her employment at IWHS, she purported to have these false qualifications in an application for Australian of the Year in 2015. According to the Australian of the Year honour roll for 2014, Ms Sharobeem is said to have studied at university, obtained PhD, a master's degree in social science and a Bachelor of Business and Administration. A copy of Ms Sharobeem's application for Australian of the year was located at her residence during the execution of a search warrant by investigators of the Commission.

30 Ms Sharobeem also promoted herself as a practising psychologist in the media, once on an ABC Radio interview and on another occasion, on the SBS program, Insight.

40 Allegation 6 and 7 relate to Ms Sharobeem's involvement with NESH. In late 2013, Ms Sharobeem proposed a memorandum of understanding between NESH and IWHS. A document was prepared in September that year, appointing Ms Sharobeem as CEO of the new organisation which was referred to as the Immigrant Refugee Women's Network, or Service.

In December 2013 a launch for the new partnership was held at New South Wales Parliament House. The purpose behind the new partnership was to cut costs to both organisations by sharing fees associated with administrative work and bookkeeping. The evidence is unclear as to whether Ms Sharobeem was to be paid for her services as CEO of the new organisation, however weekly payments of \$750 were made to Ms Sharobeem from NESH via transfers to IWHS and ultimately to her account.

Ms Sharobeem had been involved with NESH for some time before 2013. The circumstances of her ultimately becoming CEO of the organisation in late 2013 were steps she took to ultimately obtain more control. In February of 2015, Ms Sharobeem employed her son, Richard, at NESH without the recruitment process being followed. In January 2015 and Honda City four-door sedan was purchased. Richard used the Honda as his personal vehicle. The manager of NESH did not even know the vehicle belonged to NESH until May of that year.

10

Further allegations of the misuse of funds arise in the context of Ms Sharobeem's work with NESH, including \$18,000 being used by Ms Sharobeem to finalise the purchase of a Mercedes Benz vehicle for her husband, Haiman Hammo. An audit of IWHS by Boyd & Associates in 2014 raised a number of issues, however by virtue of the scope of that audit, many fraudulent transactions went undetected. A subsequent audit in 2014 to 2015 raised enough issues for the auditor to provide a qualified opinion. A further forensic audit was conducted and fraud was detected, ultimately leading to the Commission's involvement in this matter.

20

The Commission has investigated Ms Sharobeem's involvement with IWHS historically back to 2009, and with NESH back to 2013. Of serious concern also is the subject of allegation 8, namely, the use by Ms Sharobeem of her qualifications to obtain appointments with the Community Relations Commission and also the Anti-Discrimination Board. Ms Sharobeem referred to herself as Dr Sharobeem in her applications for these appointments.

30

By March, 2011 she had already obtained an appointment as a part-time commissioner for the Community Relations Commission which is now referred to as Multicultural NSW. Her application for that position represented she had obtained a PhD in psychology and was a practising psychologist. She held the part-time commissioner role for three years. In September of 2013 Ms Sharobeem applied for the position of chairperson of the Community Relations Commission, again claiming to be a practising psychologist with a PhD. Ms Sharobeem was appointed as a part-time member of the CRC advisory board for a term of three years.

40

In both her roles as a part-time commissioner and a part-time member of the advisory board of the Community Relations Commission Ms Sharobeem received regular payments. Between 2011 and October, 2016 Ms Sharobeem received approximately \$15,000 from the Community Relations Commission. She resigned in November, 2016 citing reasons relating to health.

Ms Sharobeem was also appointed a member of the Anti-Discrimination Board in 2012. Documents retained by the Department of Justice included a curriculum vitae in the name of Dr Eman Sharobeem listing her PhD in

psychology under the heading educational background. Between 2013 and 2015 Ms Sharobeem received approximately \$7,000 from the Anti-Discrimination Board for her work.

10 Those are the allegations, Commissioner. Other issues of concern which may potentially arise at this inquiry include the function and the adequacy of board meetings of IWHS and NESH and the expertise of board members to themselves monitor the day-to-day business of the service and in particular the expenditure of funds. The Commission will hear evidence from two board members of both IWHS and NESH. Ms Nada Damcevska and Ms Julie Watton, both former board members, will give evidence about the irregularity and inadequacy of board meetings, bearing in mind of course that these services received relatively large sums of money.

20 On a broader level the Commission will also hear evidence from witnesses from the Department of Health and Family and Community Services in relation to their funding of non-government organisations, how these funds and service recipients are monitored and also in that context the corruption prevention measures the Department of Health and Family and Community Services have in place within their regulatory frameworks.

The first witness I propose to call is a former board member of IWHS and NESH, Ms Julie Watton.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr Rajalingam, how many witnesses do you expect to call today?

MR RAJALINGAM: Three witnesses.

30 THE COMMISSIONER: Sorry?

MR RAJALINGAM: Three witnesses.

THE COMMISSIONER: And those witnesses are?

MR RAJALINGAM: Ms Julie Watton, Ms Maric and Ms Chan.

40 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I ask that question for the convenience of people who are here representing some of the witnesses. Mr Chhabra, is your client here today?

MR CHHABRA: Yes, Commissioner.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR CHHABRA: Seated outside.

THE COMMISSIONER: The plan of the hearing is that she will be the last person called. The reason for that is to allow her the opportunity to hear whatever else is said during the course of the hearing so that she's got the opportunity of answering it. So she's not really required here until that time arrives but you may very well appreciate her being here during the course of the inquiry so that she does know what's being said.

MR CHHABRA: Indeed.

- 10 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes. Thank you. Well, we'll take the morning tea adjournment and come back at, give you time to go and have tea or coffee, at 10 past 11.00.

**SHORT ADJOURNMENT**

**[10.45am]**

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Rajalingam.

- 20 MR RAJALINGAM: Commissioner, I'll now tender the brief in three sections but as one exhibit. I can tender the brief in electronic form. It's two CDs. They consist of statements, and I'll wait for - - -

THE COMMISSIONER: It's Exhibit 16 I think.

**#EXHIBIT 16 - PUBLIC INQUIRY BRIEF (WITNESS STATEMENTS BRIEF VOLUME 1-5; ALLEGATIONS BRIEF VOLUME 1-25; BANK STATEMENTS BRIEF VOLUME 1-8)**

30

MR RAJALINGAM: They consist of statements volumes 1-5, allegation volumes 1-25 and bank statements volumes 1-8. So hopefully if I refer to Exhibit 16 I can then go to the various – the relevant volume - - -

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR RAJALINGAM - - - of Exhibit 16.

- 40 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Now, that having been tendered, I will make an order under section 112 that if there is any personal identifying information in the exhibit there should be no publication of it. I understand that the Commission has been through it and redacted bank account numbers and various other pieces of personal information but because it's such a large amount of material it's possible that there is some other personal identifying material in it and in the event that there is, I make that order in relation to the nonpublication.

10 **ORDER UNDER SECTION 112 THAT IF THERE IS ANY  
PERSONAL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION IN THE EXHIBIT  
THERE SHOULD BE NO PUBLICATION OF IT. I UNDERSTAND  
THAT THE COMMISSION HAS BEEN THROUGH IT AND  
REDACTED BANK ACCOUNT NUMBERS AND VARIOUS OTHER  
PIECES OF PERSONAL INFORMATION BUT BECAUSE IT'S  
SUCH A LARGE AMOUNT OF MATERIAL IT'S POSSIBLE THAT  
THERE IS SOME OTHER PERSONAL IDENTIFYING MATERIAL  
IN IT AND IN THE EVENT THAT THERE IS, I MAKE THAT  
ORDER IN RELATION TO THE NONPUBLICATION**

MR RAJALINGAM: Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Yes.

MR RAJALINGAM: I call Ms Julie Watton.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: Ms Watton, will you take an oath or an  
affirmation?

MS WATTON: I will.

THE COMMISSIONER: An oath or an affirmation?

MS WATTON: Oh, an oath.

30 THE COMMISSIONER: An oath on the Bible. Yes, certainly.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr Eurell, do you want me to make an order under section 38?

MR EURELL: That would be desirable. Thank you, Commissioner.

10 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. It's just simply an order to give you protection against anything – any consequences that might arise, either civil or criminal. That's to make it easier for you to give evidence.

20 So pursuant to section 38 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, I declare that all answers given by this witness and all documents and things produced by this witness during the course of the witness's evidence at this public inquiry are to be regarded as having been given or produced on objection and there is no need for the witness to make objection in respect of any particular answer given or document or thing produced.

30 **PURSUANT TO SECTION 38 OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION ACT, I DECLARE THAT ALL ANSWERS GIVEN BY THIS WITNESS AND ALL DOCUMENTS AND THINGS PRODUCED BY THIS WITNESS DURING THE COURSE OF THE WITNESS'S EVIDENCE AT THIS PUBLIC INQUIRY ARE TO BE REGARDED AS HAVING BEEN GIVEN OR PRODUCED ON OBJECTION AND THERE IS NO NEED FOR THE WITNESS TO MAKE OBJECTION IN RESPECT OF ANY PARTICULAR ANSWER GIVEN OR DOCUMENT OR THING PRODUCED**

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MR RAJALINGAM: Thank you, Commissioner. May you state your full name for the record.---It's Julie Christine Watton.

40 And are you currently working?---I am.

Where do you work?---I work for Core Community Services.

And what do you do there?---I'm a community development worker.

In February of this year did you provide a statement to the Commission?---I did.

Do you know if that statement was dated 16 February?---It could have been because then I do recall that they came back again, the – from ICAC and another statement was – like it was signed and then a few other additions were added.

How long have you been in your current position?---I have been with Core Community Services since 1999 and firstly as an administration officer where I was for about six years and then from about 2006 to date in the current role as community development worker.

10

At some stage were you a board member of the Non English Speaking Housing Women's Scheme?---I was.

When was that?---That would have been firstly towards the end of 2012.

Can I show you a document. It's NESH volume 19, page 153.---Ah hmm.

Do you know what that document is?---Well, it's the minutes of an AGM.

20

Can you have a read of the first part of that document under chairperson's report.---Ah hmm. Yeah.

Do you recall that it was on that day that you became a board member of NESH, on 7 November, 2012?---Most likely.

Do you recall the day you were introduced to the board, on that day?---Well, it must have been that day, yeah.

30

But do you recall actually what happened when you were - - -?---Not really. I – from the minutes of the AGM, I think it was at an AGM meeting.

Do you remember that meeting?---Not really.

Do you know who introduced you to the board?---I suppose it was Eman.

Well - - -?---Like in 2012, it was some time ago. I don't really recall all the details I'm sorry.

40

How did – did you – how did you come to be a board member of NESH?---I was invited to join the board from Eman and possibly Audrey, the other co-convenor of the IRWN network with was a network that I belonged to.

What does IRWN stand for?---It's the Immigrant Refugee Women's Network. So that was a network for workers and women living in the Fairfield area. There was a monthly meeting which was held at the IWHS building because that meeting was convened by Eman and co-convened by Audrey. So I've probably been a member of that network since 2006 approximately and after some years I was invited to join the board.

How long prior to being a – becoming a member of the NESH board did you know Eman Sharobeem?---It would have been since I had been on the network of the Immigrant Refugee Women’s Network which I think was from about 2006.

And did you say you also knew Ms Lai from the Immigrant Network?  
---Yes, from the network, yes.

10 For how long did you know her?---Probably the same amount of time as I was attending the network.

Did you know others at the network, Nada Damcevaska, did you know her?  
---Yes, she was also a network member.

And was she also part of Immigrants Women’s Health Service to your understanding?---Not a work from Immigrant Women’s Health Service, no.

20 Was she on the board of the Immigrant Women’s Health Service?  
---I don’t know about the board, I don’t know who was on the board of the Immigrant Women’s Health Service at that stage.

Prior to being on the board of NESH - - -?---Ah hmm.

- - - had you received any training to be a board member?---No.

30 Did you also later become a board member of the Immigrant Women’s Health Service?---It was when the two joined, when the NESH and the Immigrant Women’s Health Service, the boards, like, they amalgamated.

When did that happen?---That I believe was in the end of 2013.

Did you consider yourself a member of the NESH board, the IWHS board or a member of both boards?---From 2013 it was a member of both boards.

Was the new organisation given a name?---Yes.

40 What was it?---Oh, it was, oh, it was something Immigrant, I can’t tell you exactly the details. It was similar to Immigrant Refugee Women’s Network but it wasn’t that.

I’ll show you a document?---Ah hmm.

It’s volume 4 of the statements, page 252. Do you recognise that document?  
---Yeah, I could, yes.

What is it?---Just about the new consortium. Oh, there it is, IW, yeah, it doesn’t actually say the name though.

If you look at the middle of the centre, the middle of the page at the centre it says, doesn't it, "the new consortium will be named Immigrant and Refugee Women's Services?"---Oh, Women's Services, yes.

If you go down the page do you see your name?---I do, yes.

Do you recall looking at this document in September 2013?---I could of. I don't really recall but I could of looked at it.

10

Do you know where it was when you first saw this document?---I don't, I could have seen it when my statement was taken, I don't, I don't recall really.

Do you have any idea who prepared the document?---Well, I imagine it would have been prepared by Audrey I imagine, but I don't really know I'm sorry.

Did you ever sign a copy of that document?---I may of.

20

Do you know if the document was presented to a meeting of both the IWHS and NESH in November 2013?---It may have been but I can't recall I'm sorry.

I'll show you minutes of a meeting for 6 November?---Ah hmm.

Volume 4, page 253. Do you agree that those are minutes for a joint meeting between NESH and IWHS on 6 November, 2013?---Well, that's what it says, it says welcome the IWHS and NESH board members to the special meeting.

30

Can you just read that document to yourself - - -?---Ah hmm.

- - - and see if that refreshes your memory in terms of the meeting?---It does look a little familiar.

Do you recall firstly being present at that meeting on 6 November?  
---I imagine I must of if my name is on there.

40

Do you recall Ms Sharobeem referring to a memorandum of understanding at a meeting?---I don't, I can't really say I recall I'm sorry.

Well, do you recall her referring to herself as the CEO of the new entity?  
---I recall like there was some conversation about her being the CEO of the entity.

And who was involved in that conversation, Mr Watton?---I imagine it was all the board members.

The meeting in November, do you know who was doing most of the talking?---I can't even really recall. That, that was a few years ago now, I don't really recall all the details.

Do you recall there being a mention of a launch at Parliament House?  
---I recall that, yes.

10 Okay. I want you to think about the meeting where the launch at Parliament House was referred to. Can you do that?---Well, it may have been this meeting.

Okay. Can you read the minutes at paragraph 5?---Ah hmm.

The minutes refer to a launch at Parliament House, don't they?---Yeah, they do, yes, and I, I recall that there was a launch at Parliament House.

Okay. Did you attend the launch?---No, I did not.

20 Okay. But you were at the meeting where the launch was referred to?  
---Well, I know the launch was referred to so if it was only referred to at that meeting, then I imagine I must have been there.

Where was that meeting?---That would have been I imagine at the IWHS building in Smart Street.

Ms Watton, do you recall that meeting?---Not really, no.

30 Okay. Are you saying to the Commission that you don't recall a meeting where a launch at Parliament House was talked about by board members?  
---I recall the launch being talked about, that's the main thing that I recall being talked about, but I don't, I imagine that I was at the meeting because my name is on the minutes. That's as far as I can tell you.

Do you recall Ms Sharobeem talking about ways in which to cut costs to both organisations?---Yes.

40 And was that referred to at the meeting?---I don't remember what was referred to at the meeting, it was in 2013 I'm afraid.

But do you recall her referring to that in the context of a meeting with board - - -?---Of a meeting, a meeting, the possibility of a meeting, but which meeting I'm not sure.

Do you know then if at a board meeting the memorandum of understanding that you were shown previously - - -?---Ah hmm.

- - - was shown to other board members?---It's possible. I can't really recall I'm sorry.

Do you recall at a meeting Ms Sharobeem referring to herself as the CEO of that new organisation?---I refer, I recall her being referred to as the CEO of the new organisation but I don't know whether it was at that meeting or whether it was prior or whether it was after.

10 Did the board discuss whether the new structure, that is with IWHS and NESH, whether that would be registered for example with the Department of Fair Trading?---Not that I recall.

Did the board discuss whether there would be any need to contact any of the funding bodies to inform them of the change to the structure?---Not that I recall.

Can I take you to paragraph 8 of those minutes?---Ah hmm.

20 It says there that on 12 December the AGM meeting for electing the one board for the new entity will be held. Did you understand that a meeting to elect board members for the entity would take place at the launch at Parliament House on 12 December in 2013?---Not really because I wasn't there.

Did you understand at some stage in 2013 that there would be an election for the board of the new entity and that election would take place on 12 December?---Not really.

30 You nevertheless continued to act as a board member - - -?---Yeah.

- - - of both NESH and IWHS - - -?---Yes.

- - - after the launch. Correct?---Yes. But we may have been asked but I don't remember any election happening at the Parliament House because I wasn't there.

40 Okay. Why didn't you go to the launch?---Oh, because I think it was during working hours. Yeah, it was at 2.00pm. Yeah. I have other duties to attend to at that time.

I'll show you an email for 17 December, 2003.---Ah hmm.

Sorry, volume 4, page 268. Can you see that email?---Yes, I can.

It's dated 17 December, 2003, isn't it?---Ah hmm.

MR EURELL: 2013.

MR RAJALINGAM: 2013.---2013.

Apologise. And that's from Ms Sharobeem to a number of other people?  
---Yes.

And do you know who those other people are?---Yes, I do.

Who is Amy Vo?---She was with the auditor's office, Nathan Boyd.

10 And what about - - ?---(not transcribable) is a board member.

No.---Myself and Audrey, another board member.

Was there a meeting between – just having looked at that email.---Ah hmm.

Was there a meeting where Ms Sharobeem was actually appointed by other  
board members to be the CEO of the new organisation?---That bit I don't  
recall, but I recall about the payment. So I recall that in a meeting that – I  
don't know what the exact amount was, but I recall 15 hours per week that  
20 the board had agreed.

When – where did this conversation about her pay take place?---That would  
have been during a board meeting.

Okay. Would that have been before the launch or after the launch?---I don't  
know the date of it. It could have been, well, it didn't look like it was in the  
minutes of what was – that you showed before. But it could have been, like,  
maybe in November or something. I'm not sure. But I do recall that the  
board – I didn't recall the amount of money but I do recall that it was 15  
30 hours per week, which would equate to \$750 or whatever it was. 15 hours  
per week times \$50, I think it was.

Do you recall any discussion about how – for how long those payments  
would last?---I don't recall how long.

Do you know how those payments were going to be made to her?---Well,  
according to this email, it said that it was going directly to IWHS.

Well, do you know how payment was going to be made to her from the  
40 IWHS account?---No, I didn't know whether she would put it on her  
timesheet. I don't know. I imagine she would have had to have put it on her  
timesheet.

When the two organisations came together in late 2013, were you aware at  
that stage that there were facilitators that worked for the Immigrant  
Women's Health Service?---Yes.

And were you aware that facilitators could fill out timesheets in order to be paid?---Possibly.

Well, were you aware of that or not?---Well, I – well, I know that that would be a common practice for any community organisation to have.

All right. Were you aware of facilitators working at the IWHS?---Yes.

10 All right. And were they employed on an ad hoc basis?---I believe so.

What was your role on the board of both IWHS and NESH from late 2013 onwards?---A board member.

Were you given the role of treasurer at any stage?---That was later on.

20 When did that happen?---I believe that that probably happened sometime around about June 2015. But I can't give an exact date. I did try to find that out for my own benefit. I can't give an exact date, but it was after Eman resigned as the CEO, but she was still the adviser. And so then the meetings were becoming separate.

Before going there, I'm going to show you some invoices.---Yeah.

Volume 20, page 279. Have you ever seen that invoice before?---Not really.

Ms Watton, what do you mean by "not really"?---Well, I don't, I don't recall it.

30 You don't - - -?---I could have, I could have seen it, I may have seen it, but I don't really recall it.

So you wouldn't know if that invoice was ever shown to other members of the joint board?---I wouldn't know but it's possible that it could have been. I just don't recall it.

40 Can I ask that the following invoices also be shown to you just in succession. And if you can have a quick look at all of the invoices?---Ah  
hmm.

Say 5, for example. That's another one for another date. Do you see that? For the same amount?---I didn't think it's – what page is that? Is it page – invoice number or I didn't think it changed - - -

No, that's for 10 March, 2014.---Okay.

And the next one will be for 10 February, or the one before that was for 10 February, 2014.---I don't recall seeing it but I don't, didn't really have a lot to do with any of the invoices so I don't really recall.

Once the new entity had commenced, how often would you attend board meetings?---I think that we attended, like, maybe about once every three months. But because we – most of us also attended that other network meeting, which was the monthly meeting of the IRWN network, we would often have, like, informal discussions after that meeting.

10

Would those informal discussions be about NESH and IWHS as well?  
---They may have had – it was mainly, like, about IWHS because a lot of the time that was spent at our board meetings was all in relation to NESH because there seemed to be – there was a lot of difficulties in the service.

20

And are you talking about the period late 2013 and 2014?---Well, from the time that I was actually on the NESH board, there was always a lot of uncertainty to do with their funding. Then there was sort of, like, they would then get little bits of funding for a short amount of period and then there was always difficulties with the NESH.

Ms Watton, you were actually on the NESH board from November 2012, is that right?---Ah hmm, yes.

And you may have said that earlier.---Ah hmm.

So you'd spent one year with NESH, is that right?---Ah hmm.

30

And then the new organisation had been created?---Yeah, yes.

Do you know whose idea it was to put both organisations together?---I believe it was Eman's idea.

Why do you say it was Eman's idea?---Well, I believe it was – because of the uncertainty of the NESH funding, that Eman was doing quite a lot of work with NESH and I believe that that was a way to reduce costs and, yeah, and to help to continue the service to carry on.

40

Was there anything that she had said or done to make you think that it was her idea to bring both organisations together?---I don't, I don't really recall but I'm sure that it would have been her idea, and at the time it was a – it seemed like a good idea.

Did you attend all board meetings in 2014 for the joint organisation?  
---Generally, yes.

How were board meetings arranged?---Well, since I've done board training, it should have been - - -

I will come to that later.---Okay. Yeah.

But in 2014 - - -?---They were quite informal.

- - - how were they arranged?---In 2012, when I first started with the board meetings, they seemed to be ran a little differently. So they seemed to be more, have more of a formal structure and reports were submitted by the team leader at the time.

10

And who was the team leader?---At that time back – I’m talking about back in 2012.

Yes.---There was a team leader, her name was Liljana. So reports were sort of presented to the meeting.

20

What reports were presented to the meeting?---Well, like the workers’ reports of what had been happening in the last month or so because they were like monthly or two-monthly meetings so what had been going on in the organisation and then after that – so it would have been from – I think things were not as formal. So there would be the - - -

When do you say things became informal?---Probably when the new entity I don’t believe it was as formal.

30

Why do you say that it wasn’t as formal?---Well, I don’t recall receiving any reports from Eman. I recall receiving reports from Nevine who was another NESH team leader but that was sort of – I think she came on board a little bit later in the piece in about 2014, maybe June, 2014.

And what do you recall – are you referring to Ms Nevine Ghaly?  
---Ah hmm.

What do you recall Ms Ghaly providing you with at board meetings?  
---Well, we had asked her like to provide a written report, which she did, of the amount of clients attending the service and what sort of activities they were involved with.

40

Do you recall Ms Sharobeem, and you’ve referred to a person by the name of Eman.---Ah hmm.

Are you referring to Ms Sharobeem?---I am, yes.

Once the new entity had started - - -?---Ah hmm.

- - - in late 2013 do you recall Ms Sharobeem providing you with any documents at board meetings?---I think it was more like emails. Like there

would be email communications between the board members and I don't really recall any written reports, they were more like verbal reports.

Where would the meetings take place?---The meetings - - -

For the joint meetings?---The joint meetings took place in 92 Smart Street.

So at the head office - - -?---Correct, yes.

- 10 - - - of the Immigrant Women's Health Service? Were all board members from both the IWHS and NESH present at the board meetings for both organisations?---No.

Do you know who the board members were of the joint organisation?  
---Myself, there was Nada, there was Audrey, there was also Liljana, not Liljana I'm sorry, Svetlana and Dalila were down as board members and later on in about August – between June to August of 2015 there was another lady called Hooda.

- 20 Did you know all of the board members while you were a board member?  
---I did. I didn't, I didn't really know that well Dalila or Svetlana because they weren't members of our IRWN network.

Dalila Pereda is it?---Correct.

You're referring to. And is it Svetlana Maric that you're referring to?  
---Correct.

- 30 Was it the case that they weren't regular attendees of board meetings?  
---That's right, yes. They weren't.

How often would they attend board meetings?---I don't really recall them attending from – once the two entities went together I don't recall them attending. I recall seeing them in previous meetings though but I couldn't tell you like how often or when or - - -

And in 2014 were you working full-time and doing work for the joint board, is that your evidence?---Correct, yes.

- 40 In terms of being a board member in 2014 - - -?---Ah hmm.

- - - what did you do for the service?---Attended the meetings. Provided like support or advice when asked. In hindsight as I said the board training sort of certainly opened my eyes that there was a whole lot more the board members were responsible for but at that stage I wasn't aware of that.

Did you attend programs conducted by the services as a board member?

---No. I did often see all the groups and activities running at the service because that was where our monthly IRNW network meeting was held so I could see that the service was always attended by a lot of people. There was always groups and activities running.

And do you say that you saw these activities and programs at the Fairfield - - -?---Yes.

- - - IWHS centre?---Ah hmm.

10

Where in the centre would these activities take place?---Oh, it was quite a big centre so there was a couple of rooms and we would often have to walk through one group room to get to the next sort of meeting room where we would meet. So the room that we walked through was quite busy. There may have been people doing jewellery making in there. There was clients coming in and out for information.

On what day did board meetings take place, was there a specific day?---I think it was on Wednesdays.

20

And at what time on Wednesday would board meetings take place?---It could have been at different times so it could have been like after the meeting that we had that was – would normally finish maybe about between 4 o'clock and 4.30 so it could have been after that, but then there was also times where it could have been in the evening as well. So there wasn't any dedicated that I'm aware of, any dedicated like first Monday of the month at 7.30 or anything like that.

When you attended these board meetings - - -?---Ah hmm.

30

- - - is it your evidence that you would see programs and activities being conducted when you arrived at the centre?---Not, not if we were in the evening for the board meetings but because I would go to a meeting that was held there, not a board meeting, the Immigrant Refugee Women's Network meeting which was always held the first Wednesday of every month between 2.30 to 4.30, so because I would be at the centre once a month that would be when I would be seeing the groups and activities running.

40 On a Wednesday at about 2.30?---Yes.

Well, when were board meetings usually - - -?---They may have been after that but sometimes as I said they may have been in the night on a different day of the week. They weren't always held like the first – they didn't – there wasn't like a – the first week of the first Monday of the month at 7.30 It wasn't anything like that.

All right. You referred to seeing for yourself programs and activities being conducted at the Fairfield centre.---Ah hmm.

And you referred to a number of rooms that were being used.---Yes.

At any given time, approximately how many people would be in a room doing an activity?---I think probably maybe about 20 and I also recall like being there after hours when we would have meetings where it wasn't uncommon for someone to come knocking at the door to ask for  
10 information.

All right. What programs and activities did you think that you observed at the Fairfield centre, which ones exactly?---I know that there was a jewellery making and I believe that there was a program that would come out every quarter so every term so I believe that there was discussions of – over that period because with programs in community centres they may change from term to term so – but over the years there would have been like computer classes, parenting programs. I know that there was funding for some steps to employment and some - - -  
20

Ms Watton - - -.---Ah hmm.

- - - I'm not asking you about programs that were funded.---Ah hmm.

I'm asking you about programs that you actually saw at the service.---Well, I saw the women that would be attending jewellery making or some group on the Wednesday - - -

Yeah.--- - - - of every month that must have finished sometime around 2.30  
30 or 3 o'clock. So that would be the only group that I ever saw, plus I do know that a jewellery-making group – that group that I saw on the Wednesday may not have been jewellery making but it was some woman's group but there was actually another jewellery-making group because when we had had largescale events the women had demonstrated the jewellery-making that they had made.

You referred to a jewellery-making program?---Ah hmm.

Do you know much about the program?---Not really. I just know that when  
40 we had events they would have their table, they would sort of have their jewellery on display that they had made in some jewellery class and I think it was like some sort of a social enterprise program.

Do you know who conducted that jewellery-making program?---No, but I know it was part of the, as far as I'm aware it was part of the IWHS.

Okay. Do you know what year the jewellery-making program was being conducted?---Not really, no.

Do you say that about 20 people attended that program?---I don't know if that was the jewellery-making program, that's what I said, that all I can say is that every Wednesday there was a group of women meeting, they could have been making jewellery, I don't know whether they were making jewellery or doing something else, but I do know that there was also a jewellery-making group.

10 You've said you've seen a group on Wednesday afternoons?---Ah hmm. Yes.

You said that the only group that you actually saw was the jewellery-making group?---No, no.

What I said was, I saw a group on Wednesday afternoons. They may have been the jewellery-making group, I'm not sure, but I did actually see a jewellery-making group that would come and demonstrate the items that they had made when we would have events.

20 Right. Which of these events did you attend where you saw the products of the jewellery-making group?---Well, the IRWN Network, they would run events, so as part of the IRWN Network we would do like 16 Days of Action, we would do Refugee Week and we would do International Women's Day, so at some of those events what would normally happen, we may ask people like to have a stall and at some time, I don't know when, I can't be precise, but the jewellery-making women did attend. I believed that it was in a function that was held in the Stars Palace in Fairfield and that could have been around for the 16 Days of Action event that we may have, that we held there a few times.

30 How often did you attend those functions, the 16 Day - - -?---We usually, as the network we usually ran three events a year.

What type of jewellery are we talking about?---I didn't really look at it, but it was like, yeah, necklaces I imagine.

Do you know what they were made of?---Not really.

40 Were they, were they made - - -?---I didn't really look at the jewellery to be honest, they set up their stall but we were quite busy that day.

Yeah?---So for me, like I wasn't really interested in, in looking at the jewellery that was on display because I had other things that I needed to attend to.

Did it look expensive, Ms Watton, the jewellery?---I didn't really look. I know that people did buy some items but I don't - - -

How much were they being sold for?---I, I wouldn't like to, I wouldn't – I'll just say like, I don't know really, but I don't imagine it would have been very much.

Was it cheap jewellery we're talking about?---Well, it wouldn't have been expensive. I imagined it would have been somewhere between maybe \$5 and \$20, so - - -

10 Were they principally buying beads from, I think it's around Leichhardt on Parramatta Road?---I don't, I don't know.

Do you know that?---As I said, I didn't really look at it, I had other things to do, but I did see that the women set up like a jewellery display and I think I've seen it on more than one occasion too.

All right. I'm going to ask you some questions about facilitators?---Ah  
hmm.

20 Do you know much about facilitators - - -?---Not really.

- - - and their role at the Immigrant Women's Health Service?---Not really, but - - -

Firstly, NESH did not have facilitators, did it?---I thought they had some of the IWHS facilitators that went and did some activities when they were located in a different service than they are now, like a different address than they are now.

30 And would that have been in 2014 after both organisations came together?  
---I believe so.

Do you know how facilitators were recruited?---No, but I imagine some of them may have been volunteers.

40 Do you know how they were paid? I think I've asked you that before?  
---No, I think I do recall something about they filled – I do recall something about maybe from the auditor or something that they filled in, they didn't fill in the – they should have had ABN numbers but they didn't, a lot of them didn't have ABN numbers.

Do you know what type of wage they were paid?---I think, I'm, I don't, I don't think it was like the award rate, I think they – I don't know. Actually I shouldn't say, I'm just surmising here.

Did the board have to approve the appointment or the employment of a facilitator?---Not that I'm aware.

Did the board ever approve the appointment of a facilitator?---Not that I'm aware.

Were you aware of Richard Sharobeem being employed at NESH?---No.

Did you become aware at some stage that - - -?---I did, yes.

- - - Richard Sharobeem had been employed by NESH?---Yes.

10 Was the board ever told that he was going to become an employee - - -?  
---Not that I'm aware.

- - - prior to his employment?---Not that I'm aware.

When did you become aware that he was an employee of NESH?---It would have been at an International Women's Day which is generally like in about February of each year, I imagine it was 2015, it could have been 2015.

20 And do you remember the circumstances in which you became aware that he - - -?---We had an event on and the event was at Mounties Club and it was for what do CALD women want, that was the topic of the symposium, and we had often seen Richard prior to that because he would take photos of events, at different events that we had over the years, and we saw him that day, I think he was taking photos and then something was mentioned and then both Nada and myself found that we were a little surprised that he was working at NESH.

30 You said something was mentioned, do you know what?---Yeah, I can't remember, like, whether we asked, he, I can't remember, like, the details of, of how we became aware 'cause he was, it was on that day thought that we became aware that he was employed at NESH.

Was Ms Sharobeem there when you became aware that - - -?---No.

Who was around?---There may have been Nevine, there was a few people, we were all quite busy doing things, I can't say exactly who was there, but I just recall that that was when Nada, the other board member and myself found out that he was employed there.

40 Did the other board members have a discussion about his employment?  
---Not that I'm aware.

Do you know what his wage was?---I, I don't know the exact amount but I do recall that there was discussions about his wage because there was some sort of conflict going on between himself and Nevine Ghaly and conflict about his wages and what he was being paid or what he hadn't been paid, and I do recall that I had a look on the Fair Work Australia website or rang them up or something like that to see if we could work out what the levels

were, apparently he had been paid with the level under South Australia instead of New South Wales, it was like a little bit of a mix up, and I was a little surprised because I didn't believe that he had, but I'm not sure whether he had very much experience in the community sector, but I think that I had mentioned like in the email that it may have been level 1, pay point 1 that he may have been paid on and this is just a, I'm just surmising this, maybe level 3 pay point 4 or 5 which I probably would have considered that would have been for somebody who had a few years' experience.

10 Okay. So do you know what he was paid?---Not off the top of my head now.

Okay. That's fine.---I'm sorry, no.

You knew that - - -?---But it wouldn't have been very much because community workers are not paid at very high levels of pay, so it may have been, like, \$25, \$27. Something along those lines.

20 It was an hourly rate, wasn't it?---Correct, yes.

Do you know what Ms Sharobeem's wage was at the IWHS?---I can't say that I did, no.

Did she receive a salary?---I'm not aware of any of those sort of - - -

30 Were you aware that she was claiming fees as a facilitator while you were a board member?---No, not until we went to the auditor's office and then the other board members – or there was a discussion with Eman and then she had said, yes, that she couldn't get anyone to facilitate the program, so she had done it and she had used a name that she had used when she came to Australia or something or other.

All right. You've just talked about – you've given evidence about a conversation you've had with Ms Sharobeem about facilitators' fees. Before I ask you questions about that - - -?---Ah hmm.

- - - were you aware that Ms Sharobeem was claiming fees under the name Emmy Adel as an alias?---Later on, yes.

40 What about Emma Adly?---Oh, actually, I think that was the name that I recognised, the Emma Adly, not the other name.

Was there any discussion amongst board members authorising Ms Sharobeem to do work as a facilitator?---No.

Was there any discussion amongst board members about whether or not Ms Sharobeem should be paid as a facilitator?---There was no discussion about it, no.

When do you say that Ms Sharobeem told you and other board members that she had been submitting timesheets?---I don't think I was present when that was mentioned, but I know that it was in minutes from our board that mentioned that, and that the payments were to be reimbursed.

Was there ever any discussion amongst board members about how many hours Ms Sharobeem would have to do in her role as a CEO of the organisation?---No.

10

Or what type of activities she would have to do?---No.

Was it assumed that she would help at programs or activities as a chief executive officer of the organisation?---I think she would oversee the activities.

Was there ever a shortage of volunteers at the service?---They seemed to have a lot of volunteers at the IWHS.

20

Did they also seem to have a number of facilitators working at any given time throughout 2014?---Well, they may have. I know they run a lot of programs, so I imagine by running a lot of programs they would have needed the facilitators to be able to run those programs.

Apart from the jewellery making course that you referred to, what other programs were you aware that NESH and IWHS were conducting?---Well, with IWHS, as I mentioned before, they had a quarterly newsletter. I can't remember all the activities. I just know that it looked like quite a full newsletter of activities that ran from Monday to Friday, with a lot of different women's cultural groups that met there.

30

You weren't always present at the central office in Fairfield, were you? ---No, because I only would go there when I attended either the board meetings or the Immigrant Refugee Women's Network.

So it's fair of me to suggest to you that the only day you can really give evidence about is the Wednesday - - -?---Correct.

- - - or any other day that you might have attended - - -?---Yes.

40

- - - for whatever other reason?---Yeah.

Were the programs being conducted as a joint organisation or separately by each organisation?---I believe separately by each organisation.

Do you know any of the programs or activities conducted by NESH? ---Well, they sort of had a different – because their funding changed, they sort of had a different funding. A lot of their – from memory they would

assist more, like, with clients that were looking for real estate and housing as opposed to running groups and activities.

Does it makes sense to refer to NESH conducting programs or activities?  
---Well, it could because for NESH they could have conducted activities, like, around their clients', like, wellbeing and sort of anything to do, like, maybe with financial or cooking or those sorts of things. So it is possible. I thought that at the previous NESH office that they had that they did run some programs like that.

10

When you say you thought that they did run programs like that, you'd never seen programs actually being conducted at NESH, did you?---No, I hadn't seen programs being conducted at NESH.

Why do you assume that programs were conducted at NESH?---I just recall hearing about programs at NESH.

Do you remember anything about programs related to a Smith Family funded program STEPS to Employment?---I recall the name of the project, yes, and I can recall hearing, like, during meetings, like, discussing that the project had been going well and what was being done and et cetera, et cetera.

20

Who was saying these things about that particular program?---That would have been Eman.

Do you know when she was saying these things about STEPS to Employment?---Oh, would have been, as I said, during board meetings. Probably, well, it would have had to have been, like, maybe between 2013 to 2015.

30

Do you know anything specific that she said about the STEPS to Employment program?---Not specifically but I know it was to get people back into the work force so they were to have their skills increased. I think there was – I think they may have done some sort of jewellery making, jewellery course, hairdressing or make-up course, gardening project.

What sort of gardening project did you think was going on?---I just remember hearing about, like, gardening project. I don't remember any of the details of the project. We weren't given, like, a copy of the application form or to find out, like, how that project was supposed to be delivered.

40

Is it the case that Ms Sharobeem would simply give you a verbal description of what was going on with service at board meetings?---That's correct, yes.

Did you or any of the other board members check to see if what was being reported was accurate?---No, we did not. Well, they may have but, no, I did not, I suppose I should say.

Do you know anything about the Multicultural Parenting Program?---I know the name of it.

Were you aware, were you actually aware of programs or activities being conducted under that Multicultural Parenting Program?---Not that I'm aware.

10 Did you know that it was part of an application to the Smith Family for funding?---I know that there was some funding from the Smith Family and I'm sure that there was talk about the program, but I don't really know the details of the program.

Where was NESH obtaining its funds from?---From Family and Community Services.

You spoke earlier about an issue in relation to NESH funds.---Ah hmm.

20 Can you describe that a little further?---I believe the funding ran out – I could have my years mixed up – in June 2013. I think it was 2013. And that then a tender process was going ahead and that then they were unsuccessful in that tender, which then meant the staff at that time, they were terminated. But then some additional funding came up and then I think that only lasted for a few months and then some other funding came up.

Do you know where funds were being sought?---The last lot of funds, I think it was from Department of Family and Community Services.

30 But when you say additional funds were being sought, do you know where? ---I think that was all to do like with – for the same sort of project because it was to do with like the Going Home Staying Home project and then when the tenders came up and then they may have had like a transitional period of funding for a few months and then that may have been extended. Perhaps it was something along those lines.

Did you yourself know that there was actually an issue with funding for NESH?---Yes.

40 How did you come to that realisation?---That was during a board meeting. We're going back like, like 2013 or something like that and we knew that the – it was going for tender.

How did you know that?---Well, it was – everybody knew that in the area that things were changing with the Going Home Staying Home and that people would need to apply for the tender.

Who applied for the tender - - -?---For this one?

- - - on behalf of the new organisation?---Eman did. So Eman and the other team leader Liljana were working quite hard on that. The other board members too were asked to assist. We tried to do a little bit on there but then it's possible – I, I believe that Eman had also contacted a consultant.

Did Ms Sharobeem resign from the joint organisation - - -?---Yes.

10 - - - in late 2014?---It could have been late 2014, yeah. I know that she resigned from it and that it was possibly around that time.

I'll show you minutes of a meeting - - -.---Ah hmm.

- - - of 12 December, 2014. Just have a look at that and read it to yourself, at least the first paragraph.---Yeah, I recall that. I imagine it was around about that date that I do recall that happening.

20 So you recall that she told you that she was overwhelmed with the workload?---Well, she may not have used those exact words but, yes.

That was the effect of what she was saying?---Yes.

Did the board ask her to continue as an adviser?---Yes.

Do you know who specifically asked her to continue as an adviser?---Not really.

30 And she was also allowed to represent NESH as well, is that right, even after she resigned?---Like represent, well, she was the adviser so I suppose she could.

I'll just take you to paragraph 3 of those minutes.---Okay.

Towards the end of it. It says there that the chairperson Audrey, who I assume is Audrey Lai - - -?---Ah hmm.

- - - can authorise Eman to represent NESH at meetings, et cetera. You understand - - -?---Well, I do after - - -

40 - - - that's what happened?---Well, I do after reading that, yeah, so I imagine - - -

Do you recall her being given this authority to still represent the organisation?---I don't really recall it but if it's in the meeting – the minutes of the meeting.

After her resignation in late 2014 do you think that much changed in her roles or responsibilities for both organisations?---I don't really believe so. She was still doing a lot of work with the team leader at the time.

I'm just going to show you minutes of another meeting on 28 November, 2014.---Ah hmm.

That's a month before.---Ah hmm.

10 If you go to the middle of those minutes of the last paragraph. Do you recall that on 28 November or towards the end of 2014 just prior to Ms Sharobeem resigning - - -?---Ah hmm.

- - - that she indicated to the board that it was a good idea to have a single bookkeeper doing work for both organisations?---I don't really recall but it's in, it's in the minutes of the meeting.

20 Do you recognise those minutes as the minutes of a meeting of 28 November, 2014?---Well, I can't say I really recognise them but it's possible.

Yeah. Did you – did the board take minutes of meetings?---I didn't usually take minutes of the meetings.

Who took the minutes?---It could have been Audrey or Nada.

Were they distributed amongst board members?---We would often get minutes of the meetings, yes.

30 How would you get them?---By email.

And who would email them?---Probably Audrey or Nada.

When were you first made aware that there were issues in relation to the expenditure of funds - - -?---I think it was - - -

40 - - - from both organisations effectively?---I think it as a little bit – no, I think – with NESH I believe something came around in about August, 2015. I believe that there was some type of a complaint made I think to Family and Community Services.

I'll just – I'll take you to firstly minutes of a meeting of 23 March. ---Ah hmm.

NESH volume 19, page 254. Yeah. Firstly, you understood that Boyd & Associates were auditing both NESH - - -?---Yes.

- - - and IWHS?---Ah hmm.

And did you also understand that the same office had been auditing those two organisations for some time – some years prior to that?---Yes.

All right. So if you look at those meetings, sorry, those minutes.---Ah hmm.

10 Would you agree that in about March, 2015 some issues were raised by FACS, Family and Community Services in relation to the 2013-2014 financial report of NESH?---Oh, maybe it was like in about the August when things sort of came more to light.

No, that's fine, but you accept that in about March, 2015 Ms Sharobeem is referring - - -?---It must have been like - - -

- - - to a letter from FACS?---It must have been because it actually, yeah, even mentions like myself in number 6 requesting the service specification and I can imagine that I would be the only one that would have asked for those.

20 What are the service specifications you're referring to?---Well, that sort of like gives a guide on how the service is to be run.

Did you ever receive the service specifications when you asked for them? ---I know that I did receive it at some time but I thought it was after Audrey and maybe it may have been a new set of service specifications after they needed to be signed for the new financial year so I'm not, I'm not sure about that.

30 Do you know if at this meeting in March of 2015 if Ms Sharobeem provided other board members with a copy of the letter from FACS?---I remember – I recall like an email about a complaint from FACS but I don't really recall reading the letter.

I'll show you the letter from FACS - - ----Okay.

- - - at page 203. 17. Do you remember seeing this list of issues that had been forwarded to the board from Family and Community Services?---I don't recall it but it's not to say that it didn't happen.

40 Do you recall the issues raised in the list?---I don't recall some of them. I recall something about the consultancy fees, the conference and seminars, the community development. I don't recall some of the items, like, some of the things that are on here when we were asked to report back on what they were for.

Were you taken by surprise by the fees relating to conferences and seminars?---I can't recall at the time whether I was taken aback.

Sorry, firstly, had you ever seen this letter prior to today?---I may have. I'm not sure. I know some of the issues that are on there but I'm not sure whether I've seen that letter before or not.

Do you know if the auditor was contacted in order to prepare responses to these issues that were raised by Family and Community Services?---He may have, because I know that there was a – I know that we needed to address these issues.

- 10 Do you know what the reference to community development activities is?  
---Not really.

It's an amount for \$55,000 approximately.---I believe it may have been when the – when IWHS facilitators or something were doing something at the NESH. But I can't really recall.

Was that - - ?---And it seems a lot of money because it's, like, as much as someone's wages for the year.

- 20 Do you recall in that meeting of March 2015, which I've taken you to, and it refers to Ms Sharobeem referring to the letter from FACS, do you recall if at that meeting an issue was raised with respect to a \$55,000 community development fee?---Not really, I'm sorry.

Do you think you would recall that if it was raised?---Not really.

There are a number of other issues that are raised in that letter, do you agree with that?---Oh, there's a number of issues here, yes.

- 30 Do you think if you'd seen that list in March of 2015 you would know that you'd seen it?---But I may not have seen it in that form. I could have seen that letter. I didn't say that I haven't seen it. I'm not aware. Or I could have seen it in a different format when we would be working on how to address those issues.

Did Ms Sharobeem, in March of 2015, either at the meeting or not, explain any of the issues that you see in that letter or the list that I've shown you?  
---Was, she actually at the meeting in March 2015? Does it say on these minutes?

- 40 Yes, yes. Page 201 of volume 17.---Because I thought that we said that she had resigned in 2014.

Yeah. We'll just – we'll check that. Sorry, volume 17, page 201. Volume 19, page 254. So despite the fact that Ms Sharobeem had resigned in 2014, she was still the chair of that meeting in March 2015.---Okay.

Do you recall her in that meeting explaining some of the issues that are raised in that FACS list?---Not really.

Okay. Does that mean you don't have a recollection of that happening?---I don't really have a recollection, no.

Can I take you to NESH volume 17, page 204, which is a letter prepared by the auditor to the board, dated 10 April, 2015.---Ah hmm.

10 204, volume 17. Do you recall seeing this letter?---I don't really recall but I could have seen it.

Do you agree it's dated 10 April, 2015?---Yeah.

And it's addressed – and it's addressed to the NESH Women's Scheme Inc. ---Ah hmm.

20 And that it provides effectively, if you keep turning the page, 204, 205. ---Can I just ask about the PO box? Was that the address of the IWHS building or of the NESH office.

Pardon me, I'll just – I understand it's the IWHS office.---Okay.

Do you – you don't recall that letter?---I don't recall it but we may have seen it. And, like, the writing on here in the blue, was that, like, done by the auditor for the action by the committee?

Well, the letter is written by the auditor.---Ah hmm.

30 And the writing in blue is essentially a recommendation to the committee. Had you ever seen that document in early 2015?---Not that I'm aware but I may have seen it.

Were you ever asked by anyone on the board to do anything in relation to the queries raised by FACS?---I think we were doing – the board was doing things.

40 What were they doing?---I can't recall exactly but I know that we were meeting on a regular basis and going through all of these things.

Okay. You said “these things”. What were you going through?---Well, the different items of things that had been raised.

Okay.---For – from Family and Community Services. So that I am aware of.

But is it your evidence that you simply don't recall the letter?---I don't recall the letter.

All right.---But I'm not saying that I didn't see the letter, but I don't recall the letter. But I recall that as the board we were working on addressing those issues.

How long were you and the other board members working on addressing these issues?---I can't tell you how long we were working on them for.

10 Do you know if Ms Sharobeem had any involvement in working the issues out?---I'm not sure.

Were you heavily involved in dealing with these issues?---Not heavily involved, no.

Why do you say that?---I just don't believe that I was heavily involved in working on the issues. I was aware of the issues.

I don't mean any disrespect or embarrassment.---Yeah.

20 But were you suffering from some health problems?---I am suffering from health problems even now. But that wasn't until about August of 2015.

Did you have any involvement in formulating a response to the Family and Community Services?---I would have probably been involved by – things were being sent around by email. So, I mean, I may have made some suggestions.

30 But did you have any actual input into the document ultimately sent?---I don't think that I made the document or, yeah, I don't think that I had anything to do with creating the document or the responses. But I may have added some suggestions or - - -

What suggestions do you recall making?---I don't know, I don't know, I just said I may of.

Were you - - -?---If you had the, do you have, like, the responses that were made?

40 I'll get to that - - -?---Okay.

- - - in a moment?---Okay.

Did you have any involvement or did you communicate with Ms Sharobeem directly in order to provide responses to Family and Community Services? ---Not that I'm aware, no.

Do you recall having conversations with her about the response that NESH would provide - - -?---I may of. I believe that we started meeting at the NESH office, if you could find out when that was, then that would - - -

Do you know if the board members looked at the auditors' letter and the recommendations that were made by him and actually undertaken those recommendations?---Which time though because there was more than one occasion.

- 10 In relation to NESH, in relation to the issues raised by FACS and in relation to the auditors' recommendations in April of 2015, do you know if the board did anything about that?---Well, we were working on those issues so we may of, we must have, you know, taken it into account if we were helping to address those issues.

Did you ask to look at the financial reports of NESH?---I may of.

- 20 Do you recall looking at the financial reports of NESH?---I recall looking at them later on, like, but I thought it was maybe like, in about August or something like that when there, there was a meeting with Family and Community Services, but that may have been, like, more like, with the, with the new budget or, but I'm sure like the P&L was available at some stage so, so I believe I - - -

The profit and loss statement - - -?---Yeah.

- - - of NESH?---Yes.

- 30 Did you remember looking at that?---I'm pretty sure that I would have looked at that but I don't know when it was.

Did you look at a balance sheet?---I'm sure I would of.

Did the board ever ask to look at supporting documentation which had been submitted for reimbursements?---No. Well, not that I'm aware.

Did you ask to look at supporting documentation in relation to reimbursements?---No, but in hindsight with board training I would of.

- 40 Did anybody in, from the beginning of say 2015 when FACS raises concerns with NESH, did anyone on the board ask to look at invoices that had been submitted in support of reimbursement?---Not that I'm aware of. It was only on one occasion when I recall that we were – but that was to do with IWHS invoices I believe, but not to do with NESH invoices.

I'll show you the responses - - -?---Ah hmm.

- - - to FACS - - -?---Yeah.

- - - that were submitted by NESH. Volume 19, page 299. Now, do you recall that letter?---Well, I don't really like the font of the letter, like, it - - -

Aside from that do you - - -?---Like, it doesn't look like a, like, to me it doesn't look like a letter which should have been sent out.

10 Can I ask that it be, the page be turned, go to the next page and the next page and the next page. You see it's unsigned?---Ah hmm.

Purportedly written by an Audrey Lai on 22 May, 2015?---Ah hmm.

Do you agree with that?---Yeah.

Do you recall Ms Lai preparing a document to be sent to Family and Community Services?---It's possible, but I don't think she would have sent it like with the, the way that that was typed.

20 Do you know if she sent it or not?---Not really, no.

Do you know if she prepared it or not?---Not really.

What document were you working on with the other board members in terms of a response to Family and Community Services?---I thought it was like more of a rough document to, to sort of like, I'm sort of thinking, I may have it confused with IWHS, they more like a spreadsheet of what needed to be addressed and what was going on.

30 Do you know if Ms Lai met with Ms Gallagher?---I believe she may have met with her, yes.

And Ms Gallagher was an officer from the Family and Community Services?---Correct, yes.

Do you know if Ms Sharobeem met with Ms Gallagher?---I don't know about that.

I'll show you another document?---Ah hmm.

40 Volume 4 of statements page 278. Do you agree that that is an email dated 28 May, 2015?---Yes.

From Ms Lai to a number of other people?---Ah hmm.

Including yourself?---Yeah.

In that email does Ms Lai refer to her meeting with Ms Gallagher?  
---Yes.

In that email does she also refer to reservations that she had in the written response she made to the Family and Community Services?---Yeah, that's what it says in the letter.

What was your understanding of each of Ms Lai's reservations if you go through points 1 to 6, are you able to comment on those reservations?  
---Oh, I think they're valid reservations.

10 When you say "valid" do you mean that they were validly withheld from FACS or that they were valid issues?---No, I think they're valid reasons that have been raised about the owner's responsibility to pay for some of the repairs.

Were you aware that the service was paying for repairs as opposed to the owner?---Not really.

20 Was the board aware at that time that the service was paying opposed to the owner?---Not really.

Was the board aware of the amount of equipment that was necessary to conduct the service?---I don't believe so.

Did the board have any understanding of what was actually required to conduct the service, namely NESH first of all?---No. It doesn't look like it.

30 Computers. It says here that computers were replaced for \$23,487, Ms Watton. What did you think when you saw this email?---I really don't recall what I thought.

Well, did you want to know what type of computer was purchased for 20-odd thousand dollars?---I can't really recall, I'm afraid.

Did you want to know if a number of computers were purchased?---I can't really recall, but I imagine there wasn't more than one computer.

Did the board have a discussion about that at any stage?---We may have.

40 It refers at point 6 to "please keep all this private between us".---Ah hmm.

What do you take that to mean?---To just keep it amongst the board.

Did you take that to mean not to refer it to Ms Gallagher?---No.

Did you think to contact the funding body yourself?---No, I didn't.

I'll show you minutes of a meeting dated 26 June, 2015.---Ah hmm.

I'm slowly getting through that year.---Yeah.

NESH volume 20, page 7. Have a look at those minutes.---Ah hmm.

Now, you agree that it says that you were present?---Yes.

That Nada Damcevska, Ms Lai and Ms Ghaly were present?---Ah hmm.

10 But it does not say that Ms Sharobeem was present on that day. Do you agree with that?---Yeah.

Do you know why she didn't turn up to that meeting?---I don't even know why it was at IWHS, because I would have imagined that that would have been at the NESH office.

It says there at point 1 that you queried the program level agreement.---Yes, I recall that.

20 Does that refresh your memory?---Yes, I recall that.

And did you do that at a meeting?---Yes.

30 What do you mean by the program level agreement?---Well, that may have been – I don't know whether that was after the new financial deed had been signed or not. And looking through, I'm not sure whether the team leader knew that there would be a program level agreement. I'm not sure if she was aware of that and that you needed to address the items in a program level agreement, which would sort of state, like, you know, whether you needed approval to purchase items more than X amount and how many clients you needed to see or how many, like, what sort of things needed to be done, whether you needed to have your budget prepared by such and such a time or, et cetera, et cetera.

By this stage, were you appointed as treasurer?---It must have been around somewhere between June or August of 2015.

Were you around about that time trying to take a more hands-on approach with the organisation?---I believe I was.

40 Do you know what, if anything, you were trying to do in order to discover what had happened?---No, I would think I was more with the program level agreement to make certain that the tasks were being carried out as that what was in the funding deed.

You knew that Boyd & Associates was conducting an audit of Immigrant Women's Health Service as well for 2014 to 2015.---Yeah.

In relation to that audit - - ?---Ah hmm.

- - - did the auditor raise a particular issue in relation to a payment of \$3,000 made to Westmead Hospital?---Yes.

Do you recall that?---I do recall that.

And do you recall a number of emails being exchanged between board members about that?---Yes, but I more so recall the fact that I was the one that signed the approval for that after it had already been paid. So that's why I really recall that.

You said that you signed the approval for that - - -?---Ah hmm.

- - - after it had been paid.---Ah hmm.

What do you mean by that?---Well, I remember we were in Eman's office, having some type of meeting. I don't know when it was, though. And there was a whole pile of paperwork that was on her desk that she asked if we would sign for her. But the payments had already been made so it was being approved after the payment had already been made. And I recall - - -

Sorry, just stop there.---Yeah.

So you're in Ms Sharobeem's office, is that right?---Ah hmm. Yes.

What time of the day is it?---It could have been after a network meeting or it could have been for some sort of meeting. When I talk about the network meeting, that's that - - -

It's the IRWN meeting?--- - - - once-a-month meeting. So it may have been then or it may have been – we may have been having a meeting.

Do you think it might have taken place on a Wednesday afternoon?---It's possible that it was on a Wednesday afternoon that we were having, like, an informal meeting and there was, as I mentioned, there was a whole pile of paperwork and she was showing us how much paperwork there was and asked if we could sign the paperwork.

Just pardon me, Commissioner.---Okay.

What were you doing in Ms Sharobeem's office on that afternoon?---We would have been having like some sort of meeting, like an informal meeting or some sort of meeting.

Who else was there?---I believe Audrey and Nada as well.

Did you say you were all – so you've had a meeting?---We were having the meeting in her office. It may have been like to do like with what was

happening with the auditor and what was going on with IWHS so it could have been at that time. I'm not - - -

Were there – what was on her desk?---Oh, there was a big pile of paperwork. They were all the accounts but, but their way of doing the accounts seemed to be that the accounts were paid and then they were approved after they were paid.

10 When did you discover that that was the process for approving reimbursements?---On that particular day.

What did you think about that particular process?---We brought it up and said that that – that's not the way that things have to happen. Is that, you know, there has to be more than – one person can't prepare and authorise the payments.

How many invoices or documents do you say were on Ms Sharobeem's desk?---There was quite a pile of them so - - -

20 How thick?---Like maybe about that, that amount.

So you're indicating about 10 centimetres?---But I know that we were given – each of us were given a pile to sign, to initial.

Who gave you the pile to initial?---Eman asked us to help her out by initialling them.

30 What did she say to you – what did she tell you to do?---She asked us to initial them. There's like a, a stamp that was put like on the – the payment had already been made and it would have been like the, the copy of the bank direct deposit or something and a credit card receipt or something like that and then the stamp that, you know, someone approves the payment and that was what it was.

Did Ms Sharobeem tell you when those payments had been made?---No.

Did Ms Sharobeem tell you who made those payments?---We imagined – the bookkeeper had made the payments we imagined or I, I imagined.

40 When you say imagined - - -?---Yeah, I - - -

- - - what are you talking about?---Well, I – well, I knew that they'd already been paid because she said they had – Eman had said the payments have already been made. Youse just need to sign them to authorise them.

Did she tell you what the invoices were for?---Some of them had like receipts on them but I didn't look at all of them, like I don't know what

everybody else's pile. I mainly am aware of the one to do with the Westmead Hospital because I had been shown that.

And what did the Westmead Hospital invoice look like?---Well, it wasn't – what, what I signed wasn't an invoice. What I signed only had the credit card receipt.

What else did it indicate on the credit card receipt?---Actually it was – the auditor also a copy of that. That's where I saw it.

10

Well, no, I'm asking you questions about this particular afternoon - - -.  
---Yeah.

- - - where you say you approved a reimbursement that had already been made.---Ah hmm.

What else did you see on the credit card receipt?---It just had the credit card receipt for \$3,000 and the payment had already been made. So we were in effect approving something that had already been paid.

20

Do you know when the payment had been processed?---No.

Were you told what the payment was for?---It was supposed to be something for the – presenting a paper at Westmead Hospital.

Who told you that?---That was a response provided from Eman.

How did she provide the response to you?---I think that was to the auditor though not to me.

30

So you're sitting there in Ms Sharobeem's room - - -?---Ah hmm.

- - - her office?---Yes.

She gives you a credit card receipt for \$3,000.---It wasn't just the credit card receipt, it was the paperwork to show that the payment had already been made.

So she showed you - - -?---Like been transferred.

40

Did she show you a credit card receipt and also a bank - - -?---Well, she didn't show it to me, she just gave us a whole pile of documents each and asked us all to initial them.

What other documents did you initial?---There was other invoices as well in there.

Invoices for what?---I don't recall all of the invoices of what they were for.

What did you think you were doing when you were initialling each document?---Well, I believed that because the payment was already made how can we authorise something that has already been paid. We didn't believe that that was a good practise and we asked that that not happen again.

10 You were aware at the time of that meeting that reimbursements had been made and approved - - -?---I didn't think they were - - -  
- - - after?--- - - - reimbursements though. I thought that they were just invoices.

What did you think you were doing by putting your initial or signing off or authorising a payment that had already been made?---Well, I didn't think that it was right and we mentioned that and said that, you know, in future we have – we can't do it like – like that can't be done that way.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: Mr Rajalingam, is that a convenient time?

MR RAJALINGAM: Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. We'll adjourn till 2 o'clock.

**LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT**

**[1.02pm]**