

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE
RESERVES (RESERVE 43131) BILL 2003**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE TAKEN
AT PERTH
ON WEDNESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2003**

SESSION 4

Members

**Hon Peter Foss (Chairman)
Hon Robin Chapple
Hon Jon Ford
Hon Louise Pratt
Hon Derrick Tomlinson**

JAMESON, MR BARRY CHARLES
Chartered Accountant,
Partner, Thomas Noble & Russell (Chartered Accountants),
examined:

The CHAIRMAN: Welcome. Please state the capacity in which you appear before the committee.

Mr Jameson: I am the administrator of reserve 43131.

The CHAIRMAN: You have signed a document entitled "Information for Witnesses". Have you read and understood it?

Mr Jameson: Yes, I have.

The CHAIRMAN: These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard. A transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. To assist the committee and Hansard, please quote the full title of any document you refer to during the course of the hearing for the record. Please be aware of the microphones and try to talk into them; they are not for amplifying but rather for the purposes of recording.

[9.50 pm]

I remind you that your transcript will become a matter for the public record. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during tonight's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session. If the committee grants your request, any public and media in attendance will be excluded from the hearing. Please note that until such time as the transcript of your public evidence is finalised, it should not be made public. Premature publication or disclosure of your transcript may constitute a contempt of Parliament and may mean that the material published or disclosed is not subject to parliamentary privilege.

Mr Jameson: Okay.

The CHAIRMAN: Can you give us your professional background?

Mr Jameson: Yes, I am a chartered accountant.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we have your CV, so perhaps if I put your CV to you, that will cover a whole lot of -

Mr Jameson: Yes, sure. Shall I read from it or -

The CHAIRMAN: There is no need to read from it. Will you just read it to see whether it is your CV?

Mr Jameson: It is. I confirm that yes, this is my CV.

The CHAIRMAN: I had a look at that, and it does not read like a people qualification; it is really an administrative qualification.

Mr Jameson: Yes, I guess that is a fair observation. I have done a fair amount of administration work. I suppose chartered accountants these days do more than just numbers. I am also an auditor.

The CHAIRMAN: You manage as well.

Mr Jameson: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: I see that for some time you were an auditor.

Mr Jameson: I still am. This is one of my busiest periods. It is chaotic.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Never mind; it is probably also your most profitable.

Mr Jameson: You would hope so, would you not?

The CHAIRMAN: I can remember auditors giving a short description of their job and saying that they are like people who go around the battlefield after the battle and bayonet the wounded.

Mr Jameson: Bayonet the wounded.

The CHAIRMAN: It is a well-known one, is it not?

Mr Jameson: It is very cruel, is it not?

The CHAIRMAN: How were you contacted to do this job?

Mr Jameson: I was working in Ipswich at the time on an administration. I was retained at that stage by the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations. Peter Armstrong, who is the director of investigations from that office, rang me in Ipswich and said, "I've just been contacted by a fellow called Mick Gooda. There's a job in Perth which looks to be difficult, and they want someone with experience. Mick was after a recommendation from us of someone who might take the job on, so you might get a phone call, Barry." That is how I first heard about it. I put it in my diary. I actually did not bring my diary with me. I think it was 7 May.

The CHAIRMAN: It is always helpful if we do have dates, because we must tie it in with other events.

Mr Jameson: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: If you went through your diary and made some extracts of relevant dates, could you let us have that?

Mr Jameson: Yes, sure.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: That was Peter Armstrong -

Mr Jameson: From the registrar's office.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: He contacted you on 7 May in relation to Mick Gooda having contacted him?

Mr Jameson: Yes, looking for an administrator.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Do you know if Mick ever contacted the registrar looking specifically for you or for somebody from the registrar's office?

Mr Jameson: No, just looking for a recommendation. Peter said, "I have recommended you, Barry, because you have done a fair bit of this work with us." I have done a lot of administration work with the registrar.

The CHAIRMAN: Had you met Mick Gooda?

Mr Jameson: No.

The CHAIRMAN: You were seen as a person with experience. Did you eventually get that telephone call?

Mr Jameson: Yes. When I came back into the office, there was a message from Mick Gooda to ring him, which I did. I made contact with him two days later, I think, on 9 May. He said there was a difficult job on in Perth and that I had been recommended to him, and would I like to speak with the DG of the department, Richard Curry; and he gave me a phone number to ring.

The CHAIRMAN: Did he tell you what was difficult about the job?

Mr Jameson: No, he did not describe it.

The CHAIRMAN: It was just difficult?

Mr Jameson: It was a difficult job, yes.

The CHAIRMAN: And you did not bother inquiring of him what the difficulty was?

Mr Jameson: I could guess what it was from my previous experience. Normally, difficult jobs mean that there could be an issue with security, there could be financial issues, there could be difficult people to deal with, or there could be a political problem. I have had to deal with this sort of stuff in the past. I have done some big jobs with that sort of thing in the past. So when he said difficult and there was a Government involved, I had a fair idea it was not going to be -

The CHAIRMAN: You assumed what the panoply of problems might be?

Mr Jameson: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: There were some remarks about trying to get an indigenous person from outside Western Australia - I assume indigenous for cultural reasons, and outside Western Australia so that it did not get involved in inter-group disputes. I take it you do not have any indigenous background at all?

Mr Jameson: No, I do not. I am a white Australian.

The CHAIRMAN: But you are from outside Western Australia?

Mr Jameson: I am, yes.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: You are forgiven.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Just on that, have you ever worked for ATSIC before?

Mr Jameson: I have been retained by ATSIC on jobs. I have done work for ATSIC, Coffs Harbour and ATSIC, Tamworth in the past.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: The Many Rivers Regional Council?

Mr Jameson: No. That is a political body. That is the political arm of our local area, actually.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you speak to Richard Curry?

Mr Jameson: Yes, I did, on 12 May.

The CHAIRMAN: What was the nature of that conversation?

Mr Jameson: He told me that a job was available in which the Government had identified a series of issues of concern. There was a concern of safety for children, he said, at the time.

[10.00 pm]

There were some official inquiries that had gone on before and the problems had not gone away. Despite the Government's best attempts to try to remediate them, things were just getting worse with the publicity that the Government was getting and the issues in *The West Australian*. He sent some of those clippings to me to give me some background after that. He said that I might like to consider whether I wanted to take on the job. I indicated at the time that I was flat strapped and would not have the time to do it but that I would want to have some background to it, so he sent me across some information on the fax. I think I spoke to him again the same day after I had read the clippings from *The West Australian*. I think there were some clippings from *The Australian* as well.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Can we get a copy of that?

The CHAIRMAN: Can you let us have copies of the fax you received from him?

Mr Jameson: I have the clippings, but I would not have the fax header.

The CHAIRMAN: Normally I would ask this at the end, but can you provide us with all the relevant documentation you have?

Mr Jameson: It is probably in this file.

The CHAIRMAN: Do not look for it now. It is not something I think we need to have immediately, but I would like you, if you can, to provide us with the relevant documentation. You

said that he mentioned political issues and the publicity the Government was getting in the paper. In what context did he say that?

Mr Jameson: In that context it was bad publicity, or so I gathered by his comment.

The CHAIRMAN: It felt it had to do something. That is what you understood.

Mr Jameson: That was my understanding.

The CHAIRMAN: To some extent, your involvement was to try to deal with the action on behalf of the Government because it was concerned that it was getting bad publicity.

Mr Jameson: It wanted to clean up the situation. It wanted to get an end to it.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you have any further discussions?

Mr Jameson: Yes. I think the next discussion was about a week after that.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps I will let you roll on with the events as they transpired.

Mr Jameson: About a week after that there was another conversation, because information had been given to me by that stage. He was pressing me to make a decision about whether I would take on the job. I was hesitant because of my own work schedule.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: That was Richard Curry?

Mr Jameson: Yes. We basically spoke about the situation at the Swan Valley camp, as I came to know its name, and the information that he sent across to me, which included also a transcript of the Gordon inquiry. That gave me a fair bit of information, actually. There was one other document, but I cannot recall what it was.

The CHAIRMAN: Possibly the coronial report.

Mr Jameson: Yes, the coronial inquiry into the Susan Taylor death. That is correct. He was pressing me for a yes or no as to whether I would do it. He ascertained that I had the skills and I was happy to do it, so eventually we got to the point where I said yes, I would, provided it did not take too much time. My timetable would have to wrap up some time about the middle to the end of July because that is when reporting time comes on for auditors. I am the auditor of several public companies and the public hospital system back home.

The CHAIRMAN: Can we identify the date of that discussion?

Mr Jameson: I am pretty sure it was 19 May. I can confirm that for you, but I am sure that was it.

The CHAIRMAN: You put an end time on it.

Mr Jameson: Yes. I needed to be out of there by the middle to the end of July. He thought it would probably take me two to three weeks to clean up the place. I asked him what I would be specifically required to do. He informed me then that the Government had formed the view that the camp should be closed, and I would be the medium by which it would be closed, and that it wanted to resettle the residents. There was a suggestion that there were certain people who were identified whom it wanted to get out first, and then resettle the others post that.

The CHAIRMAN: Did he give you a timetable for resettling?

Mr Jameson: I think the way he said it to me was in as quick as possible a time without being unreasonable about it. There was no hard and fast rule.

The CHAIRMAN: There was no suggestion that they would stay on indefinitely?

Mr Jameson: No; they would not stay on indefinitely. It appeared to me that the Government wanted to close the camp, secure it and then decide what to do with it next. I do not think there was much more that we spoke about, other than when all this would happen. He said that the Government needed to get the legislation through first and that it was in draft form. I think an early

draft of the legislation was sent across to me to indicate what my terms of reference might be and what was expected of me.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you get the whole legislation or just the bit that said what your power would be?

Mr Jameson: It was the reserves 43131 Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The whole Bill?

Mr Jameson: Yes, the whole Bill. It was pretty small; there were only about half a dozen pages. I looked at that. We had a couple of other discussions in the week following 19 May - that would have been in the week commencing 26 May - about what my role would be and what the terms of reference were.

The CHAIRMAN: Can you clarify that?

Mr Jameson: I have the terms of reference here for you. I have some documents that you may want to use, but here are the terms of reference. That is what we agreed to in the end in any case. I had access to Richard Curry and Carolyn Petroboni.

The CHAIRMAN: Can we have the date of the draft you received?

Mr Jameson: I would need to get it for you.

The CHAIRMAN: You will receive a transcript, and the questions -

Mr Jameson: Will be in that.

The CHAIRMAN: You can check against the transcript. You do not need to write it down; you can go through the transcript and respond. Please continue.

Mr Jameson: We got to the point of what my terms of reference would be, and I had discussions with Carolyn Petroboni from Richard Curry's department and - his name has left my mind -

The CHAIRMAN: DIA again?

Mr Jameson: Yes; it was Simon Hawkins. Simon was on the phone to me and we discussed generally what my role would be and how it would evolve. I had a string of questions to ask them and eventually we got down to the terms of reference.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have those questions noted?

Mr Jameson: Not with me. They might be back home, but I cannot be sure.

The CHAIRMAN: If you have a note of them, can we have them and any answers you got?

Mr Jameson: I will have a look, but I cannot be sure that I have retained that.

The CHAIRMAN: If they are not there, they are not there, but can you kindly have a look and let us have them if they are there?

Mr Jameson: Okay.

The CHAIRMAN: Carry on.

Mr Jameson: It got to point where the final Bill came through. I think it was largely unchanged from the first version I saw. I think it was almost the same, in fact; I do not think there was very much change at all, particularly in respect of that which affected me. Having resolved the terms of reference for the job that I would have to do, I agreed that I would do the job, provided I could get the thing done and would have as much assistance as I could possibly get to have it done by the middle to the end of July.

The CHAIRMAN: Now, of course, we are in October.

Mr Jameson: Do not remind me.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: How are all the audits going?

Mr Jameson: I have finished most, thank God.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have a contract of engagement?

Mr Jameson: Yes, I do.

The CHAIRMAN: Can we have that?

Mr Jameson: I have a copy here.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you discuss remuneration?

Mr Jameson: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that in the contract?

Mr Jameson: Yes, it is.

The CHAIRMAN: How are travel costs dealt with? Are they fully reimbursable?

Mr Jameson: Yes, they are.

The CHAIRMAN: And obviously accommodation while you are over here. Is there a per diem agreed charge?

Mr Jameson: Just reasonable expenses as approved by the DG at the time. I said that I wanted to keep all that low key; I did not want to stay in fancy hotels.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you employ other of your staff on the job?

Mr Jameson: No.

The CHAIRMAN: It is purely you?

Mr Jameson: I was a personal appointment.

The CHAIRMAN: One of the things that you have to do is determine options for the viable future use of the land. Are you in the course of doing that or have you completed it?

Mr Jameson: I have prepared my report and I will hand it to the minister tomorrow.

The CHAIRMAN: What are the viable future uses of the land?

Mr Jameson: I cannot say at this point; the minister has instructed me not to say anything about that.

The CHAIRMAN: You are not allowed to not say anything to us, unfortunately. We are a parliamentary committee, and you have a statutory obligation to tell us. Although you might have been instructed not to make that generally available, I will be prepared to take that in private evidence.

Mr Jameson: I can give you the letter he gave me today to say that I am not to divulge its contents or recommendations.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think he was referring to us. Was it to do with us? Perhaps I will take that letter.

Hon LOUISE PRATT: I think it would be unfortunate to construe from evidence given tonight what the Government's position is when it is not yet the Government's position.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not asking what the Government's position is; I am asking what yours is. I will take that evidence in private. One of the options you have is to ask that it be taken in private. If no other members have any problems with that -

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: No; I am quite happy with that.

[10.10 pm]

The CHAIRMAN: Okay, so you have actually determined that.

Mr Jameson: They are my recommendations. I do not know if the Government has acted upon them -

The CHAIRMAN: You have to determine. You have done that, and it is now up to the Government as to which particular option it takes. I take it your position is a contract for services, not a contract of service that you -

Mr Jameson: Yes, it is for service.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you have to tender?

Mr Jameson: No, I was asked to do the job.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you have to make any formal submission? In other words, did you have to put up any of the usual propositions as to why you should have the job, or were you just asked to do it?

Mr Jameson: I was asked to do it because they were looking for someone, as I was saying, with experience.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have an agreed schedule of rates?

Mr Jameson: That is embodied in the agreement, yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you ever speak to a man called Kieran Murphy?

Mr Jameson: No.

The CHAIRMAN: By the time you took over the camp, I believe it was empty?

Mr Jameson: Yes, it was. I arrived in Perth on 12 June and that afternoon the Governor had signed the Bill. At that stage, I then signed the agreements and I decided when I would go about my job. I decided, without consulting anyone, that I would act first thing Friday morning. I went out there at eight o'clock Friday morning and I was met by Robert Bropho, a lady who I got to know called Sharon Davis, a chap called Iva Hayward-Jackson and another lady in the background who I understood was Margaret Jeffery. I went out with Sergeant Jim Clarysse of the local police and Dave Pedler.

The CHAIRMAN: Were there any other people present like the media?

Mr Jameson: The ABC was there.

The CHAIRMAN: You did not tell them that you were going out there? Did you tell anybody else that you were going out there? Obviously, we must not forget Sergeant Clarysse and Dave Pedler. They must have been told.

Mr Jameson: They were the only two I let know.

The CHAIRMAN: So you told those two?

Mr Jameson: Only.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have any inkling as to how the ABC heard about it?

Mr Jameson: Not the first idea.

The CHAIRMAN: You are quite positive you did not tell anybody other than Mr Pedler and Sergeant Clarysse?

Mr Jameson: No, it was my decision as to when I was going to do this. I did not want to be interfered with.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you notify Mr Bropho that you were coming?

Mr Jameson: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Can you offer any explanation as to how the media knew to be there ?

Mr Jameson: I have no idea.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Have you asked?

Mr Jameson: No, I have not asked. I was rather hoping they would not be there, of course, and I got there before they arrived.

The CHAIRMAN: Were you surprised that they were there?

Mr Jameson: I was irritated they were there. I did not want the publicity.

The CHAIRMAN: Was the job a different job from the one you thought you were going to do?

Mr Jameson: It turned out that it did not have any financial aspects to it.

The CHAIRMAN: Why was that?

Mr Jameson: The registrar had told me that they had had a section 60 examiner in in May - I think it was Deloitte - who had done the review and certain things were not satisfactory. I have not read the report, but Peter Armstrong has given me some excerpts from it. He said there is not a lot of financial stuff left in there for me to do. It seemed that my job would be more one of managing the reserve rather than managing the finances -

The CHAIRMAN: Or people.

Mr Jameson: Yes. Normally my job is to manage people and finances and to get a corporation that is on the rocks back up and running again. I see it through that process and exit when it is an appropriate time and return it back to its committee. That is the normal process of administration. This one was a little different. I was required to manage people out of a place rather than retain them, and then I had to devise an alternative appropriate use for it.

The CHAIRMAN: So it was a little unusual in that respect from the normal -

Mr Jameson: Yes, it was a bit different. I suppose I had to call upon some of those skills that I have gathered in the past.

The CHAIRMAN: If there had been people in there and it had been a matter of removing certain people and then relocating other people over a reasonably short period - that is, to be out of there by the middle of July - how would you have gone about doing that? You were obviously not going to do very much personally in terms of relocation. That would have had to be done by -

Mr Jameson: No, I had been given contacts within each of the major agencies - the Department for Community Development, the Department of Health and the Department of Education and Training.

The CHAIRMAN: You would have had to make the directions to remove the people who you saw as being necessary to remove. That would have been a personal involvement. How were you then going to deal with people in the meantime and how were you going to do it from the eastern States?

Mr Jameson: I was to remain over here until such time as I had managed all of the people out of the camp.

The CHAIRMAN: So that was a commitment to stay here while there were people at the camp?

Mr Jameson: Yes, I had to stay here. It was envisaged that we would get the place cleared out, sort of, within about a four-week time frame with the help of the service agencies to facilitate that.

The CHAIRMAN: You would then be keeping good order within the camp in that time and then, once that had happened, you would be able to come across intermittently to finish everything else off?

Mr Jameson: Intermittently to the extent that I would come across once a week and do the process of consultation and interviews to determine what the wider committee really wanted -

The CHAIRMAN: Are you doing that?

Mr Jameson: Yes, I have done all that.

Hon LOUISE PRATT: With regard to our line of inquiry and being relevant to our terms of reference, I understand the line of questioning -

The CHAIRMAN: I will have to ask everybody to retire for a short period while the committee deliberates.

Proceedings suspended from 10.17 to 10.20 pm

[10.20 pm]

The CHAIRMAN: I was trying to get some idea about what was involved in the job you had to carry out.

Mr Jameson: The terms of reference will indicate that.

The CHAIRMAN: How different has this job been from the job you understood you were doing and in terms of your commitment and the time frames involved?

The CHAIRMAN: I think Richard Curry was fairly reliable when he informed me what it would entail, and the terms of reference we negotiated as they fell out. It was pretty much the way it has turned out, actually. The timeframes have blown out a bit. The job was made a bit easier when I did not have to evict what I thought would be some 80 people. It turned out to be one.

The CHAIRMAN: In terms of your personal involvement, you intended to have personal involvement in the eviction of the so-called perpetrators, and it would then be up to the department to resettle?

Mr Jameson: That is right.

The CHAIRMAN: You did not understand that you would have to resettle those people? They would be found a place?

Mr Jameson: They would be found a place, yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Obviously you had the authority to evict them if necessary?

Mr Jameson: Correct, but it was not envisaged that I would act upon that.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I am not quite sure whether I misheard you. Did you say that rather than 80 people it turned out to be only one?

Mr Jameson: Yes.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Why did you assume 80 people?

Mr Jameson: I was told there were 13 cottages, and I multiplied that by about five or six.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: You did not get specific instructions about 80?

Mr Jameson: No. In my mind I had a mental picture that there would be 80 people in there because there were 13 cottages.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: In relation to the press release of 12 June 2003 about the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, was it identified that you would be appointed for an initial period of nine days? Was that part of the original contract?

Mr Jameson: No.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: There was never any mention of nine days?

Mr Jameson: No. It was to be done as quickly as possible. I was not made aware of any particular time frame.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: You had initially nine days. You were also to be responsible for providing a detailed written report outlining the State Government's options for the future use of the Swan Valley Nyungah Community?

Mr Jameson: Yes.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: You have extensive experience with auditing practices, including of Aboriginal corporations and charitable organisations. What was your involvement with Aboriginal corporations?

Mr Jameson: Generally?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Yes.

Mr Jameson: I have been in Lismore for 15 years. Before that in Sydney I worked with and for quite a few Aboriginal organisations. I do not know how many I have done - dozens of them. I have done a lot of work. Most of the work comes through either the registrar in Canberra or the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission offices in Coffs Harbour or Tamworth. I do not know whether this is any good to you, but I brought a reference across from one of the organisations I helped in Lismore. Mr Tomlinson thought that perhaps accountants are not very sensitive people.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: You have been reading the transcript of evidence?

Mr Jameson: I thought I should fix this bloke, because we can be caring and sensitive, although we can also be hard-nosed and mean.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: My brother-in-law is in the same occupation, and I love him dearly.

Mr Jameson: Good; we chartered accountants are useful people.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Since coming to Western Australia - obviously we have heard already the evidence that Mick Gooda contacted Peter Armstrong - have you met with Mr Gooda on a number of occasions?

Mr Jameson: I have never met Mr Gooda, no. I have spoken to him on the phone only twice.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Regarding your powers, I understand that the report we are not to talk about would be done in consultation with ATSIC Nyoongah representatives together with the Departments of the Premier and Cabinet and Indigenous Affairs. Have you done your report by consulting widely with indigenous groups?

Mr Jameson: Yes. I have a list of groups I have consulted with, if that is of interest to you.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Certainly. You have not had to meet with ATSIC?

Mr Jameson: Yes, I met with ATSIC, but Mick Gooda was not there when I did. I met with Rod Little, Eamon Cook, and a lady who has left now - I cannot think of her name, but she was Irish, I think. I have a list of the organisations with which I have consulted.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: I refer to the second one from the top - consultation held with representative groups, ATSIC state policy officers Mick Gooda and Rod Little.

Mr Jameson: I did not meet with Mick. I was scheduled to meet with him. The appointment was made, but Mick was out of the State on that day, so only Rod Little was in the office.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Was it ever expressed to you at any time that the community might return?

Mr Jameson: Not in the form that it had previously existed, no.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: But there was some view that the community -

Mr Jameson: It was considered that the wider community would be able to share in the use of that reserve, yes.

Mr Jameson: Not the former residents. Some of those residents may wish to return and use it in an alternative form. It was always intended to be available for their use.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: A statement was made in our Parliament that they saw no reason why the community could not return, but obviously without the perpetrators.

Mr Jameson: I imagine that means the wider community.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Thank you for that.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I will not test your human compassion; I accept that as a given. I notice that term of reference No 2 refers to maintain and care for the land and repair and keep maintained all infrastructure on the land. When you first went to the community, what impression did you gain about its general standard and upkeep?

Mr Jameson: I was very surprised by its poor upkeep. It appeared to me that the reserve was unkempt, unloved and untidy. I have photographs.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I accept that.

Mr Jameson: We took a pile of photographs when we first gained control of the place. That is the only copy I have. There was an awful lot of rubbish and debris lying around the place. It became apparent to me that probably only six or seven homes had been lived in. The other seven or eight were in such a state that they were uninhabitable.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: In what way? Were they dirty, with broken doors?

Mr Jameson: Yes, with dirty, broken doors, busted windows, kitchens ripped out and smashed up, wet areas not functional, and hot water services ripped off the walls. They were very badly maintained. Some houses were worse than others. It was in a state of disrepair that I had not seen for some time in an Aboriginal community; and I have done quite a few of them. Some of the ones I have been involved with have all been pretty houseproud - the same as you and I. I was surprised to see the state of disrepair.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: In addition to cleaning up the general environment, is there a lot of rough structural work to be done?

[10.30 pm]

Mr Jameson: Yes. All of the kitchens are buggered. That is the best way to describe them. They have got to be replaced. In the wet areas - and this may be a function of the materials that were used - the chipboard has swollen, so they have had it. They have wood heaters. They are not functional either.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you been to any other communities in the metropolitan area?

Mr Jameson: Not in Perth. When I consider what I have seen in New South Wales and Queensland, the standards generally are the same over here as they are back home.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I think we had better go to New South Wales and look at the communities there.

Mr Jameson: I cannot see why it would be different.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: In your judgment the conditions were of a very poor standard?

Mr Jameson: Yes, as those photographs will demonstrate. I am surprised to hear that there are different standards between the groups.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know whether you have been to any metropolitan communities in Sydney.

Mr Jameson: I have.

The CHAIRMAN: These people were the fringe dwellers. They were people who were not able to be settled by Homeswest in the ordinary community. We have a lot of other people who are in Homeswest houses and who may be considered to be not the best of tenants, but a lot of the people in these communities are there because they do not fit in anywhere else. They are the people who previously lived under bridges. We visited one community, which has been totally destroyed.

Mr Jameson: I know that it happens.

[The committee took evidence in private.]