

But you know Mr Booth don't you?---I do, I do know Mr Booth.

Did you do some work for the paper?---Yes, I did write for the paper, yes.

Presumably you would have noticed the ads being placed at the time, that is in the lead up to the election, ads in the name of Save Ryde.com?---I was helping the, I was helping individual Councillors with their - - -

Please answer my question. Did you notice the ads?---Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

And the website name was on them?---Yes.

Presumably you got some traffic from that?---Hopefully yes, yes.

Did you also have a Facebook page for Save Ryde?---Yes.

And is that something you'd established?---Yes.

And did you authorise others to contribute to that Facebook page?---No.

No one at all?---No one that I can recall. I don't think I've authorised anybody else on it, yeah.

All right. Now before I move on, Commissioner, can I tender the email that I've shown Mr Stavrinis, that is the email from Mr Petch to him forwarding on the email from Ms (not transcribable) Cooke to Ms Wotton.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Yes. That will be Exhibit C26.

**#EXHIBIT C26 - EMAIL FROM MR PETCH TO MR STAVRINIS
FORWARDING ON FROM MS SMITH AND MS COOKE**

MR DOWNING: Can I ask you to have a look at a document, and it's spread over two pages, but perhaps if you can hold it together. Do you recognise that ad which is across the bottom of those two pages?---I do, I do, I do.

And that was something that ran in The Weekly Times on 5 September, just before the elections?---According to the date on the page, yep.

And it was a political ad for various Councillors saving Ryde?---Yes.

So it was Petch, Tagg, Salvestro-Martin, Lee, Perram and Butterworth?---Yep.

And you'll see that it refers in pretty big letters there on the right hand side to more info at www.saveryde.com?---Yes, yes.

Now did you write this ad?---I wrote, I did, I did. I wrote the copy on it. The copy was a repurpose from another bit of information that I'd written anyway, so yes.

Were you involved then with placing the ad in the paper?---Well if it's my copy of there I must have been.

All right. Well as - - -?---Sorry, I didn't, I didn't recall the, the Save Ryde, the Save Ryde thing on the - but that was stupid of me because, because it makes sense, yes, sorry.

Now at the bottom of that ad it says authorised by and it names the various Councillors?---Ah hmm.

So presumably you must have had discussions with them to get their authority in order to place the ad?---Look all I can recall is that I've written copy on this and I can't recall, I can't recall whether that came from me or whether, whether, whether Booth sought their authority or who did it.

Do you say what, this might have been placed at Mr Booth's behest? Isn't it the other way around, that this was your organisation and you organised for the ad to be placed?---No, there's no organisation. It's just, it's just a slogan. Save Ryde is just a slogan. So there's no organisation, it's just a, it's just a grouping of the Councillors, I guess. So - - -

Well then wouldn't you agree looking at the ad there must have been some discussion by you with them before this was placed?---I don't, I don't recall how that, how that may have come about, so, I do recall that I've, I've written some copy for this ad.

Surely you remember if it's part of their campaign you'd have discussions with them where you agreed that you would place an ad promoting their re-election?---I just don't, I don't recall how that came about. That's all.

All right. Placing an ad in The Weekly Times costs money. Correct?
---Supposedly.

You've got to pay for ads. You know that don't you?---Do you run a paper?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: Could you please just answer the question?---I'm sure that John Booth has the, has the ability not to, not to charge for an ad if he wanted to. I don't know. But the basic premise yes you pay for an ad.

MR DOWNING: Right. And who placed this ad?---I don't recall who placed the ad.

Well I thought you agreed with me a moment ago you wrote it and it was you who then ran for it to be placed in the paper?---I didn't say that I ran for it to be placed in the paper, I said I had involvement in it but I can't recall how it all came together.

Well you wrote the ad. Correct?---I wrote, I wrote some copy in the ad, yeah.

Well what did you do with it when you finished writing it? Who did you send it to?---

I probably sent it in to the paper. I just can't, I just can't recall how, how it all came together, that's all.

Well surely someone must have been giving an undertaking that they'd pay for the ad. Did you have authority from someone to pay for this?---No, no. No, I don't know anything to do with payment of ads. I don't, I didn't get involved in anything like that at all. I only got involved in copy, writing copy.

Do you say you have no knowledge of who would have been paying for this ad to be placed?---No I don't, I don't have any knowledge.

Do you recall whether Mr Cerreto might have been the person who was funding - - -?--No, I don't, I don't - - -

- - - Save Ryde?---I don't recall who would have been placing the ad or who authorised it or anything. I cannot recall.

Did you have any discussions with Mr Cerreto about him being the person that would fund this advertising?---I don't recall any discussions with Mr Cerreto.

Are you saying that you just don't recall at all and it might have happened or you know that he wasn't responsible for it?---As I said before I don't recall how this ad came together. I know, I do recognise my copy, but I don't recall how it all came together.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER: You're being asked a specific question. Do you have any knowledge or understanding that Mr Cerreto paid for this ad?---No, I don't.

And you have no knowledge of his paying for any political ads. Is that correct?---No. No.

Thank you.

MR DOWNING: Who paid for the establishment costs of Save Ryde.com?
---The, for the website and everything?

Well the domain name, hosting costs?---It was huge amount of money, it was zero and I paid for it.

All right. So that cost nothing did it?---Well Save Ryde the, yeah. There was only the domain name and that was done by, by a provider, by a graphic design provider who I think I paid. I don't, I don't, there was no establishment costs really 'cause there's a blog and there's a Facebook page.

Has anyone provided you with any funding for the purposes of Save Ryde?
---No, no.

No. If I can ask you to have a look at another ad. Do you recognise that?
---Yes.

That's an ad run just after the election on 12 September thanking people for voting for the various Councillors who were supported by Save Ryde?

---Yes.

Do you recall that was an ad that you'd written?---Yep.

Did you place it?---I think I sent it through to John Booth.

All right. And what was the arrangement for payment of that ad?---I don't, I'm not involved in the payment arrangements if there were any.

So you sent it through, it was run and you say what there was no discussion at all about who was going to pay?---No, because, because it was, it was filling in spaces. I don't know, I don't know if, I don't know how it was - - -

Well everything written in the newspaper fills a space doesn't it?---I don't know, I don't know, I don't know whether John Booth asked me can you please put together this or if I, if I did it myself or - - -

Do you recall if Mr Cerreto had anything to with it?---I don't, I don't recall. No.

Do you have any knowledge of whether he was the person who was supposed to pay for this?---I don't. I don't.

And you'll see on there there are various addresses, there's the saveryde.com site?---Yep.

There's also a Twitter address?---Yeah, I set that up too.

Facebook which you told us you set up?---Yes.

And WordPress, that you set that up as well?---Yes. There's just too many addresses here, yes.

And were you attending to all of those different addresses?---Well, one of the, one of the addresses just diverts to another basically. Yeah, I attended to all of these and it's quite easy to do these days, all you do is use a social media dashboard and you can syndicate across the different platforms.

Right?---It's not really difficult.

Okay. Now - - -?---And if you look at the saveryde digital assets there's not, there's really not a great deal of updating there.

Commissioner, I won't tender those because they're already part of a tender that's been made earlier. Can I ask you about another community organisation, the Ryde Concerned Citizens Association, do you have any knowledge of that?---Very vaguely, yes.

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What do you understand that to be?---I understand it was a umbrella organisation and that's about all I, I understand.

Do you know who set it up?---No.

Do you know who was involved in it?---I think, I think Warwick was involved in it, Warwick Cooper.

Have you ever attended meetings in respect of the Ryde Concerned Citizens Association?---No.

You've never written any letters on behalf of it or - - -?---No.

- - - written any copy for it?---No, no, no, no but I do recall Alan Jones mentioning it on his programme.

When you were listening to Alan Jones one day?---Yeah.

Was that just an incident, a coincidence you happened to be listening or were you listening because you'd been told to?---No, I was, I was, I was told that there was something on Alan Jones.

By who?---There had been something on Alan Jones, I don't recall who told me but I was alerted to it.

Just one last matter, Mr Stavrinis. At various times is it the case that saveryde published articles, pieces critical of certain of the Councillors?
---Oh, yeah.

That would be the Councillors in the yes block?---Yes.

And also critical of Council staff like Mr Neish?---Yes.

And I take it you were the author of those pieces?---Yes.

So there were pieces on the various addresses of the website?---Yes.

Anything else, published in papers or anything beyond the, the various websites?---
Yes.

Where?---The newspaper, the, the, the copy that was in the TWT, there was a story in the TWT.

But are they stories that you'd written as a journalist or things that you'd published on, as a publicist and media strategist for the Councillors?---That was as a journalist and I stand by everything that I've, I've written.

Thank you, Commissioner.