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INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

THE HONOURABLE PETER M. HALL QC
CHIEF COMMISSIONER

PUBLIC HEARING

OPERATION PARAGON

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT SYDNEY

ON TUESDAY 18 MAY, 2021

AT 11.00AM

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

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Ms Spruce.

MS SPRUCE: Yes, Commissioner, we're reconvening the evidence of Mr Masters.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Mr Masters. Good morning, Mr Masters.

MR MASTERS: Good morning.

10

THE COMMISSIONER: Did you take an oath or an affirmation yesterday?

MR MASTERS: Affirmation.

THE COMMISSIONER: We'll readminister the affirmation this morning. If you wouldn't mind standing, please. Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Yes, Ms Spruce.

MS SPRUCE: Mr Masters, I want to ask you some questions this morning about the process by which you would obtain a particular contract or job from the RMS. So, I take it there would be an initial enquiry by Mr Dubois or Mr Steyn?---Yes.

10

And would that ordinarily be by phone or email?---Either.

Could be either. I see. And then I take it that in response to that you would submit a quote. Is that correct?---If the work was straightforward, then – if it was detailed work, if it was not detailed work, then I would go and look at the job and then tell then what was required.

20

So you're saying that in some instances you'd give them a verbal quote. Is that what you mean?---Sometimes they didn't know what needed to be done on the job, so I would tell them what needed to be done on the job.

But once the specifications of what needed to be done had been agreed as between you and Mr Steyn or Dubois, then I presume you would provide them with a quote?---Yes.

30

And if your quote was accepted then it's correct, isn't it, that a purchase order would be created by the RMS?---Yes, and for maintenance there would be a, we would go and do this job at a certain location, and if the job was far away, you wouldn't go and look at the job and then come back and quote it. It would be just, go and do the job and it would come out of the existing purchase order.

I see. Well, when you talk about the existing purchase order, are you referring to what is known as a bucket purchase order?---Yes, yes.

40

Well, just put the bucket purchase orders to one side for the moment and just focus on just a straightforward request for a job and you providing a quote. You were aware, weren't you, that there was a different process within the RMS for quotes under \$50,000 as opposed to quotes for over \$50,000?---Yes.

And what was the process to your understanding, if the quote was under \$50,000?---If the quote was under \$50,000, they could go ahead with the quote, they could get, order the quote. They could get the job done.

They only needed to obtain one quote, in effect, is that correct?---Yes.

And what was your understanding of the process if the amount of a quote was over \$50,000?---Multiple quotes.

I see. And is it the case that prior to your acceptance onto the Maintenance Panel that all of the jobs you did for the RMS were for under \$50,000?---I would say so. Most of the jobs were.

10 And did Mr Steyn or Mr Dubois ever tell you to keep your quotes under \$50,000?---I don't remember quoting too many jobs over \$50,000, but if they were over \$50,000, it might have been break the job up into two parts.

So when you say break the job up into two parts, would somebody tell you that you should split the job into two different parts so that it didn't exceed \$50,000?---Yes.

And was that Mr Steyn who would tell you that?---Both, I think.

20 Both of them would tell you that. Now, you then mentioned earlier what are referred to as buckets, where a purchase order is created for a bucket amount. Am I correct in understanding that what you mean by that is that a purchase order is raised in relation to a larger sum of money with an intention that it will be used for jobs that arise in the future in relation to, for example, maintenance or repair work?---Yes.

And when it came to the creation of a bucket, did you put in a quote, in effect, for remedial works in order for that bucket to be created?---Yes, yes.

30 So if I could just show Mr Masters, please, volume 12.2 at page 248. So, Mr Masters, this is a quote provided by you on 1 August, 2017, to Mr Steyn and it's said to be in respect of remedial and emergency electrical works and it's for an amount of \$49,500. So right up until the point of the threshold after which a different process would be engaged.---Yes.

And am I correct in understanding that when it says, "Remedial and emergency electrical works," that at the time you were asked to create this, there are no particular remedial or emergency works in mind?---Yes.

But Mr Steyn wished to create a bucket of money?---Yes.

40 And so did Mr Steyn tell you to create this quote?---Yes, he would have.

And did he instruct you as to what to put in it?---Like, not the wording. Would have been, need to create an, a quote for a bucket of money to get me to go out, so prior to that, I'd have to go and do the job and then not get paid, and then would have to create a purchase order just saying, like for a few thousand dollars, then I'd have to wait for that purchase order to come back before I could then send an invoice to him.

I understand, so you understood this to be a convenient way of ensuring there was a bucket of money available for you to go out and do remedial and emergency works as they arose in the future.---Yes.

But I understand from what you're saying that Mr Steyn would have told you to quote for that particular amount, \$49,500. Is that right?---Yeah, or quote, giving a quote under \$50,000.

10 And, Mr Masters, other than in relation to the creation of these bucket type purchase orders, were there any other occasions when Mr Steyn told you the amount that you should put on a quote?---No.

And did Mr Steyn ever assist you to prepare or draft a quote?---No.

And then once you've gone and performed the work, it's correct, isn't it, that you submitted the invoice to the RMS, which makes reference to a purchase order number?---Yes.

20 If I could just show Mr Masters please, volume 12.2, page 313. Mr Masters, this is an invoice provided by you on 9 May, 2018, and just at the top there, you'll see the RMS contact is Mr Dubois. I noticed that Mr Dubois's name appears on a number of invoices as the contact person. Was it ever the case that Mr Dubois was formally listed as the contact for a particular job but in fact you were dealing with Mr Steyn?---No, they were two separate jobs, like, one for one person, one for the other person.

30 I see. And, Mr Masters, I just am taking you to this as an example, there are many examples that are similar, but you see here that in respect of this invoice, you're charging for amounts that relate to work you've done in different areas. So you've done work in Chinderah and Jerilderie – excuse me, Jerilderie, thank you – Narrandera, and again in Narrandera and Jerilderie. Jerilderie, thank you. Excuse me. So do you see that, Mr Masters?---Yes.

If you go over to the next page, I'm sorry, page 314, you'll see there's further work there. And so it was your usual practice, wasn't it, when you did work in more than one area, to itemise and particularise where the work had been done in your invoice?---Sometimes, but not always.

40 Well, Mr Masters, I can take you to a large number of your invoices, but it was usually the case, wasn't it, that you would set out where you'd done the work when you'd been working in different regions?---Yeah.

I mean, Mr Masters, when you do work, you must be keeping a note somewhere of the work that you're doing.---Yes.

So that you know the amount to charge.---Yes.

Say there's a bucket purchase order for \$50,000, and you've been asked to go and do work in Chinderah, Jerilderie, and Narrandera, you must be keeping a record of the amount of work you're doing, so that you're able to put an invoice together.---Yes.

All right, so when you put the invoice together, it would be rational, wouldn't it, to set out what it is that you've done?---Most of the time.

10 Most of the time. So most of the time it was your practice to set out where you'd been and what you'd done. Is that correct?---Would say so.

And then if I could show you another example of an invoice, which is at page 278 of the same volume. And again, this is just an example, this is an invoice from 31 July, 2018. Sorry, I withdraw that, 31 January, 2018. And you can see here, Mr Masters, that you're invoicing for work that you've done on different days. So some of the work's been done on 21 January, and some's been done on 31 January.---Yes.

20 And again, it was your practice, wasn't it, to set out the dates on which you did particular work when an invoice referred to a span of time?---Most of the time.

Now, Mr Masters, did Mr Steyn ever tell you the amount that you should put on an invoice?---No, not on an invoice.

Did he ever assist you to draft an invoice?---No.

30 Did he ever suggest to you that you should submit an invoice for work you hadn't done?---Only in the case of Peter Manuel.

Well, let's go to the case of Peter Manuel now. If Mr Masters could please be shown volume 12.3, page 63. Mr Masters, when you say only in the case of Mr Manuel, I assume you're referring to the circumstances surrounding you being issued with two invoices from Peter Manuel Services, is that correct?---Yes.

And you see the first of those invoices is on the screen.---Yes.

40 And this is an invoice dated 21 May, 2018.---Yes.

Issued to you by a company called Peter Manuel Services. And it's said to be for services rendered for the consultation of business development. Now, had you ever engaged Peter Manuel Services to assist you with the consultation of business development?---No.

Had you engaged them to assist you with any services?---No.

You'd never received any services from Peter Manuel Services?---(No Audible Reply)

Did you know who or what Peter Manuel Services was?---No.

How did you come to be provided with this invoice?---I was asked by Craig to, can I pay Peter for work that he's done onsite, and then I was told, "It's okay 'cause you've seen him on the site." I had seen him on the site. I was, I was asked, "We can't pay him because he's not on the panel." I paid, like, when I get different to this - - -

THE COMMISSIONER: Sorry, Mr – sorry to interrupt you. I'm having trouble hearing you again.---Sorry. When I - - -

So just going back over what you were saying, Craig asked you to pay Peter, and then what did you say after that?---Yeah, sorry. So when I engaged another contractor, like a fibre technician, we don't do fibre work, you know what I mean? Like, that's specialist work. I'd engage a fibre guy and I'd bill them on my bill to them, you know what I mean, back to the RMS, because I'd engaged him. So in this instance I was asked, "Can you pay this guy? Because he's not on the panel." And you'd seen him onsite doing the work. And I had seen him onsite. I didn't know what work he'd done, though. I didn't receive the invoices at that time. It was like days later, a week later that I was given the invoices.

MS SPRUCE: All right, Mr Masters, if I can just break that answer down. First of all, you refer to Craig. I take it you're referring to Mr Steyn? ---Yeah, sorry.

So Mr Steyn gives you these invoices and he says to you could you pay Peter for work he's done onsite because he's not on the panel?---Yes. At that point I didn't even know his name was Peter Manuel.

So at that point you didn't know his name was Peter Manuel, but I take it you were aware that someone called Peter had been onsite?---Yeah, I'd seen him.

And was there a particular site or location that you're referring to when you say you'd seen him onsite?---The gantry jobs, like, the, the, the new installs.

And do you recall what locations those were in?---Oh, Narrandera, Jerilderie, like, Gundagai, places like.

And so when you list Narrandera, Jerilderie, Gundagai, are you telling me where you recall doing gantry work or are you telling me where you recall seeing Peter?---No, they were the gantries. So, like, I definitely seen him at Narrandera and Jerilderie.

THE COMMISSIONER: You had seen him at Jerilderie?---Yes, but I didn't know what he did.

So you didn't actually see whether, and if so, what work he did, is that right?---Yes, that's right.

Right. Thank you.

10 MS SPRUCE: So you saw him onsite but you didn't actually observe him doing any particular labour or task that you could identify?---Oh, I'm, I'm flat out working when I'm there onsite, so I didn't, I'm not watching what other people are doing. They were always moving around doing stuff. I don't know what they were doing.

And so did you know – I withdraw that.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: Could I just ask you, at the Jerilderie site, for example, how many men were there in relation to this job – sorry – the job that was shown in the last invoice?---The previous job, yeah. Heaps.

Pardon?---Like, heaps of people.

Quite a number?---Yeah. Like, 30 or more, you know what I mean? Like, over the course of a week, more, you know what I mean?

Do I take it you weren't ever asked to instruct Peter Manuel about his work?---Beg your pardon?

30 You were not instructed and you didn't instruct - - -?---No, no, I didn't.
- - - Peter Manuel?---No.

And so far as you remember, you were never introduced to him?---No.

And you can't say whether he did any work at all?---I - - -

Is that right?---I don't know.

40 Do you remember whether he was there at Jerilderie or Narrandera in fact?
---Yes.

He was?---yes.

How do you know he was there?---I would have seen him, you know what I mean? Like, there was, like, toolbox meetings in the mornings, you know what I mean?

No, I'm not concerned with what you would have seen, I'm just trying to ascertain your recollection of what you did see at Jerilderie or the Narrandera site. Do you recall ever actually seeing this person, Peter Manuel, at either of those worksites at any stage?---Yes. I seen, his name was Peter, I didn't know his name was Peter Manuel. There was a Peter there and he was - - -

And in what context did you see him?---Walking around doing things, you know what I mean? Like, moving things around. I'm not sure.

10

But do you know what he was doing at either of those sites at the times you were there?---I didn't take any notice.

So you don't know what he did?---No.

If anything?---No.

MS SPRUCE: Mr Masters, I'm just going to show you a photograph. That's all right, we'll come back to that. So, Mr Masters, was it while you were at these sites, Narrandera and Jerilderie that Mr Steyn said to you, "Could you pay Peter because he's not on the panel?" Or was that a conversation that you had after?---No, it was after. After.

20

And to the best of your recollection, when you had that conversation, and Mr Steyn said, "Could you pay Peter?" Did he just refer to Peter by his first name?---Yes.

30

Did he give you any indication of who Peter was or what work he'd been doing?---No. It was justified by saying that, you know, "You'd seen him onsite, so it's okay."

If I could just show you, please, Mr Masters, volume 14.1 at page 214. Mr Masters, you see there this is Peter Manuel's driver's licence. Do you recognise that person as the man you knew as Peter that you saw onsite? ---Yes, pretty sure.

40

All right. So Mr Masters, when Mr Steyn says to you that Peter's been doing work onsite, you knew that he hadn't been doing any work for you. Whatever the work was he may or may not have been doing, it certainly hadn't been for you.---Yes.

He wasn't one of your subcontractors.---No.

So did you say to Mr Steyn, "Why are you asking me to pay him? His work had nothing to do with me"?---No, he, he preferenced it as he's, he can't pay him because he's not on the panel.

And it was your understanding, was it, that the only people who were able to do work on these gantry jobs were people who were on the Maintenance Panel?---Yes.

Were you aware that there was any relationship, any familial relationship between Mr Steyn and Mr Manuel?---I didn't know that he was his father, no, or father-in-law or whatever.

10 When you received the invoice – if I could just have the invoice back on screen, please, at volume 12.3, page 63. You see down the bottom it says, “Peter Manuel Services Pty Ltd” and then there's an address listed.---Yes.

And you recognise that as Mr Steyn's home address.---Yes.

So did you see that at the time?---No.

Now, Mr Masters, by this time, Mr Steyn had already been exploiting you in relation to the purchase of Apple products.---Yes.

20 So you must have known that he wasn't an honest man.---No, I didn't put that together.

You didn't put that together? You didn't think there was something suspect about the request that you pay for Peter Manuel's labour onsite?---No, I, I had no idea that, that any of the money was going to him until I read the opening address.

30 Well, Mr Masters, accepting what you've said, that Mr Steyn says to you, “Look, he's not on the panel, so can you pay him?” you must have expected to then be reimbursed for that payment.---Yes, he said, “You can invoice me on the next job you do.”

Mr Steyn told you that you could invoice him on the next job that you did? ---Yes.

You gave the example of it being like if you had to subcontract fibre work to someone, then you would, in your invoice to the RMS, account for the cost of the subcontractor.---Yes.

40 So why wasn't it structured in that way? Why didn't you give an invoice to the RMS which particularised whatever work it was that Mr Manuel had done onsite and incorporated that into your invoice as an expense in relation to a subcontractor?---I was told to “Invoice it on the next job you do, and don't make it obvious.”

“And don't make it obvious.” And so when he said, “Don't make it obvious,” at that point did you start to suspect that perhaps there was

something fishy about this arrangement?---Fishy in a way that, don't know, fishy, yes.

And did you always just do what Mr Steyn asked you to do?---No, but I'd already said yes to paying him.

10 And so I take it that what you understood Mr Steyn was instructing you to do was to then submit a false invoice on your own account to recoup the costs of the amounts you would have paid to Peter Manuel Services Pty Ltd?---Yes.

And did you feel uneasy about doing that?---Yes.

You knew that was a dishonest thing to do.---I knew he'd been there working, didn't know what he did, and I was asked to do it so I did it.

20 Did it not occur to you that whatever work he'd been there doing would have been presumably related to somebody else who was legitimately doing work there? You knew it wasn't related to the work you were doing.---Yes.

Did you not make an enquiry of Mr Steyn about why it was that this arrangement couldn't be sorted out with whoever the particular contractor was that Mr Manuel's labour was actually in relation to?---I don't know what, what capacity he was there in, if he was working for anybody else.

And you didn't ask those questions?---No.

30 And, Mr Masters, am I to understand that the reason you didn't ask those questions is because you didn't want to upset the relationship with Mr Steyn?---Yes.

You were just in the mindset of whatever Mr Steyn asked you to do, you were going to do, in order to continue receiving work from the RMS. Is that fair?---Pretty much.

All right. So if we could move to the second Peter Manuel Services invoice. This is volume 12.3, page 64. And I take it you didn't receive any of the services listed there?---No.

40 You didn't receive them from Mr Steyn?---No.

Mr Steyn never gave you business development support or assisted you with paperwork for quotations?---No.

It's just a fiction, isn't it?---Yes.

All right. And then - - -?---I would have been expecting to have got the invoices after I was first asked with a, with a, with a list of how many hours and what he'd done on the job, you know what I mean?

I'm sorry, just say that again. When you were first asked - - -?---Yeah, I would have been expecting, you know what I mean?

10 You were expecting to receive an invoice from Peter Manuel Services that was going to list labour work that you'd actually done at Narrandera or wherever the site might have been?---Yes. Yes. Yes.

So when you saw these invoices, were you surprised?---Yeah, somewhat.

I mean, it must have occurred to you that there was some sort of deception going on, didn't it? This is not an invoice which is particularising labour work that Mr Manuel's done onsite, is it?---No.

It's clearly some kind of a deception, is that fair?---Yeah.

20 All right. And then if I could just show you, Mr Masters, on page 65 of volume 12.3. See, this is a text message sent to you by Mr Steyn, saying, "Let me know when you want those invoices, please, mate." And it's dated the 6 June, 2018.---Yes.

Now, would it be correct to assume that that is a reference to the Peter Manuel Services invoices? It's hard to imagine any other circumstances in which Mr Steyn would be providing invoices to you, isn't it?---Must have been, yes.

30 Must have been those ones. And that's on 6 June. So it looks as though, even though the first invoice from Peter Manuel Services is dated 21 May, that in fact Mr Steyn gives both of them to you around, some time after 6 June.---Yeah, it was a couple of weeks or a week or a few days, I'm not sure how long, but it was a bit afterwards, after he's asked me.

I see. And you recall he gave you both of those invoices?---Same time, yeah.

40 At the same time. Now, do you recall whether you had put in your false invoices before receiving the Peter Manuel Services invoices?---I don't know.

Now, Mr Masters, if I could now show you, please, volume 12.2, page 264. So this is invoice number 4025, dated the 31st of May, 2018.---Yes.

And you see there it just says, "Existing works completed re Pacific Highway, February, March, April 2018."---Yes.

And then an amount invoiced of \$8,860.50.---Yes.

And then if we could just go over the page, please, to page 265. There's a second invoice, number 426. And again it's got a very vague description, "South region inspections and Colebee compound, May 2018."---Yes.

For \$17,820. Now, do you recall that those are the two invoices that you submitted in order to recoup the money that you'd paid to Peter Manuel Services?---Yes, they look like it.

10

And it's the case, isn't it, just looking at the one that's presently onscreen, you've got "Southern region inspections and Colebee compound."---Yes.

Now, is Colebee in the southern region?---No.

No. So you've just lumped together there unspecified southern region inspections and unspecified works in relation to the Colebee compound. ---Yes.

20

And that was just a description that you made up, wasn't it, to cover this false invoice?---Well, some of the work was done at Colebee yard, and the southern region inspections was the made-up part.

So there hadn't been any southern region inspections?---No.

Now, in respect of the Colebee compound, it's correct, isn't it, that you'd had two contracts awarded to you in relation to work at the Colebee compound?---Yes.

30

So you'd done a fair amount of work at the Colebee compound?---Yes.

But if I can just remind you, and I can take you to it if necessary, that the two contracts that you did in relation to the Colebee compound, both had a purchase order number which linked specifically to contracts in relation to works at the Colebee compound?---Yes.

But this purchase order number that you see here, 42200028806, that's not referable to one of the Colebee compound contracts, it wouldn't surprise you to hear that, would it?---No.

40

And, in fact, what it is referable to – if we could go, please, to volume 12.2, page 246 – is this contract here, which is, I take it, a bucket contract for remedial works.---Yes.

See there it's for remedial works for ASC camera works?---Yes.

And it's for the amount of \$45,000. So it's correct, isn't it, if we could just go back now to the invoice at page 265 of the same volume, that although

you had done work at the Colebee compound, this invoice is not actually in relation to work that you'd done, this invoice is just drawing on funds that are left in a bucket? Do you agree?---Yeah. Although I done the work at Colebee yard, it was just drawing all the funds out of another bucket, yes.

Well, Mr Masters, you'd done work at Colebee and you'd invoiced for that work under the Colebee purchase order number and you'd been paid a large sum of money in relation to the work at Colebee.---Yes.

10 That all took place under a separate purchase order number in relation to contracts specific to Colebee. Do you understand that?---Yes.

What this invoice is, is an invoice drawing on a purchase order number, which is referable to a bucket of money for remedial works.---Yes.

And so when you've written that you did works on the Colebee compound, although it's true that you did and were reimbursed for works at the Colebee compound separately, this invoice is just a fiction.---It could be, in relation to the Colebee works but I still remember going back there several times
20 after the works were completed. So - - -

Well, Mr Masters, there was an initial Colebee contract and that was in January 2018, and then there was a subsequent Colebee contract in September 2018. So I have no doubt that you remember going back to Colebee because you did.---Yes.

But as I have said to you, you invoiced and were paid for those works under a separate purchase order number.---Yes.

30 But the sole purpose of this invoice that we're looking at here on the screen, in conjunction with the one on the page before, was to reimburse you for the amounts that you paid to Peter Manuel Services. Is that correct?---(No Audible Reply)

Mr Masters, if it assists you, I'll take you to page 282 of volume 12.2. Do you see there this is your quote?---yes.

40 On 31 January, 2018, in relation to Colebee. And you've set out there in some detail the works which you're going to perform, which you're quoting for?---Yes.

And then on the next page, page 283, you'll see that there's a total including GST of \$56,644.50.---Yes.

And then in the same volume, page 289, you'll see that this is the purchase order in relation to that quote for Colebee compound site utility supplies. ---Yes.

And you'll see the purchase order number at the top there, the last four digits are 9-4-4-7.---Yes.

And then if Mr Masters could please be shown page 293, you see there this is an invoice on 12 February, 2018.---Yes.

And it's the 9-4-4-7 purchase order number, that is, the Colebee works.---Yes.

10 And you've set out there the work that you've done.---Yes.

And you've charged \$24,200. And then at page 294, there's another invoice dated 22 February, 2018, again referable to the Colebee purchase order number, 9-4-4-7. You see that?---Yes.

And again, you've set out there the works that you've done and charged \$11,000.---Yes.

20 And then over the next page, 295, there's a further invoice on 5 March, 2018. This is a progress payment for the Colebee compound, again referable to the 9-4-4-7 purchase order number. And you've charged \$11,000 again.---Yes.

And then over the next page, 296, you see there's another invoice on 3 April, 2018, for the Colebee compound.---Yes.

And you've charged \$10,444.50.---Yes.

30 Now, Mr Masters, those four invoices add up to \$56,644.50.---Yes.

And do you recall that that was the amount that I showed you of the purchase order that was raised in relation to the work at the Colebee compound?---Yes.

So you'd agree with me, wouldn't you, that you'd been fully reimbursed for those works at the Colebee compound?---Yes, for those works.

40 And then if we could please go to page 389 of volume 12.2. This is another quote from you on 10 September, 2018.---Yes.

So this is now September, sometime later, and you'll see here that it's in relation to the completion of works as required at the Colebee yard.---Yes.

There's further works there that you've set out are required, electrical and water hook-up, security-related lighting, et cetera.---Yeah, yep.

And this time you've quoted \$47,300.---Yes.

And then on page 390, please, of the same volume, you'll see here's the purchase order details in relation to this second Colebee contract, and you see the purchase order number is – the second, the email, you'll see the "Hello, Evan King" purchase order number 4200076744.---Yes.

So just remembering 6-7-4-4, the last four digits of that purchase order number, Mr Masters could then have a look at page 392. You see this is an invoice from you on 5 December, 2018?---Yes.

10 It's referable to 6-7-4-4 purchase order number.---Yes.

And it's for \$26,400.---Yes.

And then on page 393, there's a further invoice on 17 December, 2018, referable again to the 6-7-4-4 purchase order number.---Yes.

And this one goes over a number of pages, so page 393, 394, 395, 396, and you see there you've set out in some detail, as we went through that, the work that you did on various dates.---Yes.

20

And you've charged \$13,600. And then on page 397, there's a further invoice on 17 December, 2018.---Yes.

And it's for \$13,477.---Yes.

And although you haven't put the purchase number on that one, you've related it back to a previous invoice, which links it to the Colebee compound work.---Yes.

30 And then on page 398 there's a further invoice dated 18 February, 2019. ---Yes.

And again you've set out in detail the work that you've done there, and it's referable to the 6-7-4-4 number, which is the second Colebee contract. ---Yes.

And you've charged \$4,510. And you can take it from me that the amount of those invoices add up to your quoted amount of \$47,300.---Yes.

40 So looking at that, it's the case, isn't it, that you were fully compensated by the RMS for the work you did at the Colebee compound.---Yes.

And so going back to the invoice that we were looking at, which is the one that you issued under the instructions of Mr Steyn, as a result of you paying for the Peter Manuel Services contract, which is volume 12.2, page 265. You agree with me, don't you, that when you've referred to Colebee compound in the description, you've just put it in there to make this invoice look legitimate? But this invoice does not actually relate to any work that

you did. This particular invoice. Do you agree with that?---Yes, I, yes, I agree. But I did relocate some light poles after the yard was established. So I don't know if that was – I can't be a hundred per cent sure whether it was that, not on that invoice or if it was on another invoice, you know what I mean?

10 Well, Mr Masters, when Mr Steyn said to you, "Peter's done work onsite, he's not on the panel, I want you to pay him," it was your intention, wasn't it, that you'd be fully reimbursed for the amounts you were going to pay to Peter Manuel Services? You weren't going to pay him out of the goodness of your heart, out of your own pocket, were you?---No.

No. It was your intention to be reimbursed.---Yes.

And Mr Steyn told you, on your evidence, that the way you should go about that is to put in two false invoices to recoup the amounts.---Yeah. Yes.

And so this is one of the false invoices that you used for that purpose.---Yes.

20 And the other one is at page 264. If Mr Masters could be shown that. Right, for \$8,860.50.---Yes.

And in that one you've got the description, "Existing works completed re the Pacific Highway."---Yes.

So that was just a made-up description, was it?---Yes.

30 And then, Mr Masters, if I could just take you to your bank statements, please. Volume 12.4, page 77. You see there that on 18 June there's a transfer to you from the RMS?---Yes.

For the amount \$65,549.---Yes.

Now, you can take it from me, I want you to assume that the invoice we just looked at for existing works completed re the Pacific Highway - - -?---Yep.

- - - for the amount of – I withdraw that. The previous invoice, the one Southern region inspections and Colebee compound.---Yes.

40 Where you charged \$17,820. That invoice was paid as part of a combined payment, which is represented by that \$65,000 that you see there.---Yep.

So the RMS paid three different invoices on that day.---Okay, yeah, yeah. Yep.

And one of those is one of your false invoices.---Yep.

All right, so that was on 18 June. And then the next day, if we could go to the next page, please. On 19 June, you'll see there where it's highlighted, that you make two transfers to Peter Manuel Services.---Yes.

So you pay one of the Peter Manuel Services invoices in full, \$13,200, and you make a payment of 2,800 towards the second invoice.---Yes.

All right. And then below that on 20 June you see you get paid a second amount from the RMS of \$8,860.50?---Yes.

10

And if we could just go back, please, to volume 12.2, page 265. You'll see that – sorry, page 264 – this is one of the false invoices you submitted for \$8,860.50.---Yes.

So that invoice is paid on 20 June. And then if we could please go to volume 12.4, page 81. Then you see the following day, after the RMS has reimbursed you for the false invoice, the following day you transfer the remaining funds to Peter Manuel services?---Yes.

20

\$10,400. So it's unambiguous, isn't it, that those were false invoices which you were using to be reimbursed in full for the amount you'd paid to Peter Manuel Services?---Yes.

And I'm just going to ask you this question, did you know that those funds were really going to Mr Steyn?---No.

Did you think that – you've described there was, you thought there was something fishy going on. Did you suspect that one way or another perhaps this was another kickback that you were paying to Mr Steyn?---No, no.

30

You held a genuine belief that you were reimbursing Peter Manuel for work he had done onsite?---Yes.

Now, Mr Masters, I'm going to ask you some questions about some Mobotix cameras that you installed in Mr Steyn's residence.---Yes.

Do you recall doing that?---Yes.

40

If Mr Masters could please be shown volume 12.3, page 46. Mr Masters, these are text messages between Mr Steyn and yourself.---Yes.

And you see there in the first one, Mr Steyn says to you, "I've got a job to install some Mobotix cameras and set up, please, mate."---Yes.

All right. And then at message number 8, you say to Mr Steyn, "Do you want them in before the weekend?"---Yes.

And then message number 9, he says, "No, when you have some time, mate." ---Yes.

And then if you just look back up to message number 5, when Mr Steyn asks you to do the job to install the cameras, he sends you photos of the cameras.---Yes.

And those are at page 48 and 49. And you see there that the camera's shown in its packaging?---Yes.

10

Brand new in a box. And did Mr Steyn say anything you about where he'd obtained the cameras?---No.

All right. And then if we could go, please, to page 47 of volume 12.3. And see this is further text messages between yourself and Mr Steyn?---Yes.

20

And number 18, you make a reference to having ordered some camera housings which are not yet available. So, is it your recollection that after Mr Steyn asked you to install the cameras, did you go and have a look, did you go to his house and have a look at what was required? How did you form the view that camera housings were required?---From the pictures of the, of the cameras.

So you could tell from the pictures that camera housings were required? ---Yep.

And you took it upon yourself to order those for him?---No, I think he asked me to order the camera housings for those cameras.

30

And did you bear the cost of the camera housings?---Yes.

And then, Mr Masters, looking back at these text messages, at message 20 you'll see on 16 March, you say you've picked up the Mobotix gear from the post office but you can't do it today. "Are you home Monday or Tuesday?" And then message number 21, on 24 March, there's a message from Mr Steyn to you suggesting that he's figured out how to use the cameras.---Yep.

40

So it looks as though sometime between 16 March and 24 March, you went and installed the cameras for Mr Steyn.---Yes.

And you recall doing that?---Yep, they were already wired up. All I did was climb up ladders and put them in.

You climbed up ladders and put them in?---Yep.

Did you charge Mr Steyn for that work?---Nah. It wasn't a big job, I just screwed them in, you know what I mean? I didn't program them, I didn't do anything, he did that's, he, he's done all that, you know what I mean?

Would you ordinarily charge someone for doing that work?---Somebody that I was already working for, sometimes not, but if it was a new job, someone rang up to ask for it, then yes.

10 Thank you. All right, now if Mr Masters could please be shown the document at page 137 of 12.2. Mr Masters, you see this is an invoice from you to the RMS dated 12 February, 2018.---Yes.

So it's in the period where you and Mr Steyn are having these conversations about installing Mobotix cameras in his home.---Yes.

And you see here that you've invoiced the RMS \$955.35 in relation to camera testing and trials of Mobotix cameras.---Yes.

20 And the contact is Mr Steyn.---Yes.

Is this invoice reimbursing you for the work you did installing the cameras at Mr Steyn's house?---No, I did, I did actually do that work. I went to Colebee yard, picked them up out of the, like there, I think there was six or eight cameras.

30 So you went and picked up six or eight cameras from the Colebee yard?
---Yep, used cameras, because they were going to put them – because we'd pre-wired all the posts around the Colebee yard to have cameras put on each post, as well as lights. So I'd pre-wired, hadn't put the cameras up at that, at any point. Still, they're still not up, you know what I mean? And then I'd, I picked them up, took them to my house, plugged them all in, got them all, all working, ready to go back out and install. They were never installed.

Sorry, if I can just slow that down, you said there were six or eight used cameras?---Yeah, there's a whole container full of used cameras there.

Where did the used cameras come from?---Jobs, mmm.

40 So there were used cameras out at the Colebee yard?---Yes.

And you were instructed to pick them up.---Yes.

And you took them back to your own house.---To, yeah, I've got a, like a shed, yep.

Right, and you'd tested them to see if they were still working.---Yes.

And you ascertained that they were still working.---Yes.

And so did you then advise the RMS that they were still working and they could be put back in service?---Yes.

And did you have any understanding around that time that Mobotix cameras had been made redundant or were being replaced?---No.

10 In fact, you were doing the opposite. You were ensuring that they were still usable and serviceable.---They were going to use them at the yard there, yeah.

Right, and so then, as far as you know, they were to be taken back out to the yard and installed.---Yes.

But when you, around the same time, came to install Mobotix cameras in Mr Steyn's house, they weren't used cameras that the RMS had previously used, they were brand new ones, is that correct?---I believe so, yes.

20 Thank you. Now, Mr Masters, if you could please have a look at volume 12.1, page 63. See this is a text message from Mr Steyn to you on 25 February, 2018?---Yes.

Saying, "Hey, mate. Can you get me 20 to 30 rolls of electrical tape?"
---Yes.

And do you recall buying that tape for Mr Steyn?---Yes.

And did you charge him for it?---No.

30 It's only a small matter, Mr Masters, in the scheme of things, but it paints a picture, doesn't it, where there was just a pattern of conduct repeatedly, where Mr Steyn was imposing upon you to do things for him, sometimes at modest expense and sometimes at large expense.---Yes.

And you were just doing whatever he asked.---Yes.

And similarly, Mr Masters, if I could just please show you page 80 of volume 12.3.

40 THE COMMISSIONER: 12.3, is it?

MS SPRUCE: Yes, volume 12.3, page 80. And, Mr Masters, this is a text message from Mr Steyn to you on 8 October, 2018. "When do you think you can do that small job for me in Glenmore Park, please, mate?" And then at page 81. "Can you please fix this while you're there?"---Yes.

You see that? And then there's a photo attached, and the photo's at page 82. And you see there this is a photo that's been provided to Mr Steyn by Sandy Alexander.---Yes.

Did you know who Sandy Alexander was?---No.

You didn't. Do you know who Ashley Alexander is?---Ashley, yes.

Was he another contractor that worked onsite?---Yes. Yes.

10

And so is it the case that you went to Mr Alexander's home to do work for him?---Yeah, I put that powerpoint in there, yep.

And you knew that you were doing that work for Mr Alexander, another RMS contractor?---I don't think I knew at the time that it was his house.

So - - -?---There was some lady there. I don't, I've never seen her before, you know what I mean? He wasn't there for sure.

20

So this is just back in the category of whatever it was Mr Steyn asked you to do, you were going to do for him?---It was just a small job, so I did it.

And you didn't charge him for that? And you didn't charge Sandy Alexander or anyone else for that job?---No. Nor the RMS. Just did it. Keep things happy and smooth, you know what I mean?

Keep things happy and smooth, as between you and Mr Steyn?---Yep.

30

Now, Mr Masters, as I've just put to you, there was a clear pattern that was occurring where Mr Steyn was regularly asking you to do things for him and you were agreeing to do them.---Yes.

Now, that pattern begins in December 2016, when you do work for free or for under value on Mr Steyn's house.---Yep.

And it culminates in November 2018, which is the date of the final Apple purchase.---Yep.

40

Now, it's correct, isn't it, that you were still doing work and submitting invoices to Mr Steyn right up until June 2019?---Yes.

And it was in June 2019 that the Commission executed a search warrant on Mr Steyn, and he was then suspended from the RMS.---Yes.

So is there anything you can assist us with in explaining why it is that between November of 2018 and June 2019 this pattern seems to have either come to an end or there's been a significant pause? Did you ever say anything to Mr Steyn about "When is this going to stop?" or "This can't go

on,” or “There’s got to be a limit”?---In relation to the Apple products, I think I did, yeah.

You think you did?---Yeah.

You recall having a conversation with Mr Steyn?---I think I told him that I can’t, I can’t pay for it, you know what I mean? Like, although I was earning money out of the RMS, I’m not getting all that money, you know what I mean?

10

I understand. You’ve got expenses to pay out of that.---Yes. Unsustainable, you know what I mean?

And you referred yesterday, Mr Masters, to having conversations with your wife about all of the favours and gifts you were providing to Mr Steyn at great expense.---Yep.

And were you talking to your wife about it each time that you were imposed upon for a further gift or favour?---Probably.

20

And your wife was expressing concern that it had to stop.---Yes.

And was that merely because of the financial output or was she concerned about the morality of what was going on?---Both I’d say.

Both. So you knew in your discussions with your wife that you were doing the wrong thing?---Looking back it is the wrong thing.

30

Looking back it’s the wrong thing, but at the time did you have a conscious awareness that it was the wrong thing to do?---Conscious awareness would have been that I shouldn’t have been asked, you know what I mean?

You felt imposed upon and like you had no choice, is that what you felt? ---Yeah, I didn’t. What, what could I do at that point, you know what I mean? Like, it was, it felt like, over the time, I was, I don’t know, being groomed to, to get him stuff for free, you know what I mean, at my expense.

40

You felt like you were being groomed, did you say, to get him stuff for free?---Yeah. Well, they knew how much work they were giving me. I don’t know whether they think that I’m making more money than what I’m making, you know what I mean, but there was, like I, after reading all the, what’s, what’s, what’s happened, you know what I mean, like, I was kept at a long arms-reach and just asked for free stuff out of me own pocket.

You said “they” just then, Mr Masters. Are you referring to Mr Dubois and Mr Steyn?---Well, I, I, I couldn’t believe what I was reading.

But it was only Mr Steyn that - - -?---Yeah, that I had ever done - - -

That you provided benefits to?---That's right, yes, yes. I was astounded reading what I read, you know what I mean?

Mr Masters, you'd worked, you'd done contract work for the RMS and the RTA for a long time, since 2004?---Yeah.

10 Prior to your experiences with Mr Steyn, had any other employee of the RTA or the RMS ever asked you for a bribe or a kickback or favour?---No.

And were you aware of any other RMS contractors paying bribes or kickbacks to Mr Steyn or Mr Dubois before hearing about it in the context of this inquiry?---No.

Did you ever suspect it?---After they got sacked, terminated, stood down, I'd heard rumours but not before that. Everybody was really secretive, you know what I mean? Like - - -

20 THE COMMISSIONER: When you say you heard rumours, rumours about what?---Oh, it was only, it was never, oh, it was only rumours about Mr Dubois. I, I was - - -

What were the - - -?---Like, it was after, after the fact that they'd been sacked and, and that you guys had investigated them, that it was coming from other companies that had previous dealings with them that said that, you know, he, he was on the take and I, I'd not known any of that, you know what I mean?

30 How old when you joined RTA in 2004, or what's your date of birth?---
[REDACTED], '74.

So you say that it was only in the period when Steyn was asking you to do these various things that you've described in evidence that you acted dishonestly in the course of your employment?---Yes.

40 And you haven't discussed the situation you were in or being put in by Steyn in realising that what he was doing, so far as his requests to you were concerned, was wrong? Did you contemplate the consequences of confronting him and telling him to buzz off, as it were?---Well, I already knew that wasn't going to end well for me, from, from, from previous experience. People have, other people have, nothing to do with these two other people, have dictated through their positions what work I can and can't get. So I, I had other people tell private contractors not to use me, so - - -

Who did you consider was your boss in this period 2018?---Well, Craig and Alex, the two people giving us work.

Considered – you saw them as both your boss, in effect?---Yeah, they were like the, the bosses, you know?

Nobody else?---(No Audible Reply)

You indicate no, there was no other - - -?---No. Sorry. Sorry, no.

Was your wife in employment in 2018?---No.

10 How many children do you have?---Three.

What are their ages?---14, 12 and 10.

In 2018, did you have a mortgage?---Yes.

A large mortgage or a medium size or a small one?---Smallish.

Pardon?---Smallish.

20 Smallish. Yes, thank you.

MS SPRUCE: Mr Masters, I just want to ask you one more question in respect of the Apple purchases.---Yes.

Did it ever occur to you that you could inflate your invoices to the RMS in order to recoup to yourself the thousands of dollars that you were being asked to spend on Mr Steyn's account?---No, I was just happy to get the work. As I said yesterday, I considered it a cost.

30 And are you still working for the RMS, Mr Masters?---Not, we do contract jobs, so we finished another contract job for them a few months ago.

So you're still receiving contract work.---We did a contract. Like, a month ago it finished.

From the same division or a different division?---Same sort of division.

Thank you. And, Mr Masters, what was the last contact that you had with Mr Steyn?---Text message.

40

A text message from him to you?---Yes.

And do you recall when that was?---A few months ago.

And what was the nature of the text message?---It was to do with sensors or something at his house. Sent me pictures. Wanted to know where all the wires went, you know what I mean?

So he was asking you to give him advice on his electrical wiring?---Yep.
Over the phone.

And did you do that for him?---Yep, just told him how to do it and was off
the phone, or didn't, didn't – it was quick as, man. I wasn't interested, you
know what I mean?

10 THE COMMISSIONER: Sorry, I'm not entirely following. What was the
message from Mr Steyn?---Um, like - - -

What was the essence of the message?---Picture messages and, and a text,
you know, "Don't know where the wires go. Where do these wires go?"

MS SPRUCE: So Mr Steyn's still asking you for favours after all of this,
essentially?---Well, it was, it was a text message. I didn't go there. Just
texted back and said, you know, "Red one here, black one there."

20 THE COMMISSIONER: Did you discuss the subject matter of this
investigation with Mr Steyn?---No.

Or Mr Dubois?---No.

MS SPRUCE: Thank you, Commissioner. I don't have any further
questions for Mr Masters.

THE COMMISSIONER: Well, Ms Spruce, it's your application that Mr
Masters be stood down at this stage and recalled if necessary, subject to - - -

30 MS SPRUCE: Unless anyone wants to, any other party wants to question
him.

THE COMMISSIONER: I'm sorry?

MS SPRUCE: I'm not sure whether any other party wants to question him.

40 THE COMMISSIONER: No, that's right. All right. Well, the only thing is
that we've reserved to Mr Steyn the right to cross-examine, if he wants to,
any witnesses. So subject to that, he may be required to – sorry, he may be
required for that purpose, but perhaps for no other purpose.

MS SPRUCE: Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MS SPRUCE: And Mr Dubois, potentially.

THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Is there any application by anyone here
for leave to cross-examine Mr Masters?

MR CLARK: Not at this stage, Commissioner, but I'd just like to reserve my position in relation to that, as you have already done so.

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Clark. Now, Mr Storie, is there anything at this stage you want to say?

MR STORIE: No, Commissioner.

10 THE COMMISSIONER: Or any application or do you want to ask any questions of your client at this point?

MR STORIE: No, I don't. I don't, thank you, Commissioner. I don't, Commissioner.

THE COMMISSIONER: Again, if you could use the microphone, that would be helpful.

20 MR STORIE: Sorry. Sorry, Your Honour. Commissioner, I don't seek to re-examine or ask any further questions, thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: No, thank you. That's all right. Mr Masters, that completes your examination. You may be required, as you've just been hearing, to re-attend at some future point in time. Commission officers will give you plenty of notice if that does arise. Thank you for your evidence. You may step down. You're excused for today.---Thank you.

Thank you.

30

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

[12.15pm]

MR STORIE: Would Your Honour excuse me?

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, certainly, Mr Storie.

MR STORIE: Thank you.

40 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Downing.

MR DOWNING: Commissioner, the next witness will be Aleesha Steyn. I suspect that she will be here. If we could just have a moment. And perhaps just have a morning tea break.

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, all right.

MR VELCIC: Yes, good afternoon, Commissioner.

THE COMMISSIONER: I'm sorry?

MR VELCIC: I appear for Mrs Steyn, and she's just outside of the court.

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, well, we'll take a short morning tea break and then we'll resume with your client.

MR VELCIC: Thank you. Thank you.

10

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I'll adjourn.

SHORT ADJOURNMENT

[12.16pm]

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr Downing.

MR DOWNING: Thank you, Commissioner, and I call Aleesha Steyn.

20

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, thank you, Mrs Steyn. Now, Mrs Steyn, to give evidence you have to take an oath or an affirmation. Which would you prefer?

MS STEYN: An oath is fine.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you, if you wouldn't mind - - -

MS STEYN: Am I close enough?

30

THE COMMISSIONER: There's a Bible there, if you take the Bible, and if you stand, then I'll have the oath administered.

THE COMMISSIONER: Now just before we start, I understand Mrs Steyn you are legally represented.---Yes, I am.

So, you go ahead – I’m sorry, I don’t have your details of your name. Apologies for that.

10 MR VELCIC: Yes, Velcic, solicitor, spelt V-e-l-c-i-c, Commissioner. I formally seek your leave to assist.

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, I grant leave to you, Mr Velcic, to appear. Is there any application you have to make otherwise?

MR VELCIC: Yes, I’d make an application on behalf of my client. Thank you.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: Sorry, I can’t hear.

MR VELCIC: I make an application on behalf of my client, in respect of the usual objection.

THE COMMISSIONER: Very well. Mrs Steyn, before we start with your evidence, I understand you’ve had legal advice, you’ve been told that you can give evidence under objection, and that gives you certain protection. Do you understand, do you have any understanding of that?---Sort of, yes.

30 All right, and I understand it’s your wish to avail yourself of that protection. Is that so?---Yes.

I’ll just explain to you that although you take objection, you still understand that you must give truthful answers.---I do.

40 Thank you. The protection is that the evidence can’t be used against you in other proceedings in the future, once an objection is taken, but that does not protect you from proceedings for an offence against the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, such as, for example, giving wilfully false evidence. You understand?---Yes, I do.

Yes, very well. Pursuant to section 38 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, I declare that all answers given by the witness, Ms Steyn, and all documents or things produced by her during the course of her evidence at this public inquiry are to be regarded as having been given or produced on objection. There is accordingly no need for the witness to make objection to any particular answer given or document or thing produced.

DIRECTION AS TO OBJECTIONS BY WITNESS: PURSUANT TO SECTION 38 OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION ACT, I DECLARE THAT ALL ANSWERS GIVEN BY THE WITNESS, MS STEYN, AND ALL DOCUMENTS OR THINGS PRODUCED BY HER DURING THE COURSE OF HER EVIDENCE AT THIS PUBLIC INQUIRY ARE TO BE REGARDED AS HAVING BEEN GIVEN OR PRODUCED ON OBJECTION. THERE IS ACCORDINGLY NO NEED FOR THE WITNESS TO MAKE OBJECTION TO ANY PARTICULAR ANSWER GIVEN OR
10 **DOCUMENT OR THING PRODUCED.**

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Downing.

MR DOWNING: Thank you, Commissioner. Ms Steyn, if you could just state your full name, please?---Aleesha Prishay Steyn.

And your date of birth?---[REDACTED], '76.

20 And it's correct you're married to Craig Steyn?---I am.

And if you could tell us the year in which you were married?---2003.

You have two sons?---I do, we do.

And it's the case that you've lived together since you were married?---Yes.

Now, at the present time, you live at an address in [REDACTED]?---Yes.

30 Is it the case that before living in [REDACTED], you and your husband owned a house in Minchinbury?---Correct.

And you lived in that for a period of years?---Yes.

Do you recall that – I'm going to suggest to you that that was a property that was bought in 2001 and ultimately sold in 2011. Does that sound about right?---Sounds right, yep.

40 Do you recall that you bought your present house in [REDACTED] in 2008, so that is before you sold the place in Minchinbury?---Correct.

And was there a time when you continued to live in Minchinbury and rented out the house in [REDACTED]?---Yes, correct.

Ultimately, I'm going to suggest, you moved into the [REDACTED] address in about 2011. Does that sound about right? Again, about a decade now?---Yeah, yeah.

And it's correct, isn't it, that when you moved in, it was an older one-storey house?---Yes.

And was it the case that from the time you bought it you had plans and things you wanted to do to it?---Renovate at the time, yeah.

And it's the case, isn't it, that by 2013, the decision that had been made was that ultimately the house would be knocked down?---Yeah, yes.

10 And a new two-storey house would be built?---Yes.

And also that an in-ground pool would be put in?---Yes.

And a building associated with the pool would be constructed as well?
---Yes.

Now, thinking about your husband's work, he worked for some years at Telstra?---Yes.

20 And then do you recall that he began work with what was then the RTA in early 2009?---Yeah, around, yeah, around about that, yep.

There maybe things occurring in your life that you can use as a reference point, but I'm suggesting it was in early 2009.---Okay, yes.

And that he worked there for about a decade through until late 2019?
---Correct.

30 Now, is it correct that you worked during that period as well?---Yes, yes.

And if you could indicate, was that part-time or full-time work?---Part-time. Short of a day, full-time short of a day, so part-time, yes. It's considered part-time.

How many hours per week?---32.

In that period, have you also had children? So you've had periods off work?---Yes, yes, yes.

40 Other than periods of leave in respect of each of your two children, have you worked those sort of hours, 32 hours a week?---Yes. So you mentioned that, during the period of Craig being at RMS I had maternity leave?

Being at the RTA and RMS.---No, I didn't take any maternity leave.

So you had children before - - -?---Before that.

All right, thank you.---Well and truly.

So that during the entirety of the time that Craig has been at the RTA and then the RMS - - -?---Yes.

- - - you've worked, is it, about 32 hours a week?---Yes, yes, correct.

And for whom have you worked?---Now, Services Australia. Back then, Department – it's changed a few times. Centrelink, Department of – oh, I can't even think. Sorry, my main, my brain is blocked.

10

That's all right. We - - -?---Um, yes.

That's all right.---We've had a few changes. Centrelink, Services Australia.

So it was Centrelink and it's now known as Services Australia?---Yes, correct.

And what's the role that you have there?---Customer service. Processing.

20

Is that in like a retail - - -?---No, APS, APS 4, but in customer service background. So with processing, just put it that way, processing.

So by phone or - - -?---There is phone work as well, yes.

Now, your father is Peter Manuel, correct?---Correct.

And it's correct, isn't it, that you were born in South Africa?---I was, yes.

30

And your father was as well.---Yes.

And did you move to Australia before meeting Craig or - - -?---Correct.

All right. So you met him here?---Yes.

Now, your dad, by way of background, was a boilermaker, correct?
---Pipefitter, boilermaker, yeah.

40

And he'd worked in that capacity for many years, hadn't he, in South Africa?---As far as I know, yes.

Did he work for himself or employed - - -?---I think he worked for someone and then he, he went off on his own for a number of years as well.

Now, it's correct, isn't it, that your dad has come out to Australia at various times since you've been here?---Yes, correct.

Most recently do you recall he came out in the early part of 2018?---Yes.

And did he remain here until about March 2020?---Correct.

He then returned to South Africa.---Yes.

And I'm sorry to ask you this, but is it correct that he passed away in 2020?
---October, yes.

10 Thank you. Now, prior to that visit in 2018, had he been out here at times as well?---Twice before. Once for my wedding in 2003. He was here for a little while. He liked it and then proceeded on with 2010 (not transcribable) 2010 he came out because he – so, he applied for permanent residence and he arrived in 2010. Or he was granted in - - -

20 And how long did he stay on that occasion? I'm not expecting you to know to the day, but - - -?---Yeah, it wasn't very long. It was like six months. The rules had changed with immigration and he was hoping to have his wife here, but something had happened and then he decided he couldn't wait five years before he can have his wife come here, so he went back, and I think that's when he opened up his company.

Now, you speak of your dad's wife. Is her name Sheila?---Correct.

And she's your stepmum.---Stepmum.

All right. And so that was someone that he was married to in South Africa, correct?---Yes. Many years.

30 Now, I want you just for the moment to think about the period when he came out in 2018.---Yep.

And I understand he remained in Australia from early 2018 until about March 2020, correct?---Correct. Yes.

In that period was he by himself or with Sheila?---He arrived on his own and I needed to – sorry, is, that's enough for you?

40 No, that's fine. Please go on and expand it.---He arrived on his own and then Sheila arrived in September maybe, '18, or August, something around there.

So he might have been here for a period of months by himself.---A number of months, yes, correct.

In the period when he was by himself, was he staying with you and Craig at your [REDACTED] house?---Yes, he was.

And when Sheila arrived, for a period were they both with you at [REDACTED]?---Yes, they were.

Did they remain at [REDACTED] the entire time they were here or did they move somewhere else?---So they moved to an investment property that we obtained in 2019. February.

10 Ultimately, how long did Sheila remain in the country for?---She left – so she was, in August '18, she, she developed cancer, breast cancer, in February I think it was, '19, and she left, she had to leave in – she had a double mastectomy then left in May, I think she needed to do her chemo and stuff at - - -

So she had the surgery here but then returned to South Africa?---She had to, yes, financially-wise.

But your father then remained in Australia until March the following year. Is that correct?---Well, yes, well, he, he thought once, sorry, once she comes – well, the intention was for her to come back once she's finished her, her chemo, and so forth.

20 Now, you mentioned that your father had moved into an investment property, correct?---Yes.

Now, do you recall that in February 2019 that you and your husband Craig acquired an investment property in Marsden Park?---Yes.

And do you recall the address was [REDACTED] Fernlea Crescent?---Correct.

And is that the property that your dad and Sheila moved into?---Yes.

30 And do you recall that you had organised or perhaps reached some agreement with your dad that he would pay rent on that property?---Yes, that's correct. Well, it needed, well, it needed a tenant and then also needed rent to come in on order for us to service the loan, I suppose. And if it wasn't him, I guess someone else would have moved in, but yeah.

So it's the case that the property was bought with borrowed funds, that you and Craig obtained?---Yes, yeah.

40 But then your dad and Sheila moved in.---Yep.

And do you recall that they were paying \$1,000 a fortnight in rent?---Yes. 500 a week, yes.

And was that something that you discussed and organised with your dad, or was that something Craig spoke to your dad about?---I spoke with my dad about that. I had, we had intentions of, or mainly me, I had intentions of another investment property. As you know, we've sold one prior. And Dad needed somewhere to move into once his family came, and he didn't want

to stay with us for much longer. As you can imagine, it was quite a full house. And that was the alternative, so it was either he rent and, or he rent, rented something that I trusted my father to look after.

And is it the case that he initially with Sheila and then by himself remained there until he departed Australia in March 2020?---And his granddaughter, who he raised, yes, whom he raised.

10 Sorry, his granddaughter came - - -?---Sheila – yes, as well, sorry.

So Sheila’s daughter?---So back – no, his, his granddaughter.

Oh, I’m sorry.---That’s Sheila’s biological grandchild, who they raised from birth.

And did she come and live with them as well?---Correct, yes.

For the whole period?---For the whole period.

20 And, sorry, what’s the name of Sheila’s biological granddaughter?
---Bronwyn, Bronwyn Martin.

Okay, thank you. And if we could just for a moment go back to your role at what was formerly Centrelink.---Yes.

I take it through that work you had some idea of what corrupt conduct was.
---Yeah, well, in, in, in light of what we do, yes.

30 Is it something that you received some training or education about as part of your work?---Yes.

Did you also within Centrelink have systems in place that were aimed at preventing it?---Yes.

Would you agree that one of the forms that corrupt conduct might take would be accepting bribes or kickbacks from clients or customers?---Yes.

40 That is, where if someone works for a government agency and that person receives bribes or kickbacks from clients or customers, in return for exercising their official functions in some way that might favour that customer or client.---Yes.

Now, you’re aware, aren’t you, that Craig through his work with the RTA and then the RMS was working for a public authority?---Yes.

I’m not suggesting you have detailed knowledge of exactly what the RMS or RTA does, but I take it you’re aware that it’s a State Government instrumentality.---Yes.

And that it's responsible for things including driver's licensing.---Yes.

Registration of vehicles.---Yep.

And things like road infrastructure and compliance and enforcement systems.---Yeah, yes.

10 Now, you were aware, weren't you, of some detail of what Craig's role was with the RTA and RMS?---Sorry, detail of what he did?

Well, I'm not, again, suggesting that you're with him on a day-to-day basis at work to know job-by-job what he's doing.---Yeah.

But did you have some concept from speaking to Craig about what his role was?---Well, he was a project manager for roads and heavy vehicles, and point-to-point, that's all I really knew, and structures and, and roads, I guess.

20 But I take it that's from what he would tell you about what he was up to and - - -?---Well, that's, that's the extent that I understood it at, yeah.

So did you understand that, you say – I withdraw that. You've indicated you understand he was project manager with respect to roads or camera programs, I think you identified the point-to-point.---Yes.

30 So did you understand that part of his responsibility was that where there were particular programs, might be a camera program like the point-to-point, and he would be responsible for, for instance, installing cameras or works in order to install cameras?---I suppose, yes. Well, I don't know the details of it, but yes, that's the work I think he did.

But did you understand that part of his role was, in effect, managing contracts for works that the RMS would have done?---No, I did not know that. I, as far as contracts, I know he was a contracts manager in Telstra but I didn't know that that's what he did with RMS.

40 Well, you were aware, weren't you, that he would often go out on the road where works were being done?---Yes. But I, is that a contract?

Well - - -?---Okay, sorry.

First part, if you could just tell me you were aware of that?---Yes, he would go out.

And did you understand that when he was there, there would be works that were being done on the different infrastructure that he was involved with? ---Yes.

So, cameras or the heavy-vehicle weigh stations or something like that?---I don't know the specifics, but yes, he was out there.

Did you have any idea about whether that work was being done by the RTA or RMS itself or whether they might engage with certain contractors to do work?---RMS?

10 That is the RMS.---Yeah, yeah. It was RMS work.

But did you understand though that it was using its own employees to do work or did you understand that at time that it would give out contracts and external companies would come in on a contract basis to do work for them? ---I think both. I couldn't be sure.

So you had some, I take it, concept from what you understood Craig did, that at least in part, the projects he was managing might involve external works being done?---Okay, yes.

20 Now, you did from time to time receive communications from Craig when he was out on the road doing work, correct?---Yes.

And just on that front, he would tell you, wouldn't he, that he was going to a own somewhere in New South Wales and - - -?---Yeah, he was always

- - - that there was some roadwork or road-related work to be done?---Yeah. I think it was his way of trying to include me in his being away, so - - -

30 Well, I guess also, just you're his wife, to let you know what he was up to? ---Yes.

If we could go, please, to volume 14.1, page 179. And just while that's being brought up, you're aware, aren't you, that a search warrant was executed at your house on 18 June, 2019?---Yes, yes.

And that a number of documents, as well as electronic devices were taken? ---Yes.

40 What I'm showing you are some exchanges of texts between Craig and you, but if you could have a look at that particular page, the bottom text, so number 6, and if, for my benefit, that could be slightly enlarged? Do you see on that date, 14 March, 2018, it's a text, I'm going to suggest, from Craig to you, and if you just read the body to yourself, starting with, "New ones installed."---Yes.

And you'll see that there's a little thumbnail there of a picture.---Yep.

And if we go, please, to page 206, you'll see an enlarged version. And I'm suggesting that that's the text that was sent to you by Craig on the – sorry – the photo that came attached to that text on 14 March.---Yes.

And do you recall where he was working at the time?---No, sorry.

10 Do you recall him at some stage telling you that he was up in Tweed Heads doing some work?---Could be, but I don't know if that was the time. You, he would go all over and say, "I'm here," and to be honest I don't know my roads very well, what do you call it, I don't know my locations very well.
So - - -

Is it the case that when it comes to outback towns in New South Wales, you don't know everywhere?---No, I don't know, no.

20 If we could go back, please, to page 180. And this time if you could look at message number 7, top of the page, also 14 March, 2018, at 10.49pm and you'll see there's, again, a thumbnail of a JPEG image there. And if we could go, please – first of all, you'll see the heading was, "Just chillin'"?
---Ah hmm.

And if we could go, please, to page 207, do you recall him sending you this photo of him in a chair on that particular job?---I do, yes. Yep.

Now, there's some other photos that were attached that same evening, and I just want to see if you can have a look at those for me, if we could go please to page 208. Now, this is another photo sent at the same time.---Yep.

30 Do you recognise the man with the beard in the middle of the photo?---Is that, oh, Alex? Yep.

Well, I'm going to suggest it's Alex Dubois. He's someone you recognise?
---I do, yeah.

And just pausing there, did you understand that Alex was a colleague that worked with your husband at the RTA and RMS?---Yes, he was another project manager on a different something.

40 Did you understand he did project management as well, but from what your husband told you, did you understand he worked in respect of perhaps different programs?---Yes.

Did he ever tell you what sort of work Alex did?---No.

THE COMMISSIONER: Did you ever meet Mr Dubois in a social type setting?---Yes, I have.

What sort of occasions?---Socially, just once, and I think it was his 40th birthday. I don't, I couldn't tell you when.

MR DOWNING: Well, perhaps I can assist on that front, Commissioner. If we could bring up, please, Exhibit 103. Is this the event you were referring to, the 40th birthday?---Correct.

10 And you'll see – I'm going to suggest that's 21 July, 2018, and a 40th birthday party for Mr Dubois. Do you recall attending that function?---I do.

And it's the case, isn't it, that you and Craig are second from the front on the left and right?---Yes, correct.

And in terms of the others who were present, do you recognise the first person on the left as Mr Dubois?---Yes.

Now, the other two gentlemen after your husband – so your husband's wearing the Pepe Jeans London sweater?---Yep.

20 Do you recognise the other two?---I've seen pictures of them, but I don't, I don't recall seeing them anywhere, or - - -

As best you can recall, was this the first time you had seen them? That is, face to face?---I do believe so. I think, like I said, in pictures, because Craig would send pictures to me.

30 Well, I'll come back to pictures in a moment but in terms of meeting them. For instance, can you recall – well, first of all, you'll see there are names written there but do you understand that the two men are, first the man next to your husband, Chahid Chahine?---I don't know their names, no.

And the man beyond him, Barrak Hadid. Do you ever recall your husband using those names?---No.

What about using nicknames Hoody or Baz?---Yes, I have heard those names.

40 And what's your recollection as to when and in what context your husband used those names?---To do with work. Something to do with work or, like, like, through the pictures and stuff like that that he'd send and, like, when, when he'd come home he would go, "Oh, you know, this one where so-and-so was being silly," and I thought Hoody was a bit of a funny name, you know, a funny name, and that's why it stuck.

But he would mention the names of people that were (not transcribable)?
---Sorry?

Something at work on a particular day?---It was something to do with work and he would mention a joke or something that Hoody or someone had showed him or, yeah, but it wasn't anything to do with work as such.

But is your evidence that you believe this is the first time you met them face-to-face?---I don't believe I actually met them prior to that, no.

10 Do you recall, at any stage prior to this, them ever coming to your house? Put Alex aside for the moment but the two gentlemen after your husband, that is Mr Chahine and Mr Hadid?---To be honest the two guys on the end, like, Baz and, and the other one, Alex, they look very similar, because that, I think that's Baz and that's Hoody from what Craig is saying. And then the other one, no, I don't remember. I think I may have seen Baz with Alex at our place but I have never really been involved in any of the conversations.

20 Well, accepting your evidence is you believe you may have seen Baz come once with Alex to your house, do you recall what that was in relation to? For instance when work was being done on your house or was it for them to meet with your husband about something?---I didn't ask. I don't know whether it was about anything to do with the house. It could have, it could have been about work, I don't know.

But, for instance, did you see them doing any work on your house?---No.

As best you can recall, at some point you remember Mr Dubois, that is Alex, and Baz coming to the house?---I can't remember the specifics but I do remember seeing Baz at my house with Mr Dubois.

30 And what happened? Were they speaking to your husband or - - -?---They were, they talked. I don't think it was in the house, it was outside, and I didn't ask any questions.

40 From what your husband had said though, did you understand that these men worked for the RMS, that is were employees? You know what I mean by worked for in the sense of being an employee of the entity?---Yeah. I don't recall him telling me at that, at that particular point that - I mean, I knew Alex worked for the RMS but I also knew that Alex and Craig were friends, friends as well. So I don't know whether Baz was related to him or, yeah, I'm pretty sure he was - - -

Sorry, related as in a family relationship or related as in business relationship?---Could be, yeah. No, I think family member.

But do you recall your husband at any stage identifying what role Baz played in respect of works?---No.

And the recollection you have of having this occasion when Alex and Baz attended the house, was that during renovation, the period when renovations were being done?---It would have been. It would have been, yep.

And in terms of that period, it's correct, isn't it, that work started in respect of the pool and pool building in about 2013?---Yeah, I think so.

And continued well into 2018/2019, correct?---Yes.

10 Commissioner, is that a convenient time?

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes. That's a convenient time. We'll take the luncheon adjournment and resume at 2 o'clock. I'll adjourn.

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[1.02pm]