



## CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMISSION

### TRANSCRIPT OF INVESTIGATIVE HEARING

10 CONDUCTED AT LEVEL 2, NORTH TOWER, 515 ST PAULS TERRACE,  
FORTITUDE VALLEY WITH RESPECT TO

File No: CO-16-1664

HEARING NO: 17/0001

DAY 1 - TUESDAY 18 APRIL 2017  
(DURATION: 1HR 39MINS)

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#### LEGEND

30 PO Presiding Officer – ALAN MACSPORRAN QC  
CA Counsel Assisting – GLEN RICE QC  
HRO Hearing Room Orderly – JESSICA WINTERS  
W Witness – KRISTYN BOULTON  
LR Legal Representative – P COBB

PO Mr RICE, do you have another witness available?

CA Yes. I call Kristyn BOULTON. She is the current Councillor of Division 4 of the Gold Coast City Council.

PO Thank you. Ms BOULTON, would you prefer to take an oath or an affirmation?

10 W An oath.

PO Thank you. Swear the witness.

HRO Please stand and take the Bible in your right hand and repeat after me. The evidence.

W The evidence.

20 HRO Which I shall give.

W Which I shall give.

HRO In these proceedings.

W In these proceedings.

HRO Shall be the truth.

30 W Shall be the truth.

HRO The whole truth.

W The whole truth.

HRO And nothing but the truth.

W And nothing but the truth.

40 HRO So help me God.

W So help me God.

HRO Please be seated.

PO You are appearing for the witness, are you?

LR Yes. Good afternoon. May it please, my name is COBB - C-O-B-B - initial P, of Cobb Law.

50 PO Thank you. Thank you, Mr RICE.

CA Is your name Kristyn Lee BOULTON?

W That's correct.

CA Ms BOULTON, you're attending here in response to an attendance notice; correct?

W Yes.

CA Can I show you this?

W Yes.

10 CA Is that a copy of the attendance notice that you received relating to your appearance today?

W Yes, it is.

CA I tender a copy of that attendance notice.

PO That is Exhibit 11. Thank you.

20 CA Ms BOULTON, you are the current Councillor for Division 4?

W Yes.

CA At the Gold Coast City Council?

W Yes.

CA Having been elected in the 2016 elections?

30 W That's correct.

CA You had been involved in two previous campaigns; is that right?

W One.

CA One. You were a candidate in 2008; is that right?

W Yes.

40 CA I thought that you were a candidate also in 2012?

W I started to run, but then I pulled out.

CA Withdrew?

W Yes.

CA Was that early in the campaign?

50 W Yes, very.

CA When I asked you how many campaigns, you really thought it was one. Is that because, in 2012, you barely participated?

W Yes. I'm not even sure I nominated.

CA I see.

W I didn't get that far.

CA You were unsuccessful in 2008?

W Yes.

10 CA You announced your candidacy approximately when, in relation to the elections in March?

W March? In November I announced.

CA Early November, about the 7th?

W Just after my birthday. So I remember it was about the 7th of November.

20 CA At the time where were you employed?

W Stuart ROBERT's office.

CA His electorate office?

W Yes.

CA In Fadden?

W Yes.

30 CA For how long had you worked in his electorate office?

W Just under nine years.

CA What then prompted your decision to become a candidate for the election?

W Well, a good local area representative was retiring.

40 CA Who was that?

W Margaret GRUMMITT.

CA Yes.

W And I felt that - I waited for a little while thinking somebody would put their hand up and would give it a go, but I felt it was really sad that no-one had done that, and I felt that I was well equipped to be able to do the job, so I thought I'd be brave and bold and put my hand up and go for it.

50 CA Were you at the time a member of the LNP?

W No.

CA Had you been?

- W Yes, back in 2006 for a couple of years, to 2008. I know I was a member at the time that I ran in the 2008 GC ticket, so I was --
- CA And after that?
- W No.
- 10 CA Was it some requirement that you had to leave your employment for the purpose of a campaign?
- W To leave the - sorry?
- CA Your employment at Stuart ROBERT's office.
- W I knew I'd be going at some stage but I wasn't so sure about the requirement until I was told that I had to leave the office. So I didn't really have to give it that much thought because the decision was made.
- 20 CA Made for you.
- W Yes, absolutely.
- CA When did you leave employment?
- W I believe it was mid-January. If I had to say, early - mid to late January.
- CA When was your opponent known?
- 30 W Known?
- CA Yes. When was your opponent known to you as being the person you would be competing against?
- W You're talking about Eddy SARROFF?
- CA Yes, I guess so.
- W Yes. Well, I think he announced in December sometime.
- 40 CA In fact was there more than one opponent, more than one other candidate for that division?
- W There would have been but I had my eye on Eddy. I mean, I was the high profile one, so that was the one that I knew was running from the paper, newspaper.
- CA You were not party endorsed, were you?
- 50 W No.
- CA He was not party endorsed?
- W Eddy SARROFF?
- CA Mmm.

- W No, not - I don't believe so.
- CA Did he have some alignment that you're aware of?
- W Labor Party alignment, yes. It's very well known.
- CA I may have asked you this: when did you find out that he was running?
- 10 W December.
- CA And you regarded him as your main opponent, is that fair to say?
- W Definitely, yes. Yes.
- CA Tell me, you were not party endorsed.
- W No.
- 20 CA But you had some Liberal Party background, at least you had been a member in 2006-2008?
- W Mmm-hmm.
- CA And you'd worked for a Liberal member.
- W Yes.
- 30 CA Did you promote yourself as being Liberal Party aligned or independent, or in what way?
- W Not at all. Not at all. I mean, when I was out there talking to people, the potential voters, I know I was always very - very honest and I always told them that I worked for Stuart, that I had Stuart's support, and they were very much aware in the community about my work with Stuart. I'd organise events, it was well known that, yes, that I was - that I was running as an independent. I told them that and I told them that I wasn't endorsed by any political party. I wasn't even a member of a political party, but the community very well knew where I'd come from and I never shied away from that fact that I was working for a federal member of parliament. In fact, I'd tell people, you know, I've served two apprenticeships under him. But through my community work I definitely felt it was in my best interests to be apolitical anyway because I am talking to people from all across the spectrum, so to speak, and I never did enjoy the party political side of things as much as I did the community. So I agreed to do that job for Stuart in the community because that's the world that I've come from, and I was never so comfortable with the party political side, so that's the best way I can answer that question.
- 40
- 50 CA You mentioned you told electors that you had served two apprenticeships.
- W Well, that's how I felt.
- CA Were you referring to the two previous elections?

- W No, I was talking about the eight years. You know, an apprenticeship is four years.
- CA I see.
- W I'd done eight, so that's two apprenticeships. I felt like I had the skill and the abilities to go forth with everything that I had learned to be a really good local area representative. I felt we were losing a good representative in Margaret GRUMMITT, I did know her, I had a relationship with her, and I felt well I - I would think the transition would be quite seamless, I can do that.
- 10
- CA Did Mr ROBERT encourage you to nominate?
- W No.
- CA You made that decision --
- 20 W I did.
- CA -- by yourself?
- W Yes. I went and told him.
- CA Without input from him as to whether you should or shouldn't do so?
- W No, I told him that I was thinking about running and I was a bit wobbly at the beginning, because I kind of know what I'm talking into, and he gave me sage advice. He said "Have a really good think about it", and I said, "All right. When I've made my decision, I'm thinking about it, I'll come back and let you know, for sure." He very much said, "Well, that's in your hands, you know what you're getting yourself into", and I did, which is why I gave it some thought.
- 30
- CA Okay. Just going back to your interaction with the electors, when interacting with them did you use the word "independent" or "independent candidate"?
- 40 W Yes, I did. Well, as an example, on my marquee it had "Independent Local Candidate" because that's what I see myself as. That's what I was, that's what I am now is an independent candidate. But usually at that point voters would say to me, you know, "Tell us your background?" I'd say "Well, I've worked with Stuart ROBERT, serving two apprenticeships, and done work in the community", and that I was an LNP supporter, I put that on the table. And I also said, "Look, I" - they generally asked me after that, "Well, are you a member?", to which I'd say, "No, I'm not, I'm running an Independent". At that point they either took my How to Vote Card and were with me, because I declared that, I mean, that was fine or they said, "No."
- 50
- CA Did you use the word "independent" in any of the printed material that you used?
- W I believe - yes.

- CA You got a body of printed material from SHAC Communications, didn't you?
- W Yes.
- CA You obviously would have had an input into the content and layout of that?
- 10 W Definitely, yes.
- CA Do you recall now whether you used the word "independent"?
- W I would have used "independent", yes.
- CA On what kind of material?
- W I would think all the artwork that went out. The brochures. We had the How to Vote Cards. I had letters that I had done.
- 20 CA On your How to Vote Card, do you recall?
- W Yes.
- CA And letters?
- W Yes.
- CA Okay.
- 30 W And my marquee, as I said, because I made sure that I had that on my marquee.
- CA And you told electors when speaking with them?
- W If they asked me.
- CA If they asked you?
- 40 W Yes, otherwise it would be assumed, I would think, that there's no party politics in council and we're all independents.
- CA What is the value in this independence that you were promoting? What is the value of it?
- W Well, that I am an independent. To me the value is I'm letting you know that I am.
- CA Independent of what?
- 50 W Just an independent candidate. I'm not running on an endorsed ticket of any kind, shape or form.
- CA Does that go to the nub of it?
- W Pardon?

- CA Does that go to the nub of it, that you are not on any ticket?
- W That's what I wanted to clear up, yes.
- CA Not party endorsed?
- W Yes, because I'd run before, remember, in 2008 on a party political ticket, if you like, and I knew the differences and I just felt well this time was completely different and that's why I was big on, yes, I'm an independent. I know how the other side of it works, but I want to get it across that I am an independent, like everybody else.
- 10 CA You mentioned your marquee had the inscription, I think, "Independent Local Candidate"?
- W Yes. Yes.
- CA And you had that marquee at Helensvale at a polling booth one day?
- 20 W Yes. Yes, I did. It worked very well.
- CA Although there was some altercation on that occasion, wasn't there?
- W Yes, there was.
- CA With Eddy SARROFF?
- W That's right. He didn't like it.
- 30 CA What was that about?
- W Well, he didn't like my marquee. He said you're not an independent candidate.
- CA What was his beef?
- W Well, his beef - and, look, I didn't pay too much attention to Eddy a lot of the time because he had a beef with quite a few things. His inference was I was an LNP hack, an LNP stooge, if you like, and I wasn't being open and honest with the people. And I said, well, you know, I don't - I didn't really engage with Eddy with any kind of rebut, I guess, because I want to spend time with the voters, I'm here to convince them, not Eddy SARROFF, so I barely paid any attention to it but I do recall that he didn't like my marquee. Because my husband and I had been talking about it that morning, "Do we take it, do we not take it?", and it turned out to be a brilliant idea. So that's what I do remember of that debacle, was he didn't like it.
- 40 CA He complained, did he, about his perception of your independence?
- W Absolutely, yes.
- CA To you or to others?
- W Yes, to anyone who would listen.

CA Within hearing of people who were present?

W Well, possibly, but, as I said, I wasn't paying much attention to anything he was saying. He talks really fast and he's hard to understand, and I'm trying to engage respectfully with voters. I'm not going to engage in any screaming matches, or he said, she said, whatever. I am eyes on the voters because I want them with me.

10 CA I am going to move to a different topic, Mr Chairman.

PO That is a convenient time. Thank you, Mr RICE. We will adjourn for lunch and come back at 2 o'clock.

HRO All stand. This hearing is adjourned.

### LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

20 HRO This hearing is resumed.

PO Yes, Mr RICE.

CA Thank you.

W Excuse me, sir, before we start, am I able to say something?

CA Why don't we finish the questions, and then we'll-

30 W Sure. It was just something that I had put on the record before that I would like to make comments on.

CA All right. Well, do it now.

40 W Well, when you asked me where the word "Independent" was, I was feeling at the time that it was on my How to Vote. Sitting there having lunch, and I certainly don't want to give any false information or make a mistake - I mean, clearly this is the first time I've done this, I'm not so sure, as I sit here now, that it actually had that word. I've got no way of checking. It's just that I thought I should put that on the record. I know my marquee did and some hats and some other paraphernalia early on in the day in the campaign. I'm just not sure about the actual How to Vote Card itself.

CA It is the case, though, isn't it, that you styled yourself and promoted yourself as an independent candidate, whether or not it actually appeared on your How to Vote Card?

W Right.

50 CA Does that sum it up?

W Yes.

CA You made a decision to run on or before 7 November?

W Mmm-hmm.

- CA And presumably one of the things that you had to consider in deciding to do that was that campaigns cost money?
- W Mmm-hmm.
- CA Did you have any idea in your mind at the time what it would cost to run a campaign?
- 10 W Mmm-hmm, I know that my husband and I sat down in the very early stages to thrash out what we thought we could afford, more so than a budget. We weren't entirely sure, but we came at it from the angle of, yes, what can we afford and I did have a figure in mind for that.
- CA Whatever that figure was, how did you intend to fund it, when you had this discussion and decided to run?
- W To fundraise. To call everyone I knew to put some money into the kitty to help me campaign.
- 20 CA Donors?
- W Yes.
- CA Seeking donations, is that --
- W Yes, which - yes, that's right.
- CA -- how you wanted to go about it?
- 30 W Yes.
- CA There's different types of fundraising - you would run a raffle --
- Who, sure, yes.
- CA -- or have a barbecue, or whatever?
- W Yes.
- 40 CA Was that your style of fundraising, to call people and ask them to donate to your fund?
- W Yes, people I know. Yes. Like, I'd started with my own family, my aunt and uncle, so they helped me out. And then sometimes I'd have community sausage sizzles, and things like that, events, thinking I would raise money in that capacity, but that didn't really work so --
- CA Did you do the raffling and barbecuing type fundraising?
- 50 W Not really. No.
- CA It turned out to cost quite a bit, didn't it?
- W Yes.

- CA About \$54,000, I think?
- W That's right.
- CA Is it fair to say that it was a fair bit more than what you thought initially?
- W Yes.
- 10 CA Your donations actually came to about just under \$46,000?
- W Yes.
- CA Which left a shortfall. Did you have to pick that up yourself?
- W Yes, that's right. It's cost me a lot of money.
- CA You tipped in the balance yourself?
- 20 W Yes, that's right.
- CA As it turns out, you received a substantial amount from a single third party, correct, in the sum of \$30,000?
- Who, yes, yes.
- CA From a single third party?
- W Yes.
- 30 CA That is to say, a single donor gave you \$30,000; correct?
- W Yes.
- CA And that was your biggest donor?
- W Yes.
- 40 CA Now, that came some months after you commenced your campaign, did it not?
- W Yes.
- CA The money from that single donor came from early in February through to March; is that how you recall it?
- W Yes.
- 50 CA By that time, you'd been on the campaign trail since probably the first week of November; correct?
- W Yes, that's right.
- CA What was the origin of your commencing to receive what turned out to be \$30,000? How did that commence?

W Stuart told me some time in, I think it was January, mid-January maybe to early January, that he would stump up with some funds for my campaign.

CA Do you remember what he said?

W Exactly that, "I'm going to stump up some funds for your campaign."

10 CA Did that convey to you that he was going to give you a donation such as others had done?

W Donations, yes.

CA From him?

W From him, yes.

CA That's what you expected?

20 W From Stuart, yes.

CA And that's what you understood from the conversation that you had with him?

W Yes.

CA When he said, "I'll give you some money" --

W Mmm-hmm.

30 CA -- you thought that it would come from him personally?

W Yes.

CA The timing of that conversation?

W In early January is the best I can recall.

40 CA Do you recall - well, you would have still been in employment at that time?

W Yes.

CA Because I think you told us you left about mid-January?

W Yes.

CA Was there any prelude to that, any inkling that he was going to give it to you? Were there any prior discussions or was this early January discussion the occasion when he told you?

50 W That's the occasion when he told me.

CA Did that come as a surprise to you?

Who, no.

- CA Did he convey to you in that conversation what kind of money he was thinking of?
- W No.
- CA Did you expect any particular sum?
- W No.
- 10 CA Did you expect a large sum?
- W No.
- CA Did you have anything to say back to him about his proposal for him to give you money?
- W "Thank you".
- 20 CA And it was left there?
- W Yes.
- CA No more content at that stage?
- W No.
- CA You've told us, I think, that conversation was early January. The money commenced to come in early February?
- 30 W Yes.
- CA Were you told when the money would be forthcoming?
- W No.
- CA Were you pressed for money by early mid-January for campaign purposes?
- 40 W No.
- CA It turns out that you understood that this money was coming from an entity, I'll call it that, called Fadden Forum?
- W At that stage, it was coming from Stuart.
- CA The money didn't come from Stuart ROBERT in his personal capacity, did it?
- 50 W Well, I was expecting that it would at that stage.
- CA You were expecting that. That's not how it worked out?
- W He approached me and offered - as Stuart ROBERT, and offered me the funds.

- CA He didn't say how much?
- W No.
- CA Or when?
- W No.
- 10 CA But it turns out you started to receive money in early February?
- W Yes.
- CA Did you notice the entry coming into your bank account?
- W I didn't have internet banking, but I used phone banking, so, yes, I'd check every couple of days, and I did notice days after that it was paid in, that it had arrived.
- 20 CA When you say "it", how much did you realise had been deposited?
- W I think the first one was the \$10,000. The phone banking told me that.
- CA Did you have any conversations after the one in early January with Stuart ROBERT about, for example, his telling you "I'm about now to start giving you some money"?
- W Well, a text message came to my phone that said, "Can I have your bank account details", and I provided them. So I had it in my thought process that, oh, a couple of weeks, maybe, just guessing, that the money was coming, so I looked out for it.
- 30 CA Okay.
- W And I was checking daily for other donations that were coming in, but my system was to check phone banking, every day sometimes, when I'm waiting for things to come in.
- CA You were checking your account by phone, and is this the situation, that you realised that there was more money in there than you thought; correct?
- 40 W No. I was just going through checking my phone banking every couple of - two to three days.
- CA Did you realise that someone had made a substantial deposit to bring it up to the balance that you found out?
- W To the \$10,000, yes. Yes.
- 50 CA Did you realise it was a \$10,000 deposit at that stage?
- W The phone banking said that it was \$10,000, or what the balance was, so I worked that out.
- CA Did the information from your phone banking communication indicate the source of the credit to your account?

- W No, I don't believe it did.
- CA Did you associate that with Mr ROBERT because he had asked you for your bank details?
- W I did, because I didn't know anyone - other donors I had approached that would give me that amount of money so I, yes, believed it was from Stuart.
- 10 CA Did you think there would be more?
- W I didn't know. I didn't know.
- CA Didn't know?
- W No. I thought it was very generous, that it would be quite helpful.
- CA There was more, wasn't there?
- 20 W Yes.
- CA In fact, it was a few days later, on the 9th, you got another \$15,000?
- W That's right.
- CA Did you, at around that time, the 9th, notice that there was a significant addition to your account?
- 30 W Yes. Well, if I can just explain. My husband - I'd charged him with the responsibility day-to-day operations of, you know, managing the accounts and everything that didn't involve talking to people I sort of gave to my husband. So he generally - he told me about that second one, actually, because he'd checked phone banking. That's how we did it. We sort of shared that role. But, yes, so he told me about the \$15,000.
- CA And who, if anyone, did you associate that with?
- 40 W Stuart ROBERT.
- CA Had you had any conversation between the first and second deposits with Mr ROBERT?
- W No.
- CA So after having received the first one, you didn't know there was going to be a second one?
- 50 W No, I didn't.
- CA Or any more money?
- W No, I didn't.
- CA He didn't give you a figure --

W No.

CA -- as to what he was going to give you at any stage?

W No, sir, he didn't.

CA Apart from this text message that you got prior to the first deposit, was  
10 there any conversation with Mr ROBERT prior to his - or in the course  
of his giving you money, right up until the third deposit?

W No.

CA No phone communication at all?

W For the first two, you mean?

CA Over the period of the deposits.

20 W Including the last?

CA Including the last.

W Yes, the last one I had more of an engagement with Stuart about that  
because I was chasing that one, actually, because I was getting towards  
the last minute of my campaign and I needed that last - well, I needed  
\$5,000.

CA We can have a look at the bank account shortly --

30 W Sure.

CA -- but that was about the 8th of March?

W The final one?

CA Yes.

W Yes.

40 CA And that was \$5,000?

W Yes.

CA You were hanging out for that amount?

W I asked for that \$5,000.

CA So did you initiate a conversation with him-

50 W Yes.

CA -about asking for more money?

W Yes. I was short for my last mailout, yes, and I thought, well, who  
would support me, and I phoned and asked for his support.

CA And did you know the amount of the cost of the mailout?

W Yes.

CA Was it around \$5,000?

W For the mailout, it was \$9,000 and something. It was quite a big one. And I was running out of funds towards the end of my campaign, so I really needed that.

10 CA Okay. So you needed a significant amount, which you didn't have at that stage?

W No.

CA So you thought Mr ROBERT might be able to help you again?

W Yes.

20 CA Is that correct?

W Yes, because the mailout was nine and a half thousand, around about that figure, I only had three and a half in my account and I thought the five would help me and I would throw into the kitty some of my own funds, which I was constantly doing, putting in my own funds as well.

CA What did you say to him when you rang him? Did you make a phone call to him?

30 W Yes.

CA What did you say to him?

W I said, "I've got this mailout and I think it's really going to help me, you know, bring it home, because, you know, things are getting tough. I think Eddy's gaining some traction, and what have you, and I need to be able to send this mailout out sooner rather than later and I really need \$5,000."

40 CA So you mentioned the figure of five?

W I did, yes.

CA And that's what you asked him for?

W Well, yes.

CA Did he agree to give you that?

50 W He said yes.

CA What did he say?

W He said, "Yes, I'll work it out", yes.

- CA Did you understand that third payment to be coming from him personally?
- W Yes.
- CA At that time?
- W Yes.
- 10 CA So by that stage - and in fact he did pay, didn't he, the \$5,000?
- W Yes.
- CA Promptly?
- W I think it took a week or two - yes.
- CA At any rate, by the 8th of March, he'd put in another \$5,000 to bring the total to 30?
- 20 W Yes, that's right.
- CA Which you thought was coming from him, Stuart ROBERT--
- W Yes.
- CA -- a member of parliament.
- W That's right.
- 30 CA Correct?
- W Yes.
- CA Well, did you get a hard copy of your bank account at some point?
- W The bank account was sent to the house, but I never looked at it. My husband was charged with that responsibility. I knew I'd have to look at it eventually. But, no, I didn't operate that way. I did the phone banking. My husband did the other stuff.
- 40 CA It might be a good time just to have a look at the account, just to look at these deposits that we've been speaking of. Can you have a look at this bank statement?
- W Okay.
- CA Is that a copy of your bank statement?
- 50 W Yes.
- CA By the way, is that Bank of Queensland account, the statement for which I've just given you, your dedicated campaign account?
- W Yes, that's it, yes.

- CA You knew you had to have one; correct?
- W Yes.
- CA And you did?
- W Absolutely.
- CA And this is it?
- 10 W Yes.
- CA Would you just verify for us that that's a copy of your bank statement for your Bank of Queensland account, campaign account?
- W Yes.
- CA I tender that bank statement.
- 20 PO Exhibit 12.
- CA Could Ms BOULTON see that, Mr Chairman? It might make it easier.
- PO Can we just have the witness have that again, the hard copy. Thank you.
- CA Do you see a page of that bundle, being the account statement for the 1st of January to - correction - 1st of February to the 29th of February?
- 30 W Yes.
- CA I think it's actually on the screen also, and there's a couple of entries that are highlighted.
- W Direct credit - oh, yes, yes.
- CA Could you just confirm for us that they appear to be the deposits for the first two payments from Mr ROBERT, or what you thought was from Mr ROBERT?
- 40 W Yes.
- CA Now, this bank statement covers the period ending 29 February. Did you receive that bank statement some time after 29 February?
- W Well, I couldn't tell you because I never looked at it.
- CA Okay. Is that something that you delegated to your husband, as it were?
- 50 W Yes. I mean, I knew I had to look at it when it came to declaration phase, absolutely, so I knew it was there at the ready, but I didn't need it for anything and I didn't look at it.
- CA Does the same apply to the next statement, being for the period 1st of March to 31 March? Do you expect you received it but didn't look at it?

W Yes, I didn't, no.

CA On the screen, there has been highlighted an entry for 8 March, being a credit of \$5,000.

W Yes.

10 CA That accords with your memory, doesn't it, of the-

W That's the one I chased. That's the one I was needing, yes.

CA So on what you tell us, this bank statement didn't assist to enlighten you, or change your view as to who the donor was?

W No, because I never looked at it, that's right.

CA Right up until and after the time you were elected, you thought that that donation had come from Mr ROBERT?

20 W Yes.

CA Well, you had to complete a disclosure return for gifts, didn't you?

W Yes. Yes, I did.

CA Perhaps we should go to that. Can I show you this document.

W Please, yes.

30 CA We've probably finished with the bank account, so that can perhaps be taken from you. Would you just look at that and confirm for us that that is your disclosure statement in relation to the 19 March election?

W Yes, it is.

CA I tender that disclosure return.

PO Exhibit 13.

40 CA Do you accept that - perhaps we could scroll to page 4. If you look at the screen, that's your signature --

W Yes.

CA -- adjacent to the date 16 May '16?

W Mmm-hmm.

50 CA Did you prepare this disclosure return or merely sign it?

W I prepared it. I prepared it with my PA.

CA When was it prepared in relation to the date that it was signed?

W I prepared it - I prepared it, and then I asked my PA to type it, and then

on that day I believe I signed it and she sent it through on my behalf.

CA You think it was all done on the one day, the preparation, the typing and the signing?

10 W My preparation went on quite - no, went on quite a bit, because I needed to check my husband's material, the ledger and the bits of paper everywhere, and also I had to check my bank account because I hadn't looked at it. So I needed to go through, and I prepared a summary document - I don't know if you've got that - but just so I could go through and work out that I had the in-kind gifts, I had the small donations, the large ones, and I had the right chronological date. Now, that took me some time and I needed to check with all the sources of my donors. I went through methodically. I called everyone, including Stuart, to make sure I had the right addresses, the right source of the funding and then - now, that took me quite a while to arrive at the point where I got it typed up and signed and sent.

20 CA Well, when did you start your compiling - was it after you were elected?

W After the election.

CA It's your responsibility, so did you decide you needed to verify the information?

30 W Correct. I knew that the law required full disclosure and I needed to do that, which is why I had my husband doing the work up until that point, so he had something to give me, and I knew I'd take it from there. And he certainly was in a hurry to give everything to me, because after the election it was over to me.

CA A ledger was being maintained, wasn't it, of your donations?

W Mmm-hmm.

CA And of your expenses?

40 W Of expenses mainly.

CA Well, donations also, can I suggest?

W Yes.

CA And that was handwritten. Who wrote it out?

50 W That one there is mine. I wrote that out after the election when I was doing all of my sources - my husband's ledger, the pieces of paper that had the gifts in kind that I'd given him during the campaign. So I was compiling everything and I had to clean up his one, and that's what that was.

CA Well, a handwritten list of contributions --

W Yes.

CA -- did you write that out?

W Yes.

CA There is another list of outgoing?

W Yes.

CA A longer list?

10 W Yes.

CA Several pages. Is that in your husband's writing?

W Yes, it is.

CA Because he was keeping track of that?

W Yes.

20 CA So for the purpose of compiling your handwritten list of donations, you were going back to, what, verify the source?

W Yes, it was very --

CA What was your process?

W The process for that, for the summary sheet, you mean, was to make sure in chronological order, from the start of the campaign, checking off the bank accounts and Horace's version of the summary, going through and making sure that I didn't miss anything.

30 CA Because your handwritten list includes a column, doesn't it, "Banked date"?

W Yes, well, that's the same as on the other side of that piece of paper. They're the same dates. Just the dates from the statement, the bank statement, so I didn't need two columns.

40 CA Okay. But your handwritten list does include a column "Date banked"?

W Yes.

CA Or it actually reads "Banked date"; correct?

W Yes.

CA To ascertain that, did you go back to the bank statements which you by then had?

50 W I did. As I said, they're the same dates. The first one there was from my family, which was actually a cheque.

CA That was \$7,000?

W So I knew I received that two days or something I think it was before

I'd banked it, and all the other dates are the same because - yes, you're right, I got that off the bank statement.

CA Well, the three entries reflecting the deposits, as you thought, from Stuart ROBERT are each inscribed as the donor: "Stuart ROBERT/Fadden Forum"?

W Mmm-hmm.

10 CA Correct?

W Yes.

CA I take it from what you've said that you can't really put a date on when this list was compiled, but it was after you were elected?

W It was after the election, during the disclosure phase that I call it.

20 CA Yes.

W Yes. So I needed to put it together to get my - in the right head space ready to sign a legal document that said this is - yes, so I had it right, and I needed to ponder it and sit on it for a few days and make sure I had it all correct once I went through all the material that I had, yes.

CA Could you explain, then, what prompted you, when compiling that handwritten list of donors, to put against the amounts you thought were received from Stuart ROBERT the words "Stuart ROBERT/Fadden Forum"?

30

W Yes, because I had asked Stuart the source. I was going through that process of checking with all the donors what's the source, went through, names and addresses, and then he said - well, I actually rang Stuart to say the LNP - you know, "What's this LNP on my bank statement? The money has come from you", and then he said at that point, "It's from the Fadden Forum", so that's --

CA Well, to get the sequence correct - I know it's some time ago.

40 W Yes.

CA But you were in the process of verifying dates and amounts and sources of money; correct?

W Yes.

CA So that you could correctly put it down on your list?

W Yes.

50

CA And then put it into the disclosure return?

W Yes.

CA So in the course of that process, is it correct that you looked at the bank statements and noticed from them that the credit entries were not from

Stuart ROBERT but, as we saw a few moments ago, apparently from the LNP?

W Yes. I was confused, you're quite right, because the first two entries on the statement had "LNP", I think it was --

CA We can put that up again if that's --

10 W -- and then the third one had "LNP/Fadden Forum". So I thought, well, that's a discrepancy. I mean - yes, so that confused me, so it prompted me to call Stuart to say, "Well, what's going on?"

CA Okay. Let's look at the first two credit entries, being the 3rd and 9th of February. You saw the amounts and the dates when you looked at this bank statement presumably and thought "Oh, yes, they're the ones that I thought were coming from Stuart"; correct?

W Yes.

20 CA Did you notice, in doing that, that the entry indicated "LNP donation"?

W That's what I - yes, so when I looked at that statement, I was somewhat surprised.

CA Were you?

30 W Yes, well, only because of the descriptor. I mean, you could put anything down as a descriptor for any amount of money, as far as I know, when you make a deposit to someone's account. But it prompted me, because I didn't understand it, so I called Stuart and said, "What does this mean?", you know, "I thought you were funding my campaign", and he said, "It's the Fadden Forum."

CA I see. Was that the first --

W And I accepted that because the third payment had some reference to Fadden Forum, anyway.

40 CA All right, let's look at the third one.

W So that's what prompted me to write that in my little summary sheet.

CA The third credit entry for \$5,000 has an inscription "LNP Fadden donation"--

W Yes.

50 CA -- although the "N" is cut off. It is slightly different from the first two; correct?

W Yes, I thought it was, yes.

CA Did you notice all three together? That is to say, when you were going through this process of looking at your bank statements and verifying, did you look at all three together, or did you see the first two and then, a week later, come back and notice the third?

- W No, I went right through the bank statement, and I didn't call anyone until I was quite sure I'd been right through it. So I was very much aware, when I spoke to Stuart, that there was that discrepancy, because I wanted to talk to him at once, about the one thing, and get it clear in my head.
- CA Okay. None of those three indicates that Stuart ROBERT was the donor?
- 10 W Not on that it doesn't appear.
- CA No.
- W But the way I was thinking and feeling, what I'd been told, was Stuart ROBERT, which is why I called. I thought I'm not understanding.
- CA So it was your appreciation of what was on those three entries that prompted you to then call him and clarify; is that right?
- 20 W Yes. Yes, as part of doing that declaration dutifully, I needed to make sure that I understood.
- CA And what did you ask him?
- W I said to him, "I'm preparing my declaration, preparing - you know, it needs to be correct. I thought the source of the funds, you know, are from you", and he said to me "They're from the Fadden Forum", which I accepted because I do know the Fadden Forum exists and I do know it's somehow connected to Stuart, so I was quite satisfied, because of the third one, it had "Fadden Forum", so he said, "You disclose it as Fadden Forum", which I did.
- 30 CA First of all, just dealing with the handwritten list of donors, was it his suggestion to you or advice to you - it sounds like it was?
- W Yes.
- CA Was it advice, would you say?
- 40 W Yes, because I had "Stuart ROBERT" I think originally just written, if I recall it, in my ledger, my summary document, and then I think I put a slash, yes, "Fadden Forum", when I'm starting to connect the dots.
- CA In the compilation of this handwritten ledger, do you think you, in the first instance, wrote down Stuart ROBERT and then later, having spoken with him, came back and added "/Fadden Forum"?
- 50 W Look, it's highly possible. I can't really, sorry, recall that exact-
- CA You can't remember?
- W No, but it's possible because I'd slashed it.
- CA At any rate, is it your version, or your evidence, that he advised you

that the donor was Fadden Forum?

W Yes, he told me to put "Fadden Forum" on my declaration, and I did that.

CA That's what you should put on your form?

W Very clear. Very clearly told me that.

10 CA If we go back to the disclosure return, had you seen a form like this from having participated as a candidate, for example, in the 2008 elections?

W Well, in the 2008 elections, because I was running on a party political ticket, I guess, I didn't think I was responsible for that. I know it's a long time ago. I don't believe --

CA I see.

20 W -- I would have known, because I didn't have to do the declaration, it wasn't my responsibility. But this time I certainly spent a lot of time on it because it wasn't something I'd done before, and I was concerned--

CA I see. That's really what I was looking to ascertain from you. This was your first time, as it turns out, that you had completed such a form?

W Yes, that's right, and I was, you know, not sure. That's why I did in fact check and I did ask for help with it.

30

CA From what you've told us, you were going through what in your mind was a fairly serious process of verification?

W Whenever - yes. Whenever I sign anything, I dot my Is, cross my Ts and, yes, definitely knew it had to be right.

CA Did you receive from the Electoral Commission an information pack, including a guide on disclosure of donations?

40

W I believe I did.

CA Did you read it?

W Parts of it. Not all of it.

CA Did you ever consult the Act about what the reporting requirements actually were?

50

W I'm not sure I did, but I did call the Electoral Commission on quite a few occasions to check a few things, I did, throughout this process.

CA Well, in relation to the donations that you and Mr ROBERT spoke about, you see as it appears on the form, there are the three entries for the three dates in question --

W Mmm-Hmm.

- CA -- all appearing - or the details of the donor appearing in each case as "Fadden Forum"?
- W Yes. Yes, that's right.
- CA Fadden Forum is not the name of a person, is it?
- W No.
- 10 CA What is it?
- W I believe it's a fundraising arm of Stuart ROBERT's.
- CA Consisting of what? What kind of entity is it?
- W Well, I have - I have no idea. All I know is that it's a fundraising vehicle that he uses for elections, campaigns.
- 20 CA Do you know if it's a company or an Australian registered business of any kind?
- W No, I don't know, and - yes, no, I don't know how it works. And I guess that's - it's been such a confusing process, maybe I know a little bit more now than I did, looking back in hindsight, but it's quite - been quite confusing for me because I think Stuart's given me the money. He says, "No, the Fadden Forum has given you the money", and the Fadden Forum says the LNP has given you the money. So, as I sit here today, trying to help the Commission as much as possible, I'm even more confused. This has been a very difficult period for me and I've
- 30 tried to do what I can to get to the bottom of it and I'm nowhere.
- CA Do we take it that you didn't appreciate at the time that you should put down the name of a person who was a donor, or if it's a trust, you put down the name of the trustees and so forth, so that there's a real person who's named?
- W No, that - no, it didn't cross my mind.
- 40 CA Do you know that now?
- W That - that --
- CA That the relevant details for your disclosure involve the names of persons who are responsible for the donation?
- W Right. No, I have - I did not know that. I put what I was told to put, if you like. I had no reason to distrust the advice I was getting. I would have been more comfortable, like I did with my summary, maybe, to
- 50 put the name in, which is why I had it there, it's my belief, but I put "Fadden Forum" because I was told to.
- CA Mr ROBERT was, in a sense, your employer?
- W Yes.

- CA Or former employer?
- W Yes.
- CA Not directly, but that's how it worked in practice, isn't it?
- W Yes.
- 10 CA He would give you directions, and you did what he needed in his electorate office?
- W Correct.
- CA And he was also the member of parliament and you were the electorate officer?
- W Yes.
- 20 CA Was there some sort of information imbalance or trust - correction, some sort of information imbalance causing you to trust him?
- W Yes, well, he'd never given me a reason in the close to nine years that we'd worked together to distrust him. I certainly respect him. I look up to him, and he's a person of good character. I know him to be a person of good character and a genuine person. So I had - I absolutely did what he suggested that I do, and I thought he would know. He's the source of these funds, so who better to ask than the source themselves?
- 30 CA Well, you'd been working, prior to the campaign, in his office for nine years --
- W Yes.
- CA -- or thereabouts. What had you heard during that time of Fadden Forum and what it did?
- 40 W Well, I knew it existed because, you know, people would talk about it in the office and it was a fundraising arm. But other than that, I was charged with community work, and I love that space, which is why I am where I am today. So I did that, and I didn't have any responsibilities for the Fadden Forum, so only from hearing other people talking about it did I start to join the dots that, okay, it's a fundraising arm for Stuart, and that's as much as I know.
- CA A fundraising arm for Stuart, for what purpose?
- W For his re-election, or elections.
- 50 CA Is that what you understood from the talk around the office?
- W Yes.
- CA That Fadden Forum existed, in whatever form, to raise money for Stuart ROBERT's re-election?

- W Yes. And since, I've read a lot in the media and I've read an interview by Stuart himself in the media, so I've also got that background knowledge now after the fact, after the event, the election, as to how I think it might work. Yes, so --
- CA Your disclosure return shows a couple of other donations from Robert MOLHOEK?
- 10 W Mmm, yes.
- CA He's also a member of parliament?
- W Yes, he is.
- CA At the time you received - well, you received money from him, according to your return, on 30 November, being \$500?
- W Yes.
- 20 CA And another \$1,000 on the 2nd of March.
- W Yes.
- CA Dates are not so important.
- W Okay, yes.
- CA But you got two amounts from him?
- 30 W \$1,500, is that right, \$1,000 plus \$500?
- CA We won't dwell on that for now. The return shows 500 and then 1,000?
- W Yes. Okay. Yes
- CA The point I'm making is that there were two donations that came from a member of parliament?
- 40 W Yes.
- CA As you understood it, as a personal donation from him to your campaign?
- W Yes.
- CA He being a Liberal member; correct?
- W Yes.
- 50 CA Did you similarly think that Mr ROBERT was making personal donations in the same fashion as Mr MOLHOEK had done?
- W Correct.
- CA And it was this conversation you had after noticing the bank accounts--

W That's right.

CA --that caused you, firstly, to write up your handwritten list of donors in the way that you did?

W Yes.

CA And then to fill out your disclosure return in the way that you did?

10 W Yes.

CA Correct?

W That's right.

CA Just looking at that return, take the bottom entry - it's easiest to look at - do you see that it includes an address, being a post office box address?

20 W Yes.

CA Where did you get that from?

W Stuart ROBERT.

CA How did you get it from him?

W Well, I asked for the address of the Fadden Forum, and that's the address he gave me.

30 CA Well, did you understand at the time that in terms of naming the address of a donor that it should be a business or residential address?

W No. That's a good point.

CA That didn't occur to you?

W No, it didn't in that instance, no, because the others were. I can see why you're asking that, yes.

40 CA Did Mr ROBERT tell you to put that address on your return also?

W Yes. I confirmed it with him with a text message. Yes, I said, "This is correct, just to be sure, to be sure?" "Yes, that's correct."

CA Did you, just to be clear about this, ask him what the address of Fadden Forum was, or did he tell you, "Put this address down on your return"?

W I confirmed that address with him.

50 CA For the purpose of putting on your disclosure return?

W Yes. Yes.

CA And did you make that known to him?

W Yes.

CA In words to the effect, "I'm filling out my disclosure return " --

W Yes.

CA -- "as I need to, give me the address."

10 W Yes.

CA So that he was in no doubt that you were asking for --

Who, yes, it's in writing.

CA -- the address?

W Yes, that's right.

20 CA For the purpose of putting it on your disclosure return?

W Correct.

CA Well, just getting back to this question of independence that we spoke about before, did you feel that your independence was in any sense compromised by having two-thirds of your donations of \$45,000 coming from Stuart ROBERT?

W No.

30 CA Did the subject of who was donating money to you in a substantial way ever come up in your interface with electors?

W With electors?

CA With electors - voters.

W Very few people asked me -- I can count on one hand, you know -- about the donors or about that type of thing. They mainly asked me about the issues. They asked me where I worked, my background; if I was an LNP member, they asked me that. But no-one - you know, I don't recall having lots of conversations about backers or supporters or donors at all. It just didn't seem to be an issue for me.

40 CA Or from what you're saying it didn't seem to be an issue with electors --

W That's what I mean.

CA -- because so few asked you about it?

50 W Yes, I'm not saying that that's the same for every candidate, but I actually didn't talk much about the source of my funding.

CA In your mind, did you feel that your independence was in any sense being compromised by having such large donations from Liberal members?

- W No.
- CA Members of parliament?
- W No.
- CA It doesn't affect your independence at all?
- 10 W I didn't feel it did, no. These are people --
- CA Do you feel any sense of that now, looking back?
- W No, because these are people I knew.
- CA Personal supporters?
- W People that I knew, personal supporters, yes.
- 20 CA Such as Mr ROBERT and Mr MOLHOEK, who happened to be members of parliament?
- W Yes.
- CA Is that how you --
- W Yes, yes.
- CA -- viewed it?
- 30 W Can you exactly-
- CA That you were being personally supported?
- Who, personally, yes. Yes, that's right, like everyone else on my donors list, like my family and friends and mums and dads, you know, the people that gave me the money. I didn't view it any differently.
- 40 CA And these two just happened to be Liberal members of parliament?
- W Yes, that's right.
- PO Ms BOULTON, can you understand there may be a perception in the community that your independence was compromised by virtue of those large donations from the Liberal Party?
- W Do you know I've had a lot of time to think about this and reflect, and I certainly will be paying more attention in future, definitely, to perceived public perceptions. And, yes, looking back in hindsight, I've had a long time to think about it, a lot of water under the bridge, a lot of press reports and indeed, yes, I concur that I can see that now. Was I thinking, feeling, acting like that at the time? Absolutely not.
- 50 PO Thank you.
- CA We've referred in discussion to your handwritten list of contributors

and outgoings. Can I just show you this --

W Yes, please.

CA -- and ask you to confirm it.

W Thank you. What am I confirming, sorry, sir?

10 CA Just verifying that that is your handwritten - or is the handwritten list of donors on the first sheet, followed by the ledger which you said your husband wrote of outgoings?

W Yes, yes.

CA I tender those handwritten lists.

PO Exhibit 14.

20 CA Even now that your disclosure return is posted on the website, according to the Electoral Commissioner, do you appreciate that an elector who was interested to know how you were funded and by whom, and looked up your return, would see the words "Fadden Forum" against \$30,000 of donations, and such an elector would be in no position to know who or what that consisted of?

W I agree. I absolutely wholeheartedly agree with that.

30 CA In hindsight, then, does that affect the transparency of your election that details like this are not available for public scrutiny except in a forum like this?

W Well, I think, as I said, hindsight is a beautiful thing. Looking back I would have preferred to have put the name, you know, "Stuart ROBERT". This is a first for me, you know, running in this capacity as an independent and I've certainly learnt a lot. And, yes, I think it would be better definitely to have put, for public perception, absolutely, the name, exactly like I put there with Rob MOLHOEK, absolutely.

40 CA Well, your recording it as Fadden Forum was, can I suggest, a combination of two things: one, that you didn't really know what relevant details had to go on the form, and, two, the advice you got from Stuart ROBERT just to put down "Fadden Forum"?

W That's exactly right.

50 CA Did you subsequently send an email or cause your solicitor, perhaps more correctly, to send an email to Mr ROBERT asking for clarification of the three entries that we've looked at from your bank statement?

W Yes, I did. It was way after the fact.

CA Yes.

W Because I was wanting to understand this whole process, and perhaps something I have to wear is that perhaps I've been a little naïve, and

I say that earnestly, because, looking back, okay, I can see where you're at; I can see what the public issue is. So, yes, I definitely wanted to see if there's anything else I could find out about the source of those fundings that I've missed. And I didn't get a reply.

CA That email communication was 29 September 2016; does that sound right?

W Yes, it does. September, yes.

10

CA I appreciate you said you were seeking information about those three entries so that you could understand better. But what prompted you to send that at that time? This was like four months, more than four months, after your disclosure return was signed off?

W Yes, yes, because I still wanted to know whether I had done the right thing, whether I had put the right - done the right disclosure, just to give him another chance to say, "Well, actually, you're funded by the LNP", or whatever, because when I asked Stuart about this situation when it was declaration time, he said, you know, "The money has come from the Fadden Forum." He never said, "Oh, by the way, it's actually from the Liberal Party", or, "You're funded by the Liberal Party." So I just wanted to have another bite at it and say, "Well, look, can we be absolutely sure", if you like, "Anything else you want to tell me now, because I'm going through all this and I need to understand it. I can't very well explain it to my constituency or to people that are asking when I'm not entirely sure. Have I missed something?" So that was written in that spirit, "Now do you have anything to come back to me with for my learning curve?", because it has been a real difficult time for me.

20

30

CA Okay. Would you mind looking at this email? Is that the email which you caused your solicitor to write?

W Yes.

CA An email of 29 September 2016?

W Yes.

40

CA I tender that.

PO Exhibit 15.

LR Can I have a look at it? Thanks.

CA Just to change the subject a little bit.

W Okay.

50

CA You would obviously know Felicity STEVENSON well?

W Yes, yes.

CA You worked together at Mr ROBERT's office?

W That's correct.

CA Was she there as long as you were?

W Longer.

CA Longer. So you worked with her for nine years?

W Yes.

10 CA Or at least in the same office. She announced her candidacy also for that council election, didn't she?

W Yes.

CA Around the same time as you or not?

W Later.

20 CA She ran unsuccessfully?

W Yes.

CA Did you campaign as a group with her?

W No.

CA Or anybody else?

30 W No.

CA Did you know at any time during February and March up to the election, that is to say, around the time that you were receiving money, that she had received a similar amount facilitated by Mr ROBERT?

W No.

CA You didn't know that?

40 W No.

CA Had you heard that before I just mentioned it to you?

W That she had received money?

CA \$30,000, same as you.

W Yes, I saw that on a disclosure form.

50 CA How did you come to see her disclosure form?

W On the LNP disclosure that listed my name and her name.

CA I see.

W And I'm still trying to put all the dots together.

- CA What prompted you to look at the LNP disclosure return?
- W One of my colleagues said that I should, because I'm still thinking, feeling, Fadden Forum, Stuart ROBERT. Well, no, you were funded by the LNP. How so? Not joining the dots. And they showed me, well, there's your name and there's Felicity's name. It's on the electoral website or wherever. I said, "Oh. Okay. Right."
- 10 CA Do you remember when the content of that return was pointed out to you or when you looked it up?
- W A long time after the election, when I'd - you know, during the normal course of my duty and with all the press and all that that was out there, everyone's talking about it, and I'm still trying to work out what mess I'm in, and that was pointed out to me. I said, well, that seems pretty sure that that's where the funding came from. That's the only kind of validation I felt I had that perhaps - perhaps - and sitting here today, I still don't know how it all works, how it all links together, but that was a sign to me, well, hang on, it's the LNP. But I had no - I didn't prepare that disclosure for the LNP, so I guess it's not a matter for me. So other than that, I noted it and I thought, "Oh, okay, there's another level of this, and what do I need to know?"
- 20 CA Is that like the email, a bit of a process of your trying to get to the bottom of things?
- W Well, I was trying to. That's the kind of person I am. I like to get to the bottom of things. But as I sit here today, I can tell you, I'm the bottom of nowhere. I still don't understand how it all relates to one another. And I'm not sure it's my place to do that, but I did try, because I did want to learn from it, I guess, and I understand the public's feeling about it, so it's important for me to be able to understand where I've been, what's happened, how it's happened.
- 30 CA You didn't have any discussion during the campaign phase with Felicity STEVENSON in which the subject arose about how generous Mr ROBERT was, that he'd given both of you money?
- 40 W Not that I recall. I didn't speak with Felicity much at all. Maybe the pre-poll booth towards the last couple of weeks when you'd see all the candidates on the booth. But, no, not any kind of engagement. We sort of left the office and did our own thing.
- CA You didn't compare funding or funding sources?
- W No.
- CA You used the same media agency, if I could call it that, SHAC Communications, didn't you?
- 50 W Yes, that's right.
- CA What prompted you to go to SHAC Communications?
- W Well, I'd known Simone since I was a teenager. In fact, we flatted

- 10 together for a little while in Sydney and she was involved in politics at that stage and I was doing something else with a corporation. So we flatted together for a little while and then we went our separate ways, and then both moved back to the Gold Coast and, you know, I've sort of followed her rise, if you like, or what it is she does with, "Oh, that's interesting", and I did my thing. And I guess our worlds came back together once I did get involved in politics, and I think she was a little surprised about that, because I was into the community side of things, which is - yes. So, I knew how good she was at her job. I knew what it is she did, so I sought her out to help me with this campaign.
- CA Did you know a range of other candidates had done likewise?
- W I didn't at the time know that. I certainly knew after the fact when it all started coming out and hitting the media and what have you.
- CA Did you not have any discussions with any other candidates about SHAC Communications, what kind of services they were providing?
- 20 W No.
- CA For other candidates - no?
- W No. Just running my own race.
- CA What services were you provided with by that business?
- W Okay, yes. Design services, artwork, mail plan. I wanted a bit of a proposal or some advice on the mail plan. Yes. Brochures, that kind of thing. Colour choices. All of that.
- 30 CA And that cost you about \$5,000, or cost exactly \$5,000?
- W Her services, you mean?
- CA Yes.
- W \$5,500.
- 40 CA Maybe including GST?
- W I couldn't tell you. I would assume so.
- CA It doesn't matter. Did you get any advice on strategy?
- W I did ask at times, particularly with the media. Yes, I did ask for some strategy advice generally.
- CA Was that included in the fee that she charged, or was that a bonus?
- 50 W Well, I think it was under the media - yes, I think there was a subheading "Media" on the schedule. I asked SHAC to put together a schedule for me, and I think the media advice was part of the schedule.
- CA The schedule, what, listed the various things they were going to do for

you?

W Yes, I asked them to put that together, because my husband and I also had an idea, particularly with the advertising, because that's my husband's field, but I just wanted to compare what we had done together with what SHAC is suggesting, or giving advice on, and then we were going to cut our cloth to fit to work out where we were going to go and save as much money as possible.

10 CA Did you pay SHAC Communications \$5,500?

W Yes, I did.

CA There's no entry for that in your dedicated campaign account, can I suggest?

W Mmm-hmm.

20 CA Is that right?

W Yes, that's right.

CA Should there be?

30 W No, I don't believe so, because I actually paid that retrospectively. I got to the end of my campaign and I had no money, to be fair, so I got the invoices sent to me, after the campaign, from SHAC. I got in contact with Simone and I said, "Can I have a payment plan to pay it off? Now I'm elected and I need to pay this, I understand, but I just don't have it at the moment. It's taken a lot out of me, this campaign", and she graciously said, "Okay, pay \$1,000 a week", which I did, and got it done in five weeks, six weeks.

CA The payments commenced, do you say, after your election?

W Yes. Yes, when I was sworn in to my job as a councillor, I paid it straight out of my councillor wage, absolutely, to her bank account.

40 CA Via your personal ANZ account, can I suggest?

W Yes, that's right. That's right. And I asked the bank to help me do that so that I knew that for the next five weeks that that would be done, because, you know, I pay my bills. I pay my debts.

CA We've almost finished. Just getting back to the form of disclosure, in your case, of the words "Fadden Forum" without really knowing very much about it, as you told us, does receiving money in that fashion in your mind present any challenges for you in identifying and managing any conflicts of interest?

50

W No.

CA And looking back on it, anyone reading the return and seeing "Fadden Forum" on it, knowing what Fadden Forum is, do you understand that people would assume that your independence has been seriously compromised?

- W I think they would, looking back and, yes, going through the journey, for me, yes, I concur; I can see that.
- CA Because you had promoted yourself as being independent?
- W Yes.
- CA Quite staunchly, from what you've told us; correct?
- 10 W Yes.
- CA That's the evidence.
- PO Thank you, Mr RICE.
- Mr BRAITHWAITE, you are appearing for Mr ROBERT, I understand?
- 20 LR Indeed.
- PO Do you have any application to question this witness?
- LR Maybe. And I say that in a noncommittal way because of this reason: as you would be aware, no proofs of evidence have been provided in advance. The witness has given evidence of some matters which don't particularly concern me with respect to making such an application when one has regard to Practice Direction 2 and the qualified nature of the rule in *Browne v Dunn*.
- 30 There are, however, a couple of areas which are news to me in circumstances where no proofs of evidence have been provided, and subject to what Mr ROBERT was to say about those, when he comes to be called, this witness may - it may be necessary for her to be afforded the opportunity to comment upon a contrary view, if indeed that is necessary under sections 15 to 18 of Practice Direction 2 where submissions may be made at a later stage.
- 40 I just don't know the answer to that question because it's the first time that I've heard the evidence, as with everyone else, and they're not matters that were canvassed in my client's CCC interview, either.
- PO All right. What I thought I might do, if it's convenient to you and your client - your client is here, I think?
- LR Yes.
- PO If I was to stand the matter down for a short time whilst this witness is here before I excuse her, and you might get some instructions on those couple of discrete areas you have some concerns about, and depending on your instructions, you might have an application to make to question this witness or you might not.
- 50 LR Indeed.
- PO We will just stand it down. You take as long as you need, but bearing

in mind we would like to get your client in and out today.

LR I can't imagine I will inconvenience the Commission very long.

PO Okay. We will do that, I think. We will adjourn just for a short time hopefully to see if Mr BRAITHWAITE can get some instructions. Just while we have you here, could we just have you, for the transcribers, fully announce your appearance?

10 LR My apologies. My name is BRAITHWAITE, initials A C, Counsel. I appear for the Honourable Stuart ROBERT MP.

PO Thank you. We will just stand it down for as long as it takes.

### SHORT ADJOURNMENT

PO Mr BRAITHWAITE, I'm told you need to make sure -- and this applies to everyone whenever you're speaking -- that the microphone is in front of you, so the live streaming can pick it up.

20

LR I appreciate the Commission's indulgence.

It seems that there's simply one matter that I ought put to the witness, simply in compliance with sections 15 through 18 of practice direction 2.

PO Yes.

30

LR I propose simply to do that to give the witness an opportunity to comment upon it, as need be, and then I don't propose to go any further than that.

PO Okay. I think I understand the matter you're referring to.

Mr RICE, I'm inclined to grant the application. You would have no objection to that, would you?

CA No, Mr Chairman.

40

PO All right, thank you. Mr BRAITHWAITE, go ahead.

LR I'm just going to suggest something to you to give you the opportunity to comment upon it, and this concerns the genesis, really, of funding through my client, Mr ROBERT, in any shape or form, and that is this, that the first real instance of that occurred around the end of January 2016 and it was a conversation had with these people present - yourself, Ms STEVENSON and Mr ROBERT - and it's a conversation that occurred in his office at this electorate office. Do you follow me so far?

50

W No, not yet.

LR I'm just setting the scene.

W Yes, I'm following that, yes.

- LR I'm going to suggest that a conversation occurred.
- W Yes.
- LR I'm just setting the scene in terms of where, firstly, that occurred, so that is the electorate office of Mr ROBERT.
- W Yes.
- 10 LR And, more specifically, in his room. So that's the place. And in terms of time, towards the end of January, perhaps around the 29th, 30th of January 2016?
- W Mmm-hmm.
- LR Are you with me so far in terms of place and time?
- W Place and - what time did you say?
- 20 LR Towards the end of January, so about the 29th or 30th of January 2016. So we've got the place. We've got around about the time, as in the date. And insofar as the people present, there was yourself, Ms STEVENSON and Mr ROBERT. So that's the scene, really, that I'm presenting you.
- W Mmm-hmm.
- 30 LR And I do that to give you the opportunity to comment upon a conversation. So what I'm suggesting occurred is that around that time, date and place, with those people present, you had a conversation where Mr ROBERT effectively said that he would assist with your campaign by getting some dollars or cents together, dollars and cents together, through the Fadden Forum and that - well, I should stop there. So that's the first part of the conversation, that he said to you that he would help out with your election campaign by getting some money together, or some dollars and cents together, through the Fadden Forum. Do you wish to comment upon that at all?
- 40 W I don't recall.
- LR Is it the case that something like that may have happened, but you just don't have any memory of it?
- W That is possible. I don't know how memory works, but I don't know - perhaps I can't recall because - I can't - yes, I just can't recall.
- LR Sure.
- 50 W I'm not saying it didn't happen. I'm saying I can't recall.
- LR I understand.
- W We have lots of conversations about lots of things, but I haven't locked it away in my memory. I don't recall.
- LR I understand. It's some time ago. I'm not meaning to be critical.

- W Yes, there's been a lot of water under the bridge and I can't remember every single conversation we've had.
- LR Okay. And just, I suppose, to be a bit more specific or provide a bit more details, in the course of that same conversation, there were also discussions about Eddy SARROFF and Stacey SCHINNERL running in the election? Does that ring any bells or doesn't it help you one way or another?
- 10 W At that same meeting, do you mean?
- LR Yes, at that same meeting that we're talking about, end of January, Ms STEVENSON, yourself and Stuart ROBERT.
- W I don't recall that meeting, but I do recall some discussions about Eddy. I think Stuart might have said he'd stump up some money to, you know, help to that end or that - he'd mentioned Eddy in some sentence somehow.
- 20 LR And possibly Stacey as well?
- W I didn't know her. I just remember Eddy.
- LR You remember a conversation, at some stage at least, where Stuart has mentioned Eddy is running?
- W I remember the mention about Eddy. I don't recall the other at that meeting.
- 30 LR And that he'd be stumping up some money to help you, and it may have been the case, but you don't have an independent memory, but do you accept it may have been the case that he mentioned that was through the Fadden Forum?
- W Well, anything's possible. He could have. I don't recall those words or I wasn't switched on - I don't know.
- LR And just one last thing. In terms of the Fadden Forum, you had been at the office working for Mr ROBERT for about nine years or so?
- 40 W Just under, yes.
- LR You're aware of the Fadden Forum as a result of being there?
- W Yes, yes, that's right.
- LR It was a topic of some discussion within the office itself; do you agree?
- 50 W Yes, at times, yes.
- LR And, indeed, the Fadden Forum used to hold meetings in the office when people would come along and there would be roundtable discussions. You would see that happen?
- W I'd see it happen, yes.

- LR And you knew that the Fadden Forum, in whichever way it might be characterised, was a body of people, if I can use that generic term, which was, as far as you're concerned, for the purpose of funding Stuart, at least, in terms of his re-election?
- W That's how I understand it.
- 10 LR Yes, and Stuart is a member of the Liberal and National Party, as you'd be aware?
- W Sure.
- LR So it was an LNP body of people, at least, for fundraising aspects?
- W Sorry, I'm not sure of your question.
- LR It was a fundraising group, if I can call it that; do you agree with that?
- 20 W The Fadden Forum?
- LR Yes.
- W Group of people?
- LR Yes.
- W Fundraising for Stuart?
- 30 LR Yes, yes.
- W Well, I guess he collects the funds from someone, so one would think.
- LR Yes, and it follows if it's for Stuart, then it's for LNP purposes, because he's an LNP member; do you agree with that?
- W I'm not sure how the accounting side of any of that works.
- LR I don't think I need to take that further. That's all I have, Mr Chairman.
- 40 PO Thank you, Mr BRAITHWAITE.
- I haven't asked you, Mr COBB. Did you wish to ask your witness any questions?
- LR I have no questions.
- PO Thank you. Do you have any re-examination, Mr RICE?
- 50 CA No, Mr Chairman.
- PO Should we excuse the witness?
- CA Yes, the witness can be excused.
- PO Thank you, Ms BOULTON. You are excused. Thank you for coming.

LR            If I may be excused?  
PO            Yes, Mr COBB. Thank you.

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UNPROOFED TRANSCRIPT