

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

INQUIRY INTO WORKSAFE



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
MONDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2017**

Members

**Hon Adele Farina (Chair)
Hon Jacqui Boydell (Deputy Chair)
Hon Ken Baston
Hon Kyle McGinn
Hon Darren West**

Hearing commenced at 10.36 am

Mr JASON THOMSON

Regional Director, Multiplex, sworn and examined:

The CHAIR: This is the Standing Committee on Public Administration inquiry into WorkSafe, and we have a hearing with Mr Jason Thomson, a regional director of Multiplex. On behalf of the committee, I would like to welcome you to the meeting, and before we begin I must ask you to take either the oath or the affirmation.

[Witness took the oath.]

The CHAIR: You will have signed a document entitled “Information for Witnesses”. Have you read and understood the document?

Mr THOMSON: I have.

The CHAIR: These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard and broadcast on the internet. A transcript of your evidence will be provided to you in due course. To assist the committee and Hansard, please quote the full title of any document you refer to during the course of this hearing for the record, and also be aware of the microphones. Try to talk into them and ensure you do not cover them with papers while giving your evidence. 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 today’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. I advise you that publication or disclosure of the uncorrected transcript of evidence may constitute a contempt of Parliament and may mean that the material published or disclosed is not subject to parliamentary privilege.

Would you like to make an opening statement to the committee or are you happy for me to just roll with my questions?

Mr THOMSON: I am happy with the questions, thank you.

The CHAIR: How many construction projects does Multiplex currently have in WA?

Mr THOMSON: Okay; tricky question. There are currently about six.

The CHAIR: How many construction projects does Multiplex currently have in regional WA?

Mr THOMSON: We have six projects and one in regional WA, so seven in total.

The CHAIR: How often does WorkSafe send inspectors to Multiplex sites?

Mr THOMSON: Over the last three years, according to our records, we have had 21 site visits to our various sites—an average of seven per year.

The CHAIR: Does WorkSafe send inspectors to inspect Multiplex regional sites?

Mr THOMSON: Actually, yes, they did. We are doing the Karratha regional hospital and there was a WorkSafe visit a couple of weeks ago.

The CHAIR: So, that would be the only visit to that worksite?

Mr THOMSON: Yes.

The CHAIR: Do WorkSafe inspectors notify Multiplex before doing a visit on a worksite?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, more often than not.

The CHAIR: Is that the same for regional site visits?

Mr THOMSON: I think so, yes.

The CHAIR: Did you want to take that as a question on notice just to double-check that?

Mr THOMSON: I can do, yes.

The CHAIR: We will take that as question on notice 1. Do you think that WorkSafe issues appropriate improvement notices and prohibition notices on your sites?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, we do.

The CHAIR: And that is the same in regional areas?

Mr THOMSON: We have not had any prohibition notices. The last notice we were issued was in May 2014—on any of our projects.

The CHAIR: Okay. Have you or any of your employees ever complained about a WorkSafe inspector's conduct; and, if so, what was the process and the outcome of that?

[10.40 am]

Mr THOMSON: No, there have been no complaints on WorkSafe inspectors or their conduct on our sites. We actually find it quite collaborative and good to deal with.

The CHAIR: Would you mind just speaking up a little bit, Jason.

Mr THOMSON: Sure.

The CHAIR: Thank you. When a WorkSafe inspector does visit one of your sites, are they more likely to issue verbal directions about safety concerns or will they issue improvement and prohibition notices?

Mr THOMSON: As I said previously, the last notice that we have had was in May 2014, so of the 21 visits we have had in the last three years, we have had three verbal directions.

The CHAIR: Do you think that verbal directions issued by WorkSafe are as or more effective than improvement and prohibition notices?

Mr THOMSON: It depends on the severity of what the issue was—what they found when they went to the site. If it was a verbal instruction, it would only have been a very low level health and safety issue, in my opinion.

The CHAIR: If an accident happens on one of your worksites, do you have a procedure to secure the accident site until WorkSafe arrive?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, we do.

The CHAIR: Can you just outline the procedure for us?

Mr THOMSON: It depends on the nature of the incident, but if it is a serious incident, we have a systematic set of procedures that we put in place, which would include, if we had to, basically securing the scene, but we have not had any significant critical incidents that would involve securing the area until WorkSafe arrive.

The CHAIR: Can I just clarify, with that procedure, do you only secure the site if there is a fatality or do you secure it even in the incident of a serious injury?

Mr THOMSON: Certainly, I have had no experience of a fatality—not in recent history in Western Australia and Multiplex, anyway. If it is a serious injury—I am not aware in recent history

in my time with Multiplex that we have had a serious, serious injury where we have had to secure the site to such an extent that police or a WorkSafe investigation would have been warranted.

The CHAIR: I am going to ask these questions, but I think it will follow that your answer will be no, given the fact that you have just given evidence that you have not had any recent experience of any fatalities. Do you or your employees have any experience with WorkSafe questioning you or your employees after an accident and what was the experience like; and do you have any views on that process by WorkSafe?

Mr THOMSON: I will have to take that question on notice, please.

The CHAIR: That will be question on notice 2. Has WorkSafe ever been denied access or has access been delayed to witnesses or employees after an accident on a Multiplex site?

Mr THOMSON: No.

The CHAIR: Who does WorkSafe speak to after an accident? Do they interview everybody who is present on the site or do they talk to only those people who actually witnessed the accident?

Mr THOMSON: I am sorry, I cannot comment because I do not have any experience in that. As I said, 21 visits over the last three years, and most of them were just general inspections. There were a couple of complaints and then there were some incidents that we reported to WorkSafe under the legislation, which they came down to just check on. But we have not had any serious accidents or fatalities, touch wood.

The CHAIR: I am going to try to skip some of these questions so you do not have to keep repeating that statement all the time. What is your view on union notifications to WorkSafe regarding potential breaches of the OSH act? Are these interventions by the union helpful?

Mr THOMSON: Not in my view, no.

The CHAIR: Would you like to expand on that?

Mr THOMSON: Not really. We are happy to address any legitimate concerns raised by anyone on our sites, but often we find that some of the things that are raised by certain parties are not really legitimate.

The CHAIR: Do you have a process of dealing with that?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, if it is legitimate—if any complaint is dealt with from a health and safety perspective, we will investigate it appropriately.

The CHAIR: But what if it is a non-legitimate complaint, because it is made by WorkSafe, it is in WorkSafe's hands what it does with it.

Mr THOMSON: No. We will investigate any complaint, but often complaints do not turn out to be legitimate.

The CHAIR: Do you think that unions should play a greater role in investigating safety breaches? For example, should union representatives participate in on-site inspections by WorkSafe inspectors?

Mr THOMSON: I think —

The CHAIR: If you do not feel comfortable answering any of these questions, you can simply say that you will take it as a question on notice, if you want to, and you can provide us with a written response.

Mr THOMSON: Can I take that as a question on notice, please?

The CHAIR: We appreciate that you are representing the company and you are speaking on behalf of the company, so that is fine. That is no problem. That will be question on notice 3.

In your view, should there be more regular inspections from WorkSafe inspectors on construction sites?

Mr THOMSON: In our view, I think the level of inspections is adequate. I cannot comment on some of the other companies or sites, but certainly from our perspective, we welcome WorkSafe on-site, and the level of inspections, we find fine.

The CHAIR: If you have employees who do not speak English and cannot read English, what is your procedure to ensure that they have understood safety briefings and procedures?

Mr THOMSON: They have to be able to speak, have knowledge and understand a certain level of English, otherwise they cannot get through our induction.

The CHAIR: Does Multiplex interact with WorkSafe WA on an executive level regarding safety issues?

Mr THOMSON: Yes.

The CHAIR: So your managers feel comfortable that they can contact WorkSafe whenever they want to obtain advice on any safety issue that they may not be clear on?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, absolutely. I think we have got a very collaborative relationship with WorkSafe and we also deal with WorkSafe on the WACSA council.

The CHAIR: What is WACSA?

Mr THOMSON: WACSA is the Western Australian Construction Safety Alliance formed in 2008, to which WorkSafe is often invited. We are not aware of any time when they did not attend.

The CHAIR: Is that alliance comprised of just construction companies?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, all the major construction companies, WorkSafe, the master builders, CFMEU and Western Power.

The CHAIR: Do you think WorkSafe's website is user friendly and is accessed by workers and employers to access information about safety?

Mr THOMSON: Can I take that question on notice? I personally do not interact with the website. I will check with our safety manager.

The CHAIR: I will take that as question on notice 4. What is your view of WorkSafe's educational campaigns? Are they frequent enough? Do they get through?

Mr THOMSON: Yes; WorkSafe safety alerts come out quite frequently. We get them and we pass them on to all our various personnel on-site. So, yes, I think that they are relatively frequent and very clear.

The CHAIR: In your organisation, who receives the WorkSafe newsletter and safety alerts?

Mr THOMSON: Our regional safety manager receives them.

The CHAIR: And he then disseminates them to —

Mr THOMSON: And he disseminates the information, yes, out to the various sites.

The CHAIR: How could WorkSafe improve their safety education for the construction industry?

Mr THOMSON: That is a good question. Look, I think WorkSafe is doing a good job. As I said, its bulletins are clear and concise. Generally, the catalyst for them are very recent issues or incidents that have happened. They come out frequently. We get them and they are straight out to our sites and people are notified, so I think they do a pretty good job.

The CHAIR: When was the last safety alert issued by WorkSafe?

Mr THOMSON: I would have to take that on notice, but I am sure I saw something the last week or the week before.

The CHAIR: Okay. We will take that as question on notice 5. What is the perception of WorkSafe as a regulator within the industry, and has it changed over time, in particular over the last 10 years?

[10.50 am]

Mr THOMSON: Look, from Multiplex's perspective, we find WorkSafe a relatively fair and collaborative organisation. Yes, they have to police the legislation and provide advice on policy matters. I do not think the perception has changed in my view from our company's perspective over time. Over the last sort of 10 years, it has pretty much remained consistent.

The CHAIR: The committee has heard evidence that WorkSafe investigations take too long to conclude—these are fatality investigations and serious injury investigations. Do you have a view about the length of time it takes WorkSafe to conclude an investigation?

Mr THOMSON: I think fatalities and the complexities associated with investigating them can take a long time and it is a very sensitive matter as well, and the right conclusions need to be reached. It takes as long as it takes.

The CHAIR: What would Multiplex consider to be a greater deterrence: fines or negative publicity—naming and shaming companies?

Mr THOMSON: I think it depends on the severity of the HSE issue at hand. I know, for example, in New South Wales, prior to any sort of prosecution, you can opt for an enforceable undertaking, which we have on one occasion in New South Wales prior to prosecution. That resulted in more of a positive outcome for the industry over there, whereas in WA, you cannot opt for an enforceable undertaking in lieu of a fine until after prosecution, so that is —

The CHAIR: Sorry, Jason. Can you just detail for me what an enforceable undertaking actually is? What sort of things are you giving an undertaking to do?

Mr THOMSON: In New South Wales, for example, our undertaking was to liaise with industry to come up with a practical guide to planning for the safe erection of steel structures, which we did with the Australian Steel Institute and various members and other companies. That actually resulted in a standard being formed. It has had a bit of a ripple effect in the industry, so it has been a positive outcome in lieu of paying a fine. It actually cost us a lot more money to do that, but it was a positive outcome for industry.

The CHAIR: In Western Australia, you cannot enter into one of those undertakings until after you have paid the fine?

Mr THOMSON: No, until after prosecution. So you get prosecuted, and then there is a fine associated with that. You cannot opt for an enforceable undertaking in lieu of the fine until after prosecution. That means we have spent more time, money and energy going through the whole prosecution process as opposed to going straight to an enforceable undertaking.

The CHAIR: You have never entered into an enforceable undertaking in WA?

Mr THOMSON: No, we have not, but we have not been prosecuted either. It is just kind of an example of something that could be an improvement.

The CHAIR: Do you have experience in hiring employees who have a high-risk work licence?

Mr THOMSON: Yes—not directly, but through our subcontractors, yes.

The CHAIR: The committee has heard evidence that many people with high-risk work licences do not have the required competency. Do you have a view on the training for high-risk work licences?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, specifically, we often have issues with scaffolders. In Western Australia, you can get a scaffolding licence between one week and three weeks. In other countries and in other places, it takes a lot longer to get your advanced scaffold high-risk work licence. For us, we often find issues with scaffolding on our projects, and then when we question the licensed scaffolder, they often do not have the required level of competency and training. Given the fact that it is a high-risk work activity, we would like to see some more rigour around scaffolding licensing in particular.

The CHAIR: One of the things that the committee has heard is that in other countries, they actually have a process where you have to get some practical on-site experience before you can advance from basic to intermediate, then from intermediate to advanced. They suggest that that should take the course of 12 months to complete before you can actually get an advanced high-risk work licence in scaffolding. Do you agree with that sort of a system?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, I agree with that system in principle. I mean, it depends on if 12 months is adequate, but, yes, definitely we would agree with that in principle.

The CHAIR: Do you have a view on the adequacy of assessors who assess the high-risk work licences, because the committee has heard concerns that assessors are actually assessing and issuing a high-risk work licence to people who do not have the adequate competency?

Mr THOMSON: The assessors are only assessing against the criteria they are given to assess against, so I do not really have a specific view on that.

The CHAIR: Do you have a view on WorkSafe's role in auditing the assessors, because one of the other bits of evidence the committee has heard is that there are concerns that WorkSafe do not audit assessors frequently enough and that is what is leading to some of the lack of competency concerns that the industry is seeing?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, possibly. I do not have any direct experience, but the biggest issue for us with high-risk work licences is scaffolders.

The CHAIR: Does Multiplex have a vetting process to ascertain whether people with high-risk work licences have the required competency to do the work? What is the process that you use?

Mr THOMSON: Anyone that is undertaking high-risk work activities on our site needs to provide evidence of their high-risk work licence. We also have our own systems where we check their safe work method statements and safety management systems prior to the activities being undertaken. That is generally our process and procedure.

The CHAIR: Does Multiplex ensure that there is a site HSR elected on all worksites?

Mr THOMSON: Yes.

The CHAIR: So, that is a HSR that covers a whole site, not just specific tasks.

Mr THOMSON: We have a safety council on each site, so all our major subcontractors will provide representation, including ourselves, where we have a health and safety coordinator or adviser on-site. A safety reference group is created.

The CHAIR: Do you know whether WorkSafe inspectors, when they arrive on-site to undertake an inspection, ask to meet with the health and safety representatives and involve them in the inspection process?

Mr THOMSON: Look, generally our own Multiplex safety coordinator will generally interact with the WorkSafe person, but they are welcome to talk to anyone they want to on the site, which would include anyone from the safety reference group.

The CHAIR: So would the Multiplex safety adviser then relay whatever discussions happened with the WorkSafe inspector to all the HSRs on site?

Mr THOMSON: Generally speaking, yes.

The CHAIR: The committee has heard evidence that some employees are not willing to act as health and safety representatives because they are worried about discrimination and the risk of losing their job if they raise safety issues. Are you aware of this?

Mr THOMSON: Not on our projects, no.

The CHAIR: Does Multiplex encourage employees to become health and safety representatives?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, absolutely. We like to sort of make sure that there is a broad slice of representation through our projects, so all the main trades will provide a health and safety representative to sit on the safety reference group.

The CHAIR: How often does the safety committee meet?

Mr THOMSON: It is once a month.

The CHAIR: Does it have representatives from all the subcontractors?

Mr THOMSON: Not all; it is all the main subcontractors, so all the service trades, structural trades, and probably the ceilings and partitions, so the bulk of the workforce would be represented.

The CHAIR: Do all the health and safety reps attend the safety committee meetings?

Mr THOMSON: Yes.

The CHAIR: Is that as well as Multiplex management?

Mr THOMSON: As well as, yes; that is right.

The CHAIR: Do you know whether your employees see much bullying on construction sites; and, if yes, do you see WorkSafe as an effective organisation to address bullying on construction sites?

Mr THOMSON: I am not aware of any bullying on our sites.

The CHAIR: Are there any legislative amendments to the OSH act or regulations that you would like to suggest to the committee from your experience in the industry, because it is one of our terms of reference to make recommendations about legislative changes?

Mr THOMSON: The only thing we would like to see is progress towards the national harmonisation laws. For us, we operate in all the jurisdictions across the nation and to try to come up with a uniform health and safety system is difficult because of the different nuances in each state and territory. We would like to see progress towards harmonised laws.

[11.00 am]

The CHAIR: The committee has heard evidence that unions should have the power to prosecute for safety breaches. Do you agree with this?

Mr THOMSON: No.

The CHAIR: What is your concern in relation to this proposition?

Mr THOMSON: Impartiality.

The CHAIR: The committee has heard evidence that WorkSafe should be able to issue on-the-spot fines for safety breaches. Do you have a view about this?

Mr THOMSON: Sorry, Adele, could you repeat that?

The CHAIR: Issue on-the-spot fines.

Mr THOMSON: WorkSafe?

The CHAIR: Yes. We understand that in other jurisdictions in Australia the relevant WorkSafe body has the capacity to issue on-the-spot fines.

Mr THOMSON: I would not see any issue with that.

The CHAIR: Should WorkSafe adopt a three strikes and you are charged policy, where if they need to issue verbal instructions or improvement notices or prohibition notices three times for the same safety breaches on a worksite, then should they prosecute the employer?

Mr THOMSON: If it is for the same thing three times, yes, I would not see an issue with that.

The CHAIR: Does Multiplex have both site managers or project managers and safety managers on all of their worksites?

Mr THOMSON: Yes.

The CHAIR: Could you just describe to the committee the safety culture at Multiplex? Is it a priority? Is it front and centre of everything that you do?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, it is front and centre. Our philosophy, if you like, on health and safety is all about planning up-front. We think the biggest influence you can have on any particular project is before you start the task. It is all about planning, planning, planning and replanning for us, and incorporating safe methods of working in the actual design before it gets finalised. If we can design something that is safer to manufacture and deliver and then install, that is what we try to do—sort of focus on that up-front. Yes, there are certain levels of paperwork that we need to make sure are in place under the OSH act, which we do. We like to focus on practice, not just paperwork. We like to be out there on our sites actively engaging with the people and personnel on site, just to kind of grow a mature safety culture. We feel everyone can open up and talk about safety matters, and also it is important to make sure that all your tasks that are happening on the site are all happening in a logical manner. I find a lot of the time you run into problems and incidents when everyone is working on top of each other and the site is untidy, it is messy and unclean, and there is just not that culture there. We like to think that when you walk up to a Multiplex site, you see the sign, you see the gate, you see the fence, it is all nice, clean and tidy, it is organised. You go in, you get inducted, you get inducted properly, and then you go out onto the site and everyone is wearing their PPE and everyone is doing the right thing, and that is the culture that we are trying to grow within the business and make sure that all our sites adopt, as well as assessing critical risks on projects. Things that are going to kill people, they are the things that we need to focus on as well as the cultural aspect. That is our approach in a nutshell.

The CHAIR: Are subcontractors required to handle safety in relation to their employees, or does Multiplex provide some contractors with safety procedures and standards to be followed on its worksites?

Mr THOMSON: There is a bit of both, but the majority of it is done by the relevant subcontractors, which we assess and make sure that their safe work method statements and systems are adequate. In the case where they do not have adequate safe work method statements, we will assist the subcontractor. But we try not to impose our—we do not like to instruct them on how to do things; we just tell them what to do and when to do it. It is really their responsibility to make sure that they are doing things safely, especially subcontractors, but we make sure that they are doing it.

The CHAIR: Does the project manager or safety manager regularly—at least on a regular daily basis—walk the site to conduct their own safety inspections?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, site supervisors, they are out there all the time. Site managers are out on site probably 30 to 50 per cent of the time, and the project managers, I am sure they all get out there daily. As far as formal safety inspections go, the supervisors will do them weekly and the senior management will do them probably monthly or thereabouts. Even myself, I attend site quite often and do safety inspections as well.

The CHAIR: What is the process of when one of those officers does a safety inspection? Do they just issue verbal directions or is there an internal written notification system?

Mr THOMSON: There is an actual checklist that they go through and inspect their work areas—tick, tick, tick. In the area in question, any issues they come across, if they are severe enough, they could involve a formal instruction or even a nonconformance. But, generally, speaking it would just be a verbal instruction to correct whatever they find.

The CHAIR: Based on your evidence, and on the facts, I am sure, Multiplex have not had any fatalities in recent years, but the committee is aware that there have been a number of fatalities on construction sites in Western Australia in recent years. What needs to be done to reduce the number of fatalities on construction sites in WA? Where is the problem?

Mr THOMSON: I do not think there is one silver bullet. I just think a lot of it comes down to culture on projects and attitude, and I think money plays a part as well. I think some subcontractors and some builders will scrimp on health and safety, and if it is not front and centre and you are not paying attention to it, you do not have that safety culture on site, and if they are really hard up for dollars or they are trying to scrimp and scrape from a commercial perspective, that has a massive effect on the health and safety of a project.

The CHAIR: The committee has heard evidence that WorkSafe visibility on construction sites is really low—that they rarely make inspections these days, and certainly most of the inspections that they do undertake are reactive inspections rather than proactive inspections. As a result of that, there has been a reduction in regard to safety on-site because the subcontractors and the workers on-site do not expect to see a WorkSafe inspector come and visit. Do you agree with that viewpoint, and do you think there has been a decline in focus on safety on construction sites?

Mr THOMSON: From our perspective it has been consistent, and our interaction and frequency of visits from WorkSafe has been pretty consistent over recent years. I cannot comment on other projects of other builders, but from our perspective, it has been very consistent. I think the visibility that we have WorkSafe is adequate.

The CHAIR: The committee has heard evidence that an industrial manslaughter offence should be introduced in Western Australia to hold those in responsibility personally accountable in the case of a workplace fatality for failing to take all reasonable measures to provide a safe workplace or for failing to act to remedy safety breaches. Do you have a view about this?

Mr THOMSON: No view.

The CHAIR: Do you want to take that as a question on notice?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, please.

The CHAIR: We will take that as question on notice 6. What sort of processes and checks and balances are in place within Multiplex to ensure that project managers do not put getting the job done on budget and on time ahead of the safety of the workers?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, there is a few, I suppose. There is some pretty in-depth monthly reporting that goes on, so any sort of health and safety statistics that start creeping out of norm get highlighted pretty quickly. Myself, as regional director, will visit most of my sites once a week, and I will go out

on-site, and if things do not look or feel right, I will be certainly having a chat to the project manager. Our regional safety manager visits most of our sites, again, once a week as well. So any issues get raised pretty quickly if things are getting out of sequence as far as health and safety, quality or time goes. It is front and centre, and we find that a clean, safe, tidy site actually improves your productivity anyway.

The CHAIR: That was all of my questions. Do other committee members have any questions?

Hon KEN BASTON: Yes, I just have one. You mentioned that we have six sites in Western Australia, and we only asked you about Western Australia. Do you have other sites in Australia as well?

Mr THOMSON: Yes, we do. We have many sites in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

[11.10 am]

Hon KEN BASTON: Are you able to compare their safety regulations against Western Australia's; and, if so, how do they fare?

Mr THOMSON: I think that generally speaking all the same sort of principles and intents are there at a high level but there are quite a few nuances around the specific health and safety matters. Covering of penetrations on the site is different in WA than it is in Victoria or it is in New South Wales. For us to come up with a standard procedure across the nation for penetrations, just as one example, is difficult because it will not meet Western Australian, Victorian and New South Wales legislation. At a high level, it is generally not that much of a problem—at a policy level. The further you go down, as soon as you get to a safe work method statement level, it becomes nuanced because there are differences in each of the different states. We have our health and safety handbook in Victoria and one in New South Wales. We are developing one for WA and we are cherry-picking the best bits out of Victoria and New South Wales. We also have to crosscheck it to make sure that it is compliant with all the legislation in Western Australia, so it can be a little bit difficult. That is why we support harmonisation.

Hon KEN BASTON: Yes, I understand. It is very important.

The CHAIR: There is just one more question that has occurred to me. When your health and safety representatives are elected, how long does it take before they undertake that initial introductory course for health and safety inspectors? We have heard evidence that sometimes it takes up to a year before health and safety representatives are permitted to go and do their training.

Mr THOMSON: Really?

The CHAIR: Yes.

Mr THOMSON: I stand corrected, but I think that most of the people that our subcontractors elect to do the role on the safety committee have already done the course anyway. They are already ready for the role, if you like.

The CHAIR: How do you know whether they have done the course or not? Do you just take it on trust or do you have a checking system?

Mr THOMSON: No. There are guys who check that they have done the course and the validation and that sort of stuff. There is no-one on the safety committee that would not have done the safety committee training.

The CHAIR: Jason, is there anything that you would like to bring to the committee's attention that we have not covered in the questions we have asked you this morning?

Mr THOMSON: No. I think it has been covered.

The CHAIR: Okay.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you very much for taking the time to give evidence to the committee. The evidence that we receive from yourself and other witnesses is invaluable to the committee understanding what is happening out in the workplace in relation to safety and will help us in preparing our report back to Parliament. In conclusion, I again thank you for attending today. I advise you that a transcript of the hearing will be provided to you in due course. If you believe that there are any corrections that need to be made to the transcript, either for transcription errors or typographical errors, if you could just mark them on the transcript and return them to Margaret, we will ensure that the transcript is corrected. The committee requests that you provide your answers to questions taken on notice when you return your corrected transcript of evidence, but as long as we receive it before 15 December, that would be fine. If you want to provide additional information or elaborate on particular points, you can provide supplementary evidence to the committee when you return the transcript of evidence. On that basis, I thank you very much for your evidence.

Hearing concluded at 11.13 am
