

**Board of Inquiry into the McCrae landslide**

**Before: The Chairperson, Ms  
Renée Enbom KC**

**County Court of Victoria,  
250 William Street, Melbourne, Victoria**

**Friday, 16 May 2025 at 10.00am**

**(Day 7)**

**Mr M. Costello KC with Mr A. Di Stefano and  
Ms A. Kittikhoun appeared as Counsel Assisting.**

**Ms K. Evans KC with Ms E. Peppler and Mr C. McDermott appeared on  
behalf of the State of Victoria.**

**Ms K. Foley SC with Ms E. Bateman, Mr C. Viney and Dr W.  
Phillips appeared on behalf of the Mornington Peninsula Shire  
Council.**

**Ms D. Siemensma appeared on behalf of South East Water Corporation.**

1 CHAIRPERSON Mr Costello.  
2  
3 MR COSTELLO: Good morning, Madam Chair. I call Lara  
4 Olsen.  
5  
6 CHAIRPERSON: Is Ms Olsen in the hearing room?  
7  
8 <LARA OLSEN, sworn:  
9  
10 <EXAMINED BY MR COSTELLO:  
11  
12 CHAIRPERSON: Pour yourself a glass of water if you would  
13 like one.  
14 A. Thank you.  
15  
16 CHAIRPERSON: Mr Costello will now ask you some questions.  
17 A. Sure.  
18  
19 MR COSTELLO: Could you state your full name for the  
20 record, please?  
21 A. Lara Olsen.  
22  
23 Q. And your business address?  
24 A. It's 101 Wells Street in Frankston.  
25  
26 Q. And your current occupation?  
27 A. The managing director of South East Water.  
28  
29 Q. Ms Olsen, you have made a witness statement for the  
30 purpose of this board of inquiry; is that correct?  
31 A. That's correct.  
32  
33 Q. Do you have a copy of it there with you?  
34 A. I do.  
35  
36 Q. All right. Now, as I understand it, there's two  
37 amendments that you would wish to make to that statement?  
38 A. Yes, please.  
39  
40 Q. Could you turn, please, to paragraph 72, which is on  
41 page, it's described as, 12 of 19 in the top left-hand  
42 corner?  
43 A. Yes.  
44  
45 Q. All right. Can you see there you say, "SEW's lawyers  
46 have commissioned an expert report that has not yet been  
47 finalised"?

1 A. Yes.  
2  
3 Q. Is that one of the paragraphs you wish to amend?  
4 A. Yes.  
5  
6 Q. And do you wish to amend it to delete the words "has  
7 not been finalised" and insert in their place "has been  
8 provided to the board of inquiry and to the affected  
9 residents"?  
10 A. Yes.  
11  
12 Q. Could I ask you to make that amendment by hand on your  
13 copy?  
14 A. Yes, I've written it down.  
15  
16 Q. You've done that already?  
17 A. Yes.  
18  
19 Q. Thank you. Did you wish to make the same amendment to  
20 paragraph 73?  
21 A. Yes, please.  
22  
23 Q. And have you made that amendment?  
24 A. I haven't yet. I can.  
25  
26 Q. All right. Thank you. Are there any other amendments  
27 that you wish to make?  
28 A. Yes, please. On question 3 about our contracts on 23  
29 and 24 --  
30  
31 Q. Could you just - sorry, question 3, what paragraph  
32 number are you speaking of?  
33 A. Sorry, on paragraph 24.  
34  
35 Q. 24. This is at the bottom of page 4 or the top of  
36 page 5?  
37 A. I'm sorry, on my copy it would be the bottom of  
38 page 4.  
39  
40 Q. Thank you.  
41 A. It's just to note that some of those contracts have  
42 transitioned. I can be more specific if that's helpful?  
43  
44 Q. What do you mean by "transitioned"?  
45 A. Yes, so contract that we've got in 24(a) for Detection  
46 Services, that that one has been finalised, and now that  
47 work is being transitioned.

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Q. So that contract's no longer on foot?

A. That's right.

Q. And the work that was previously done by Detection Services Pty Ltd is now being done by another entity?

A. That's right.

Q. That's what you mean by "transitioned"?

A. Yes.

Q. All right. And what's the other entity?

A. So that Service Stream and Downer continue the work on that. They do - and, sorry, I'll explain it and then I'll come back to the words, if that's okay?

Q. Please. Yes.

A. Service Stream and Downer do the work on our reactive leak detection, and they also have the ability to do the work on our proactive leak detection as well. So they are continuing to do that work, and then a new proactive leak detection only is going with Service Stream.

Q. I see. And did you wish to make an amendment to your witness statement to reflect that, or are you happy just to have given that additional evidence?

A. I just wanted to note it because it said "to date", which was right on 30 April but not now.

Q. Yes. I understand. Thank you. Is there anything else that you wish to correct or amend?

A. No.

Q. All right. Well, with the amendments that you've just made and the additional information in respect of paragraph 24, are you content that the witness statement is true and correct?

A. Yes.

Q. Could I ask you then to sign it on the final page, please.

A. Sure.

Q. There's provision for a witness but you can ignore that. I tender that statement with its amendments, and the exhibits referred to therein.

1 CHAIRPERSON: Yes. The statement of Lara Olsen and the  
2 documents referred to in that statement are exhibit CA25.

3  
4 **EXHIBIT #CA25 STATEMENT OF LARA OLSEN AND THE DOCUMENTS**  
5 **REFERRED TO THEREIN**  
6

7 MR COSTELLO: Now, Ms Olsen, you've been served with a  
8 notice to appear and to attend and give evidence today?

9 A. Yes, I have.

10  
11 Q. And you're attending in answer to that notice?

12 A. Yes, I am.

13  
14 Q. Thank you. In addition to your statement South East  
15 Water has filed a submission with the board of inquiry; are  
16 you aware of that?

17 A. Yes, I am.

18  
19 Q. Were you involved in the preparation of that  
20 submission?

21 A. Yes, the team worked on it with me.

22  
23 Q. All right. And you approved it?

24 A. Yes, I did.

25  
26 Q. Thank you. Now, Ms Olsen, would you mind just  
27 explaining to the chair your professional qualifications?

28 A. Yes. So I've got an undergraduate degree in chemical  
29 engineering and arts, and then I've got a masters of  
30 business association.

31  
32 Q. Did you say "business association"?

33 A. Administration, sorry.

34  
35 Q. Thank you.

36 A. Thank you.

37  
38 Q. Did you work as a chemical engineer?

39 A. No, I didn't. I've overseen different infrastructure  
40 projects, but I don't have the sort of in-depth technical  
41 engineering that some of the other engineers would have.

42  
43 Q. Thank you. You've been the managing director of South  
44 East Water Corporation since 17 February 2020?

45 A. That's right.

46  
47 Q. Did you work at South East Water before that date?

1 A. No, I didn't.  
2  
3 Q. Had you worked in what I might broadly describe as the  
4 water industry before that date?  
5 A. No, I didn't.  
6  
7 Q. All right. Thank you. I want to start more generally  
8 before we come to the specific events that this board of  
9 inquiry is most directly concerned with. South East  
10 Water's network extends approximately from Port Melbourne  
11 to Portsea?  
12 A. That's right, and then out east about 30 kilometres  
13 past Pakenham.  
14  
15 Q. Thank you. In your witness statement you mention four  
16 primary types of infrastructure. The first is stormwater  
17 infrastructure, which you say is the responsibility of  
18 local councils, not South East Water?  
19 A. That's right.  
20  
21 Q. The second is sewage. That's South East Water's  
22 responsibility generally?  
23 A. That's right.  
24  
25 Q. There is a slight limitation that you give in your  
26 statement to that, which is where the sewer main is inside  
27 a property?  
28 A. So depending on for both - staying with throughout the  
29 moment, depending on where the sewer main is, there's  
30 different instances, and we've got some diagrams if that's  
31 helpful, of where that responsibility transfers from South  
32 East Water to the property owner.  
33  
34 Q. Generally speaking, there is something called the  
35 first inspection opening?  
36 A. That's right.  
37  
38 Q. And what's that?  
39 A. It's sort of a cap, if you like, so it allows for  
40 inspections to take place.  
41  
42 Q. And South East Water's responsibility in general terms  
43 extends to the first inspection opening or one metre inside  
44 the property, whichever is the less?  
45 A. I was going to say, if it would be okay, Mr Costello,  
46 there's --  
47

1 Q. Yes, of course.  
2 A. -- written words, and I just find that helpful, the  
3 diagram --  
4  
5 Q. Yes, of course.  
6 A. -- just because it differs between water and sewer and  
7 depending if the main is in the property boundary or  
8 outside.  
9  
10 Q. You're right, it does. It does. If I could have on  
11 the screen, please, SEW.0001.0001.0109.  
12 A. Thank you.  
13  
14 Q. Is this the diagram that you were speaking of?  
15 A. Yes, and the text underneath it just talks about where  
16 our ownership goes up to, and you can see it sort of  
17 depends. So it's up to a metre from the sewer main or the  
18 inspection opening, which is that sort of cap that  
19 I mentioned, whichever is less. And if an inspection  
20 opening doesn't exist, then it's one metre.  
21  
22 Q. This is in circumstances where the sewer main's inside  
23 the property boundary?  
24 A. That's right. And then there's a --  
25  
26 Q. Would you like me to show the next diagram as well?  
27 A. Yes, please.  
28  
29 Q. All right. Could we have the next page, please. This  
30 is circumstances where --  
31 A. The sewer main's outside of the boundary, and that's  
32 up to one metre from the property boundary or the  
33 inspection opening, whichever is less, or one metre if an  
34 inspection opening does not exist. There's a further one  
35 as well, as shown in the third diagram.  
36  
37 Q. All right. So that generally covers sewers. There's  
38 a slightly different position for mains water?  
39 A. That's correct.  
40  
41 Q. All right. Perhaps if we go to the next page you can  
42 explain that by reference to the diagram?  
43 A. So this top one is the responsibility for drinking  
44 water or recycled water up to two metres inside the  
45 property boundary, and where the primary - the second one  
46 shows where the primary meter is greater than two metres  
47 inside the property boundary, and in that case the water

1 corporation maintains up to the property boundary, and then  
2 the other section as shown in the diagram is maintained by  
3 the property owner.  
4

5 Q. Thank you. So far as you understand, where do these  
6 rules come from concerning the extent to which South East  
7 Water is responsible or the owner is responsible?

8 A. Good question. I'm not sure.  
9

10 Q. All right. Thank you. But it's the general  
11 understanding at least within South East Water?

12 A. Yes, that's right. Yes.  
13

14 Q. Did you have this general understanding before you  
15 signed your witness statement, or are these matters you  
16 learned in the course of preparing a witness statement?

17 A. I would say I had a general understanding but  
18 certainly not specific that I could have drawn those  
19 diagrams.  
20

21 Q. Thank you. That's three of the four forms of  
22 infrastructure. The fourth is groundwater infrastructure.  
23 Could you explain generally what you mean by groundwater  
24 infrastructure?

25 A. So that would be any infrastructure that relates to  
26 water that emanates from the ground.  
27

28 Q. In lay terms, does that generally mean bores?

29 A. Yes.  
30

31 Q. And --

32 A. I should say I'm not an expert in groundwater, so --  
33

34 Q. And you're not an expert in groundwater in part  
35 because your corporation doesn't have responsibility for  
36 it?

37 A. That's correct.  
38

39 Q. That lies with Southern Rural Water?

40 A. That's correct.  
41

42 Q. Okay.

43 A. For the licensing of bores.  
44

45 Q. The licensing of bores. So do you consider South East  
46 Water to have any responsibility for groundwater?

47 A. No.



1  
2 Q. All right. Thank you. That can come down, please.  
3 Can I just seek to understand in general terms again  
4 something about the limits of South East Water's  
5 responsibility concerning mains and sewer infrastructure.  
6 Is South East Water the owner of sewer trenches?  
7 A. I'm not sure.  
8  
9 Q. That's all right. Do you know if South East Water is  
10 responsible for maintaining sewer trenches?  
11 A. I'm not sure, but - I'm not sure.  
12  
13 Q. That's all right. Are you sure whether or not South  
14 East Water is the owner of mains water infrastructure?  
15 A. Yes.  
16  
17 Q. So you are in fact an asset owner of at least those  
18 assets?  
19 A. Absolutely.  
20  
21 Q. But you don't know whether that is or - the situation  
22 for sewer trenches?  
23 A. For - do you mean the sewer pipes, sorry, or the  
24 trenches around them?  
25  
26 Q. The trenches.  
27 A. I'm not sure but I believe we would be.  
28  
29 Q. All right. In terms of water leaving South East  
30 Water's infrastructure, do you accept at least at a general  
31 level that South East Water can be liable for losses caused  
32 by water leaving its infrastructure?  
33 A. Absolutely.  
34  
35 Q. Thank you.  
36 A. Where it's our fault, yes.  
37  
38 Q. Yes.  
39 A. Yes.  
40  
41 Q. Now, where South East Water infrastructure fails and  
42 causes damage --  
43 A. Yes.  
44  
45 Q. -- for example to a council road --  
46 A. Yes.  
47

1 Q. -- who's responsible for the repair of the road?  
2 A. In terms of who actually does the work, that might be  
3 different depending on the situation, but in terms of where  
4 it's our asset has caused a fault then it's our  
5 responsibility for that.  
6  
7 Q. When you say responsibility --  
8 A. Unless there's --  
9  
10 Q. I apologise. Finish your answer, please.  
11 A. I was going to say if it's 100 per cent our fault then  
12 it's our fault and it's our accountability.  
13  
14 Q. Do you attend to the repair of the road, or would the  
15 physical work be organised by the council in that  
16 circumstance?  
17 A. I couldn't say in all cases what happens. I can  
18 imagine that there might be either case in terms of who  
19 actually does the work, and then in terms of who pays for  
20 the work, if it's our responsibility, then it would be us  
21 that should have that accountability for that.  
22  
23 Q. It might be that council sends you a bill?  
24 A. Again, I don't know the specific circumstances, but  
25 certainly if others - we'd certainly have cases where  
26 others do work, but it's us that have caused it and then we  
27 pay for it.  
28  
29 Q. Is it the same situation if there's damage to private  
30 property?  
31 A. That's right, yes.  
32  
33 Q. That the works might be organised by the property  
34 owner --  
35 A. That's right.  
36  
37 Q. -- but South East Water might foot the bill?  
38 A. That's right.  
39  
40 Q. Thank you. And the two questions I've just asked you  
41 were concerned with mains water?  
42 A. Yes.  
43  
44 Q. But generally speaking would the same situation apply  
45 if it were sewage infrastructure that had failed?  
46 A. Yes, it would.  
47

1 Q. Thank you.  
2 A. And does.  
3  
4 Q. Thank you. You speak in your witness statement about  
5 leak detection testing?  
6 A. Yes.  
7  
8 Q. And I just want to ask some general questions about  
9 that. You speak of a network operations centre?  
10 A. Yes.  
11  
12 Q. Where is that?  
13 A. It's a group of people that sits in our digital and  
14 transformation group. Those people either work in our  
15 office or can work from home as well.  
16  
17 Q. So the network operations centre is not so much a  
18 reference to a physical place but to a collection of  
19 people?  
20 A. Yes, it's a collection of people. They tend to locate  
21 in one area that has a large number of screens.  
22  
23 Q. I see. And that's at your headquarters, did you say?  
24 A. Yes, that's right.  
25  
26 Q. But some of them work from home?  
27 A. Yes.  
28  
29 Q. All right. In paragraph 15 of your statement - and if  
30 at any point in time it would assist you to have your  
31 statement put on the screen, Ms Olsen, you only need to  
32 ask.  
33 A. Thank you.  
34  
35 Q. At paragraph 15 of your statement you say that various  
36 alarms may be triggered from time to time indicating a  
37 change in performance of SEW's network?  
38 A. Yes.  
39  
40 Q. Do you recall saying that?  
41 A. Yes.  
42  
43 Q. Could you describe some of the types of alarms that  
44 might be triggered?  
45 A. Yes. So in terms of our network we've got over 600  
46 pump stations and eight treatment plants and about 27,000  
47 kilometres of pipelines in total. And so those alarms

1 indicate if there's a change in performance. So most days  
2 we'd get between 1,500 to 3,000 alarms. That might be that  
3 a pump has stopped. That might be that a cabinet has been  
4 opened, and that allows us then to understand if we're  
5 expecting that cabinet to be opened or if that be a sign of  
6 intrusion. And also flow alarms as well.

7  
8 Q. All right. What's a cabinet in this context?

9 A. So it might be a cabinet at one of our assets that  
10 might contain, you know, important switchboards or  
11 something else.

12  
13 Q. I see.

14 A. So we have different telemetry to try and trigger when  
15 there's a change across our network, and then our network  
16 operators look at that to understand if that's expected or  
17 not.

18  
19 Q. Do some of the alarms relate to water pressure?

20 A. Yes. I believe so.

21  
22 Q. Do any relate directly to leaks?

23 A. Yes, they do in relation to our digital meters.

24  
25 Q. All right. We'd better just explore that for a  
26 minute. Through your network Port Melbourne to Portsea, 30  
27 kilometres west of Pakenham - east of Pakenham?

28 A. East, yes.

29  
30 Q. There are some areas that have digital meters?

31 A. That's correct.

32  
33 Q. What percentage of the network is on a digital meter  
34 at the moment?

35 A. We are just over 100,000. I believe we might be  
36 120,000. But we could get that exact number.

37  
38 Q. 100,000 to 120,000 premises?

39 A. That's right.

40  
41 Q. And how many premises do you service water - do you  
42 provide water to?

43 A. About - just over 800,000.

44  
45 Q. I see. And was it your evidence that some of  
46 the alarms that can trigger in the operations centre relate  
47 to leaks in areas where there are digital meters?

1 A. That's right.  
2  
3 Q. I see. But not in respect of areas where there are  
4 not digital meters?  
5 A. Just to add to that, we've got flow - in terms of  
6 rather than alarms that relate to leaks, if you like --  
7  
8 Q. I see.  
9 A. -- there's flow alarms, and so what that would relate  
10 to is a change in flow compared to what's expected.  
11  
12 Q. I see.  
13 A. Sorry, I think, yes --  
14  
15 Q. No, that's useful.  
16 A. -- I should clarify that.  
17  
18 Q. Thank you. So there are flow alarms --  
19 A. Yes.  
20  
21 Q. -- but those flow alarms are extant only in areas  
22 where there are digital meters?  
23 A. No, sorry, I haven't done a good job at this.  
24  
25 Q. No, not at all.  
26 A. There's sort of two parts if you like. So across our  
27 sort of full network it's not necessary that we can have an  
28 alarm that says, "Yes, you've definitely got a leak." But  
29 what we do have is alarms that measure flow, and then we --  
30 Q. In a pipe?  
31 A. Or between different parts of the network.  
32  
33 Q. Yes.  
34 A. And then you can set an alarm so that if it goes above  
35 a certain level an alarm is triggered. So that may not  
36 necessarily indicate that there is a leak, just that that  
37 flow is higher than where you set that limit.  
38  
39 Q. What about if it's lower? Can an alarm be triggered  
40 by a lower flow?  
41 A. I would have to - I'm not sure about that. I suppose  
42 my focus has been on the high one, but --  
43  
44 Q. Thank you.  
45 A. Yes, I don't know. And --  
46  
47 Q. Do you know - sorry, you finish your answer.

1 A. Sorry. Yes, so that's the sort of broader - sorry,  
2 that's the sort of broader network which sort of looks at  
3 flow and unexpected flow, which is used to see there's a  
4 problem or, to your point, that's one way to detect a leak.  
5 And then the digital meters that I was referring to, they  
6 are able to both measure the flow but also then trigger the  
7 same way if there's an unexpected flow, so if the flow is  
8 higher than we'd expect, and we also put in a listening  
9 device into those meters to go back down our network to try  
10 and see if we also might have a network leak. So it allows  
11 us to better indicate customer and network leaks.  
12

13 Q. All right. Do you know how significant the change in  
14 performance needs to be for a flow alarm to be triggered?

15 A. Again, I don't know. It would most likely differ  
16 depending on that part of the network.  
17

18 Q. The tolerances might be fixed at different levels for  
19 different parts of the network?

20 A. That's right. But I'm not an expert on that.  
21

22 Q. Are you aware of whether or not there was any flow  
23 alarm triggered in the McCrae area in the period November  
24 2024 to 5 January 2025?

25 A. Yes, we looked at that as part of understanding what  
26 had happened. So there is a flow alert on 11 December. As  
27 mentioned, when there's an alert, someone then looks at it  
28 and it doesn't necessarily mean that an action is taken,  
29 depending on if they believe at that stage there is an  
30 issue or not. I know we'll come to it later, but that leak  
31 grew over time. So one of the issues I suppose about  
32 alarms is you can sort of look at it, it might be a  
33 particular point in time, but actually it changes over  
34 time.  
35

36 Q. Thank you. I asked you this already, but I can't  
37 quite recall your answer. Do you know if any of the alarms  
38 relate to water pressure?

39 A. I'm not 100 per cent sure, sorry.  
40

41 Q. Thank you. That's fine. I just want to ask you some  
42 other questions about the set-up of the infrastructure  
43 here. If you know, you can answer; if you don't, you  
44 won't. There's some reference in your witness statement to  
45 valve and hydrant maintenance?

46 A. Yes.  
47

1 Q. Are you able to explain the relationship that a valve  
2 has to a main?  
3 A. I could in rough terms, but I don't think I'm probably  
4 best to explain it, Mr Costello.  
5  
6 Q. All right. What about a hydrant?  
7 A. Yes. So we have access points across our network that  
8 allows people to access water. Sometimes that's for  
9 firefighting purposes. And so that, if you like, is a  
10 fitting, as is a valve is a fitting as well.  
11  
12 Q. All right. Does South East Water have a program for  
13 the replacement of pipes based on age?  
14 A. We've got an asset renewal program, and it's based on  
15 a number of different factors. It's based on - age or  
16 condition is one part of it; impact, if that pipe or that  
17 main fails in terms of both customer impact and other  
18 impact; and then also another set of sort of risks, so what  
19 would the impact be in terms of if that fails both from  
20 customers or more broadly. So for a sewer, for instance,  
21 that might also include the environmental impact if that  
22 sewer is to fail.  
23  
24 Q. I see. There was some evidence given earlier this  
25 week that the pipes around the burst site here with which  
26 we're concerned were installed in the 1960s. Does that  
27 accord with your knowledge?  
28 A. Yes, that's my understanding, that in speaking with  
29 the team, 1963.  
30  
31 Q. And is there anything surprising about that, or is  
32 that a perfectly natural lifespan for this type of  
33 infrastructure?  
34 A. Yes, that is a - in terms of our network age, some of  
35 our network assets are older than that. They're more like  
36 up to 100 years old. So it ranges across our network.  
37  
38 Q. All right. And so there's nothing surprising about  
39 the fact that there are pipes from the 1960s in this area?  
40 A. No.  
41  
42 Q. All right. And there's no particular reason why the  
43 fact that a pipe was installed in the 1960s might mean that  
44 that pipe ought be renewed?  
45 A. No, not in itself, no.  
46  
47 Q. Thank you. At paragraph 18 of your statement you make

1 some reference to South East Water's leak detection  
2 program.

3 A. Yes.

4  
5 Q. I think it's fair to say that there are proactive and  
6 reactive measures to leaks?

7 A. That's correct.

8  
9 Q. One of the proactive measures is - I think it's  
10 actually somebody physically walking the streets with  
11 acoustic detection devices searching for leaks?

12 A. Yes, that's right. So in terms of a leak they make a  
13 sound, and some people equate that to water coming into  
14 your washing machine or when your toilet cistern fills up;  
15 so it's got an acoustic pattern to it. So one of the  
16 proactive ways we look for leaks is specialists walk our  
17 network. There's generally a form of fitting every 10 to  
18 30 metres, and so what they're able to do is to put their  
19 acoustic device into there and to see if they can detect  
20 any of those sounds. There's some times or different  
21 conditions when that makes it harder or easier to do.

22  
23 Q. And you say in your witness statement that this  
24 particular program works on a seven-year frequency?

25 A. That's right.

26  
27 Q. Meaning that each piece of infrastructure is to be  
28 tested once every seven years?

29 A. That's right. And I suppose the advantage of the  
30 digital meters that I was speaking about then is they are  
31 sort of constantly on. So that's a key advantage of those.

32  
33 Q. Yes. All right. We'll come to digital meters. Just  
34 in terms of this proactive program, what it in fact means  
35 is that there needs to be a leak in the particular street  
36 that the person is walking at that point in the seven-year  
37 period in order for it to be detected?

38 A. That's right, of the proactive one.

39  
40 Q. Yes.

41 A. There's also, as you were speaking about, the reactive  
42 one, which is often how we find leaks.

43  
44 Q. Yes. Plainly, that proactive measure alone would be  
45 an inadequate form of leak detection?

46 A. That's right. It is a form where we're able to pick  
47 some up. There's also, if there's changes in flow, so



1 there's alarms that we spoke about before, and then there's  
2 the reactive one where either our people in the field, you  
3 know, our direct team or meter readers that we might have  
4 around, or other people, customers or other agencies, will  
5 contact us about what they believe to be a leak.

6  
7 Q. And they're the reactive measures?

8 A. That's right.

9  
10 Q. Just to finish on the proactive measure, do you know  
11 how many people that South East Water employs or contracts  
12 to do the proactive leak detection?

13 A. I don't, sorry.

14  
15 Q. Thank you. You say at paragraph 19 that, moving to  
16 reactive measures now, "South East Water's reactive leak  
17 detection methods include a 24-hour faults and emergency  
18 contact service and a Snap Send Solve application"?

19 A. Yes.

20  
21 Q. What's a Snap Send Solve application?

22 A. It's an application that allows people to take a  
23 photo, so they might see water pooling or water moving,  
24 they can take a photo and send it in as a way of reporting  
25 rather than calling us.

26  
27 Q. I see. And you say that those reports, that is that  
28 come through the phone service or through the app, are  
29 prioritised based on available data?

30 A. That's right.

31  
32 Q. And then issued to SEW's maintenance contractor for a  
33 field investigation?

34 A. That's right.

35  
36 Q. In terms of the prioritisation based on available  
37 data, does that data extend beyond the information in the  
38 report from the customer?

39 A. I believe it would. In terms of generally what would  
40 happen is a customer might ring up, and then the faults and  
41 emergency person makes an assessment in terms of impact on  
42 safety or impact on number of customers impacted, and so -  
43 to understand the number of customers impacted then I don't  
44 believe that the person ringing would know that. So  
45 I believe it would. I'm not 100 per cent sure.

46  
47 Q. Thank you. Does the South East Water staff member

1 responsible for prioritising take into account the location  
2 of the complaint?  
3 A. Yes.  
4  
5 Q. Are you aware of a concept of an erosion management  
6 overlay?  
7 A. I am.  
8  
9 Q. Is that a concept that you've become aware of in the  
10 course of this board of inquiry?  
11 A. Yes, it is.  
12  
13 Q. Are you aware of whether or not prioritisation  
14 includes whether the complaint area is within an area  
15 subject to an erosion management overlay?  
16 A. I'm not.  
17  
18 Q. At paragraph 20 of your statement you talk about the  
19 source of the leak being unknown, electrical conductivity  
20 tests being performed?  
21 A. Yes.  
22  
23 Q. And that's one of the methods that South East Water  
24 will use to investigate?  
25 A. Yes.  
26  
27 Q. And you say that if the results of that testing are  
28 within the parameters for drinking water SEW deploys a  
29 specialist employee?  
30 A. (Witness nods).  
31  
32 Q. And does that necessarily mean that if the results of  
33 the testing are not within the parameters for drinking  
34 water South East Water does not deploy an employee?  
35 A. I'm not sure. I think it would depend on the  
36 circumstance.  
37  
38 Q. All right. What would be the circumstances in which  
39 an employee would be deployed notwithstanding an electrical  
40 conductivity test indicating that it's not tap water?  
41 A. So depending on the circumstance, if there was, you  
42 know, a safety issue or if there was very upset customers -  
43 it's not like there would definitely not be a specialist  
44 sent, and I can see in a number of our records where that  
45 test might be outside the electrical conductivity but  
46 others are sent. Might it be helpful just to explain that  
47 type of - the standard practice for our testing and --

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Q. For conductivity?

A. For conductivity.

Q. We'll come back to that.

A. Okay. Sure.

Q. But thank you. I'll try and remind you. Who within the organisation is making the decision about whether to deploy somebody in these circumstances, for example, where there has been a conductivity test performed that suggests the water is not yours?

A. So our water maintenance team oversee those type of things, and then in different cases they will ask for our specialist leak detection.

Q. I see. In paragraph 21 you say that SEW reads water meters in the McCrae landslide area on a quarterly basis?

A. Yes.

Q. That's indicative of the fact that there are not smart meters in this area?

A. We've just started deploying them since late April.

Q. Yes. Thank you.

A. In McCrae.

Q. In McCrae; thank you. And how long will it take for the whole of McCrae to have smart meters installed?

A. It's scheduled to start on 28 April and scheduled to finish in June.

Q. I see. And is it fair to say that that has been prioritised in more recent times?

A. So it was - McCrae was one of the areas, but certainly we are focused on doing it now, yes.

Q. Well, what do you mean when you say "McCrae was one of the areas"?

A. So it was already scheduled for this year in terms of being rolled out.

Q. But has it been brought forward?

A. I think what - post the landslide we sort of then just checked to see if customers would want it or would see it as, you know, a distraction. It was clear that customers wanted it, so we kept going with our schedule.

1  
2 Q. I see. What are the sources of water that South East  
3 Water draws upon? Do you have your own reservoirs or?  
4 A. Overall our sort of wholesale supplier is Melbourne  
5 Water, and then they - we take water from them. In some  
6 cases we take it directly from them, in some cases we take  
7 it to one of our reservoirs or tanks and then feed our  
8 customers from there.  
9  
10 Q. There's a bit of talk in your statement about tanks.  
11 Could you describe the role of tanks in your system?  
12 A. Yes. So, as mentioned, we get that water from  
13 Melbourne Water, but then we've got tanks throughout our  
14 network that are closer to customers, and that allows us to  
15 have a certain amount of storage, depending on that  
16 customer base that they serve. In other times it might be  
17 that actually that tank doesn't have enough pressure to  
18 serve the customers that it's near, so it's used as a step,  
19 if you like, a storage, and then it feeds up to another  
20 tank that is used to serve customers.  
21  
22 Q. Does rainwater affect tank level?  
23 A. Our tank levels?  
24  
25 Q. Yes.  
26 A. It doesn't if it's a closed tank. It would if it's an  
27 open reservoir, but we have covers across reservoirs.  
28  
29 Q. So do you have any reservoirs that are uncovered?  
30 A. I don't believe so, but I'd have to check.  
31  
32 Q. Okay. What about tanks? They're all covered?  
33 A. Yes, that's right.  
34  
35 Q. All right. Thank you. So in general terms in terms  
36 of inferring that there's a leak in a premises, one way  
37 that that can be - sorry, not in a premises; I withdraw  
38 that. In terms of inferring a leak in an area, it's easier  
39 with smart meters because you've got much more current  
40 information about actual water usage of households; is that  
41 fair?  
42 A. That's right. I could give you an example of --  
43  
44 Q. Please.  
45 A. So we have deployed just about 2,000 digital meters  
46 now in that McCrae area. Of that, we've found 150 what we  
47 call continuous flow alerts. So it doesn't necessary mean

1 it's a leak because customers might be - have that  
2 continuous flow, a 24-hour flow for a reason. Of those 150  
3 continuous flow alarms, 20 have got over - usage of over  
4 1,000 litres a day, and one had 30,000 litres a day, and in  
5 that case what we do for those large leaks, so those large  
6 20 continuous flow - again, it doesn't necessarily mean a  
7 leak; it just means that a customer property is using  
8 1,000 litres or, in that case, 30,000 litres a day - we  
9 send them a notification to tell them about it, and then in  
10 the McCrae case at the moment, obviously given the  
11 sensitivity of water, we're working with them to help them  
12 find the leak.

13  
14 Q. All right. So that's in circumstances where there are  
15 smart meters?

16 A. Yes.

17  
18 Q. Where there are not smart meters you're taking meter  
19 readings on a quarterly basis?

20 A. Yes.

21  
22 Q. And just so I can understand the extent of the data  
23 available to SEW, you need two inputs to understand  
24 whether - at least two inputs to understand whether there's  
25 a burst. One is the usage of water by premises within the  
26 relevant area, and the other is water in effect through the  
27 main or mains into that area; is that generally correct?

28 A. There's different ways to do it. So one way, as you  
29 suggest, is that first way, where you can see the flow, and  
30 then a - sort of it's information shared with the customer  
31 to work out if they're expecting that flow, I suppose. And  
32 that's one way to detect a leak. The second way is  
33 sometimes we get called out because there's water pooling  
34 or a customer's concerned about a leak on our side, and  
35 then we're able through those investigations to find a leak  
36 on their side in terms of that.

37  
38 Q. I'm just interested in circumstances where there's an  
39 increased use of water but that increase is not reflected  
40 in the meters at premises. What that tells you in those  
41 circumstances is it's not customers using the water?

42 A. Oh, right, yes. Yes, sorry.

43  
44 Q. Now, in terms of ascertaining - in terms of the second  
45 piece of the data, which is the increased water usage, how  
46 do you obtain that data? Do you have meters on your own  
47 mains, for example, to see the amount of water that's flown

1 through?  
2 A. Yes. Sorry, I think I misunderstood.  
3  
4 Q. No, not at all.  
5 A. Yes. So we've got telemetry at different points  
6 across our network that allows us to, I suppose, calculate  
7 that difference, and at sort of the full network scale  
8 that's what one of the - that's what Mr Hutchings was  
9 referring to --  
10  
11 Q. Yes.  
12 A. -- when he sort of said that our overall leak across  
13 the network is sort of comparable to others but at sort of  
14 10 per cent. It's 9 per cent at the moment, but it is of  
15 that nature. I recognise that that sounds like a lot of  
16 water, and we do know that water is precious, but it is the  
17 nature in terms of a large network.  
18  
19 Q. Yes. In terms of the area that we're concerned with  
20 here, that what you describe in your statement as the  
21 landslide area --  
22 A. Yes.  
23  
24 Q. -- is it right that there are a number of mains that  
25 provide water into that area?  
26 A. So I think that it's right to say that, whether it's  
27 mains or - there's water mains that go into that area, and  
28 then there's large mains that feed those mains as well.  
29  
30 Q. Thank you. So in terms of ascertaining the size of  
31 the leakage from the water main that Mr Hutchings spoke to,  
32 for example, and Mr Bolch, how is it that one comes to a  
33 view about the amount of water that's leaked out?  
34 A. Yes. Unfortunately, for that - I'm not sure if we  
35 could call it the Bayview Road leak?  
36  
37 Q. Yes, please.  
38 A. We don't have the telemetry that means that we can  
39 accurately say what the size of that water lost is, and so  
40 the way that we've been looking at it internally is to do  
41 data analysis of that water balance that you were alluding  
42 to before to look at sort of the water in and then take the  
43 water out. The other part about different parts of our  
44 network is it differs over time. So in - it's seasonal.  
45 In holiday areas, like down the peninsula and some other  
46 parts of our network, we tend to see water usage go up over  
47 summer generally and then when there's high occupancy as

1 well. And so there's been work - I've just seen the latest  
2 version on 8 May - to work out what that is from a data  
3 perspective, trying to take all of those different things  
4 into account.  
5  
6 Q. When you say "the latest version on 8 May", what are  
7 you speaking of?  
8 A. So our organisation's been trying to estimate what  
9 that volume of that burst is because we can't say for  
10 certain what that volume is.  
11  
12 Q. All right. And the most up-to-date estimate was  
13 computed on 8 May; is that right?  
14 A. That's the last version that I've seen, yes.  
15  
16 Q. All right. We'll come back to that.  
17 A. Sure.  
18  
19 Q. I just want to continue through these general topics  
20 first and then --  
21 A. Sure. Sorry.  
22  
23 Q. No, no, not at all. It's been very useful, but we'll  
24 return to the Bayview Road leak. Just to assist, could  
25 I please have Ms Olsen's statement on the screen. It's  
26 SEW.0001.0001.0110. Could we go to page 4, please. Just  
27 to assist you, Ms Olsen, I'm just going to refer to some of  
28 these paragraphs rather than read them to you.  
29 A. Sure.  
30  
31 Q. Paragraph 22. Do you see the reference there to  
32 undertaking CCTV monitoring --  
33 A. Yes.  
34  
35 Q. -- and inspection in the sewage network?  
36 A. Yes.  
37  
38 Q. Now, the CCTV monitoring, that's by permanently placed  
39 cameras, is it?  
40 A. No. It's generally a device is put in with CCTV.  
41  
42 Q. I see.  
43 A. I must admit I've been following those ones. I'm not  
44 sure if there's also permanently placed CCTV.  
45  
46 Q. So that means when somebody attends to inspect a piece  
47 of infrastructure they might take some video footage?

1 A. Put a device in, that's correct.  
2  
3 Q. I see. Can you see in the third line there you speak  
4 of assets categorised as critical owing to factors such as  
5 the scale of anticipated customer impact in the event of a  
6 blockage?  
7 A. Yes.  
8  
9 Q. And assets that are in environmentally sensitive  
10 areas?  
11 A. Yes.  
12  
13 Q. Such as proximity to waterways?  
14 A. Yes.  
15  
16 Q. Is that the full extent of matters that would make an  
17 asset a critical one; that is, scale of anticipated  
18 customer impact and assets in environmentally sensitive  
19 areas?  
20 A. I'm not sure, and stop me, but certainly we have what  
21 we call like an asset management strategy, and that asset  
22 management strategy oversees how we plan for assets, repair  
23 assets, et cetera, and, obviously since our learnings here,  
24 that asset management strategy now includes landslides as  
25 part of a consideration in terms of our asset management  
26 strategy.  
27  
28 Q. All right. Are you aware of whether there's any  
29 internal definition of "critical assets"?  
30 A. Yes, there is a process - part of that asset  
31 management strategy looks at what we call critical assets,  
32 and that's part of determining how those get treated. As  
33 mentioned, it's been updated now. It now also includes  
34 vulnerable assets as well.  
35  
36 Q. And when was that update undertaken?  
37 A. In April.  
38  
39 Q. In April of?  
40 A. This year.  
41  
42 Q. This year. And that update included categorising  
43 areas in landslide-prone areas; is that right?  
44 A. What it includes is both critical assets and  
45 vulnerable assets that should be looked at as part of our  
46 asset management strategy and a range of risks. We had  
47 previously included bushfires, et cetera, and now that



1 extends to landslides as well. We're going through the  
2 process across our service area to work out where we have  
3 landslide susceptibility.  
4

5 Q. Why was that updated in April?

6 A. I think from the learnings of this process, in  
7 understanding the different risks in terms of customer  
8 impact, then that's been a part that we didn't have before  
9 that we think is important.  
10

11 Q. Do you know how within that process landslide-prone  
12 areas are identified?

13 A. I believe we're going through that process now in  
14 terms of understanding across our service area what's been  
15 mapped.  
16

17 Q. Is there any current view as to how they are to be  
18 identified?

19 A. I'm probably not the best person to ask, but we could  
20 come back with that information.  
21

22 Q. Do you know if it involves examination of topography?

23 A. I'm sorry, I'm - but we could come back on that.  
24

25 Q. All right. Who is the person within South East Water  
26 with responsibility for the development of that policy?

27 A. It's in the general manager area that is run by  
28 Charlie Littlefair.  
29

30 Q. Sorry, what was the surname?

31 A. Littlefair.  
32

33 Q. And does that area have a general description?

34 A. Yes. So we call that our liveable water solutions,  
35 and amongst other areas they're responsible for planning  
36 and our capital works.  
37

38 Q. And so that policy is still in development at the  
39 moment?

40 A. No, that strategy has been finalised.  
41

42 Q. It's been finalised. But the finalisation doesn't  
43 include a method for identifying landslide-prone areas?

44 A. That's right. So the finalisation is the strategy  
45 level, I suppose, and then there will be a set of policies  
46 and processes that come.  
47

1 Q. I see. And is there an expected timeline for the  
2 implementation and finalisation of those policies?  
3 A. I'm not sure.  
4  
5 Q. All right. Are you aware of whether or not South East  
6 Water is obtaining expert advice in relation to the  
7 question of identification of landslide-prone areas?  
8 A. Yes, I know that's being sought - or understand that's  
9 being sought.  
10  
11 Q. And do you know who that's being sought from?  
12 A. No, I don't.  
13  
14 Q. Thank you. On leak detection, does South East Water  
15 have its own leak detection personnel or is it all done by  
16 contractors?  
17 A. No, we also have our team members that also do leak  
18 detection.  
19  
20 Q. All right. And is there any particular split between  
21 contractors and employees?  
22 A. Sorry, how do you mean?  
23  
24 Q. Do contractors and employees do the same type of work?  
25 A. No, we've got a sort of - there's more contractors or  
26 contract partners than compared to the size of our team.  
27  
28 Q. Okay. So how does one determine whether a contractor  
29 attends at a particular site or an internal employee?  
30 A. I'm not sure.  
31  
32 Q. All right. That's a call made by somebody in what  
33 might be generally called the maintenance department, is  
34 it?  
35 A. That's right.  
36  
37 Q. Okay. If we could go over the page, please. Starting  
38 from paragraph 26, you give some evidence in connection  
39 with the fourth question that was put to you?  
40 A. Yes.  
41  
42 Q. Regarding leak detection. And you speak there about  
43 the network being broken into zones?  
44 A. Yes.  
45  
46 Q. How many zones are there?  
47 A. There's 209, is my understanding.

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Q. All right. Are zones only relevant for leak detection purposes or are they relevant for other purposes as well?

A. No, my understanding is that the zone is set sort of by topography or about maintaining pressure across particular zones.

Q. All right. Some zones are then identified as a high leakage distribution zone?

A. Yes, that's right. So particularly our maintenance team is familiar with the areas that are higher in terms of leakage.

Q. Do you know how regularly SEW assesses whether a zone is a high leakage distribution zone?

A. No, I don't.

Q. All right. Do you know what benchmark is used to determine whether or not a particular area is a high leakage distribution zone?

A. No, I don't.

Q. In paragraph 27 you speak about abnormal network events?

A. Yes.

Q. For the supervisory control and data acquisition system?

A. M'hmm.

Q. What's an abnormal network event in this context?

A. They were the events that I was describing before. So "abnormal" is maybe not the right word that I should have used there, but unexpected or a change event. So they're sort of the 1,500 to 3,000 alarms that I was describing before.

Q. An event that would trigger an alarm?

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. On the question of zones, how many did you say there were?

A. I believe there's 209.

Q. Is the whole of the McCrae area in a single zone?

A. I don't know.

1 Q. Do you know if any of the McCrae area is in a zone  
2 that's characterised as a high leakage distribution zone?  
3 A. I don't know.  
4  
5 Q. Thank you. I might just bring up another exhibit to  
6 your witness statement, please. It's SEW.0001.0001.0108.  
7 Are you familiar with this document, Ms Olsen?  
8 A. Yes, I am.  
9  
10 Q. This is exhibit 4 to your witness statement?  
11 A. Yes.  
12  
13 Q. When was this document prepared?  
14 A. I don't know.  
15  
16 Q. Do you know who prepared this document?  
17 A. I don't, no.  
18  
19 Q. Do you know if it was prepared for the purpose of your  
20 witness statement or if it was a document that existed  
21 within South East Water before your witness statement came  
22 into being?  
23 A. No, I actually don't know.  
24  
25 Q. All right. Do you know in what range acoustic leak  
26 detection is effective?  
27 A. I've got an understanding, but I don't know to be  
28 correct, so I'm not going to guess.  
29  
30 Q. Can you give a ballpark, or would you just be  
31 guessing?  
32 A. It would be an understanding - no, I'm going to say  
33 I don't know.  
34  
35 Q. Thank you. Does acoustic leak detection rely upon  
36 having the ability to touch the relevant pipe with an  
37 instrument?  
38 A. In terms of from the digital meter perspective, no.  
39 So that's a sensor that just sits in there, and then  
40 nothing's required, if you like. It goes through. In  
41 terms of our --  
42  
43 Q. All right. Let me pause you and then we'll go to the  
44 next one because that's quite interesting. Is it the case  
45 that in a digital meter there is a permanent acoustic leak  
46 detection device?  
47 A. Yes.

1  
2 Q. Embedded within the unit?  
3 A. Yes. That's what I was trying to say, yes.  
4  
5 Q. And when you're speaking about a digital unit here are  
6 you talking about a smart meter in a premises or are you  
7 talking about a digital device somewhere else on the South  
8 East Water network?  
9 A. Yes, good question. When I was speaking the digital  
10 meters there, that's on the customer's premise. So where  
11 their normal water meter would - not normal. Where their  
12 analogue water meter would be, we replace that with the  
13 digital one. There's also telemetry across our network.  
14  
15 Q. All right. So the digital device is categorically  
16 different from the more old-fashioned of the two?  
17 A. Yes.  
18  
19 Q. On the more old-fashioned of the two, does it  
20 necessitate an operator being able to touch a relevant pipe  
21 or piece of infrastructure with a device in order to  
22 perform the acoustic leak detection?  
23 A. Again, I've got an understanding, but I'm going to say  
24 I don't know because I couldn't say in 100 per cent of  
25 the categories that that is the case. Maybe - that's my  
26 understanding is probably the best, but I'm not an expert  
27 on this.  
28  
29 Q. Do you know if acoustic leak detection is being  
30 manually performed --  
31 A. Yes.  
32  
33 Q. -- that is, in the circumstance where it's not a smart  
34 meter - does it require an assessment by the operator or  
35 does the instrument make the call?  
36 A. It's not sort of possible I suppose to make a call  
37 because sometimes there can be a variety that - in terms of  
38 that instrument there's a variety of factors that impact  
39 why you may be able to hear noise well or not hear noise or  
40 what it might mean.  
41  
42 Q. All right. It's called an acoustic leak detection.  
43 Is it entirely reliant on sound?  
44 A. This acoustic leak detection one relies on sound, but  
45 people when they're doing leak detection can also observe  
46 different factors that might lead to leaks being  
47 discovered.

1  
2 Q. All right. I'll leave that document on the screen at  
3 the moment, but I'll just remind you of something that you  
4 say in your witness statement at paragraphs 30(a) and (c).  
5 There you point to some of the challenges that can be faced  
6 in detecting a leak?

7 A. Yes.  
8

9 Q. You say in (a) that there can be limited accessibility  
10 and visibility, for example, assets running through rural  
11 areas or vegetation that makes identification of leaks  
12 complex?

13 A. Yes.  
14

15 Q. In (b) you talk about areas of significant noise,  
16 assets near railway tracks, for example; and in (c) you  
17 talk about other unforeseen difficulties, for example,  
18 weather conditions?

19 A. Yes.  
20

21 Q. Are there methods of overcoming those particular  
22 difficulties so as to get a meaningful reading from an  
23 acoustic leak detection device?

24 A. My understanding is not always, no.  
25

26 Q. All right. Thank you. I just want to make sure that  
27 I understand your evidence in respect of the other category  
28 of leak detection, that is the embedded digital form of  
29 leak detection. Are there acoustic leak detection devices  
30 embedded on infrastructure outside of people's homes  
31 outside of smart meters?

32 A. There's telemetry. I don't know if it's acoustic, so  
33 I'm not sure, but there is --  
34

35 Q. When you say "telemetry" you mean that there are  
36 devices that --

37 A. Measuring devices. I just don't know if sound is what  
38 they use for those ones.  
39

40 Q. Right. So you don't know whether there is the  
41 equivalent of the type of acoustic leak detection that is  
42 embedded in a smart meter embedded anywhere else on your  
43 network?

44 A. No, I'm not sure.  
45

46 Q. Thank you. Can we go back to the witness statement,  
47 please, which is SEW.0001.0001.0110, and if we could go to

1 page 6 now, please. Sorry, 7. Ms Olsen, at page 7 you  
2 give some evidence in answer to a question that sought a  
3 description of SEW's systems and procedures for repairing  
4 or otherwise addressing water leaks?

5 A. Yes.

6  
7 Q. And at paragraph 33 there you talk about, once a  
8 report's been received about a possible leak, an assessment  
9 and priority being undertaken based on conditions,  
10 including safety; you see that?

11 A. Yes.

12  
13 Q. What are the criteria that determine whether or not  
14 something ought be prioritised on the basis of safety?

15 A. I don't know those detailed criteria. But we could  
16 get them to you.

17  
18 Q. Can we seek to understand the process in a little more  
19 detail. If a possible leak is reported, there will be this  
20 assessment made and somebody within South East Water will  
21 determine whether or not a runner ought to be sent out; is  
22 that right?

23 A. So there will be a determination made on the priority,  
24 and what that means is the - it sets the amount of time  
25 that we have on average to get to site. So it indicates  
26 that. So, for instance, our priority 1 means that the  
27 person going to site on average needs to get there within  
28 an hour, and then it goes down from there. And then  
29 depending, in many cases, as you say, what happens is a  
30 runner is sent to site to assess the situation and be able  
31 to determine what's needed to do that repair or work as  
32 effectively as possible.

33  
34 Q. And is it the case that the runner might form a view  
35 that a field crew is necessary?

36 A. That's right. So the runner might be able to repair  
37 it themselves or they might know that different permissions  
38 are needed, we're going to need permissions from another  
39 utility, we'll need traffic management, et cetera.

40  
41 Q. All right. At paragraph 37 you say that in the event  
42 the reported and identified issue does not relate to an SEW  
43 asset the matter is referred to the relevant party's  
44 attention; do you see that?

45 A. Yes.

46  
47 Q. How is that determination made?

1 A. Someone will assess that. It might be - again, there  
2 will be different circumstances, but it might be the person  
3 attends site and the customer might have called up or  
4 someone else might have called up and thought it was our  
5 asset but it's not our asset, and then that's generally  
6 referred to the relevant party.

7  
8 Q. So in some circumstances that might be readily  
9 apparent?

10 A. That's right.

11  
12 Q. For example, the runner might spot a water tank in a  
13 premises with a hole in it?

14 A. That's right.

15  
16 Q. Outside that easy and obvious case, it's a question  
17 for the runner to determine?

18 A. I don't believe that it would just be the runner.  
19 I couldn't say. But someone would aim to determine that,  
20 yes.

21  
22 Q. Well, if not the runner, who?

23 A. Sometimes the field crew might go before that's  
24 determined. So it could be different stages of the process  
25 that that's determined.

26  
27 Q. But the runner might determine no field crew is  
28 necessary because it doesn't relate to an SEW asset?

29 A. I couldn't say, but that seems very plausible to me,  
30 yes.

31  
32 Q. Do you know if runners are given training on this  
33 question of determining the source of water leaks?

34 A. I don't know.

35  
36 Q. It would be an important part of their job, wouldn't  
37 it?

38 A. Again, I'm not sure if it's them, only them, or others  
39 that determine that. But I take your question would apply  
40 to anyone who does determine it.

41  
42 Q. Do you know if field crews are given particular  
43 training on that question?

44 A. In terms of determining if it's our asset or not?

45  
46 Q. Yes.

47 A. We have a standard practice in terms of determining,



1 let's say in this case, a water leak that we go through to  
2 determine if it's ours.  
3  
4 Q. Is that standard practice set out in a document?  
5 A. Yes, it's a document of our - yes, of our contractor  
6 who does this.  
7  
8 Q. Sorry, what did you say?  
9 A. Of our contract partner who does this, yes.  
10  
11 Q. So these are not calls being made by SEW-employed  
12 staff; they're being made by SEW contractors?  
13 A. I think it would be a mixture of both.  
14  
15 Q. All right. If it's a mixture of both, doesn't SEW  
16 need its own policy as well?  
17 A. I'm not sure if we've got one or not. I can come back  
18 to you.  
19  
20 Q. You don't know?  
21 A. I don't know.  
22  
23 Q. Is one of the methods that a runner or field crew  
24 might use to determine whether or not an identified issue  
25 relates to an SEW asset undertaking conductivity testing of  
26 the water?  
27 A. Yes, that's right. That is one part of two.  
28  
29 Q. What's the other?  
30 A. So the standard practice that occurs is our water has  
31 a electroconductivity, so in South East Water that average  
32 is 83. And it's a process then of testing that water to  
33 see if the characteristics resemble our water. If it's a  
34 different characteristic, much higher, then it's often  
35 determined not to be our water. Then there's a second  
36 process for that. So even if it tests to be mains water,  
37 so maybe it's around 83, that doesn't - and it's in the  
38 environment, that doesn't necessarily mean that it's a leak  
39 from our asset, because there's water in the environment  
40 from people watering their garden or car washing or they  
41 might have a leak, and so a second step of acoustic  
42 detection is also done, if you like, and we're generally  
43 looking for those two ones to be yes, so that, yes, it  
44 resembles our water and, yes, we've got an acoustic issue  
45 that signifies it's one of our leaks.  
46  
47 Q. All right. Let's make sure we all understand

1 electrical conductivity testing and its relevance.  
2 Conductivity is a measure of water's capability to pass  
3 electrical flow?  
4 A. That's right.  
5  
6 Q. And it relates to the concentration of ions in the  
7 water?  
8 A. I'm definitely not an expert on this, although I did  
9 chemical engineering, but that's my high-level  
10 understanding too, yes.  
11  
12 Q. Do you know where the most obvious source of ions in  
13 water would be?  
14 A. No, I do not.  
15  
16 Q. Do you know that dissolved salts are a source of ions  
17 in water?  
18 A. I do not.  
19  
20 Q. Do you know that the more ions that are present in  
21 water the higher the conductivity of the water?  
22 A. Again, I'm not an expert on this.  
23  
24 Q. Do you know what the accepted measurement of  
25 electrical conductivity in water is?  
26 A. I just know what our average is across our network.  
27  
28 Q. Okay. And what did you say that average was?  
29 A. 83.  
30  
31 Q. And do you know how that compares, for example, to  
32 seawater?  
33 A. No, I do not.  
34  
35 Q. Do you know how that compares to the water that might  
36 be supplied by other water suppliers in Victoria?  
37 A. No, I do not.  
38  
39 Q. And do you know the range that water supplied by South  
40 East Water might be within in terms of electrical  
41 conductivity?  
42 A. I've got an understanding of that. I'm not  
43 100 per cent sure, so --  
44  
45 Q. Did I understand your evidence to be that the average  
46 reading for electrical conductivity was about 83?  
47 A. That's correct.

1  
2 Q. You said 83?  
3 A. Yes.  
4  
5 Q. Do you know what the range is?  
6 A. I believe it to be 50 to 200.  
7  
8 Q. Thank you.  
9 A. In terms of drinking water. I'm not sure if that's  
10 South East Water, but that's my understanding in terms of  
11 drinking water.  
12  
13 Q. I see. And when you say 83 you know 83 is the  
14 headline number but you're not sure what the unit of  
15 measurement is?  
16 A. No, I'm not.  
17  
18 Q. You don't know, for example, if it's millisiemens or  
19 microsiemens?  
20 A. I do not.  
21  
22 Q. All right. Are runners and field crews trained on the  
23 topic of electrical conductivity?  
24 A. I do not know.  
25  
26 Q. Are they trained on doing electrical conductivity  
27 testing?  
28 A. I'm not sure.  
29  
30 Q. Do you have any understanding of how the electrical  
31 conductivity of water might change by reason of  
32 environmental factors if the water escapes a pipe?  
33 A. No, I don't know.  
34  
35 Q. All right. Do you have any understanding of the  
36 ground - sorry, of the groundwater salinity in the McCrae  
37 area?  
38 A. No, I don't know.  
39  
40 Q. Do you have any understanding of whether or not  
41 groundwater salinity is relevant to electrical  
42 conductivity?  
43 A. I don't know.  
44  
45 Q. We'll come back to it soon, but just so I can  
46 understand your position and questions that I can  
47 reasonably expect an answer from you, South East Water,

1 I think I'm right to say, through its solicitors  
2 commissioned a report from a company or firm called SMEC?  
3 A. Yes.  
4  
5 Q. Which I'll call SMEC?  
6 A. Yes.  
7  
8 Q. And they produced a report dated 5 May?  
9 A. Yes.  
10  
11 Q. Into the McCrae - what they call the McCrae landslip?  
12 A. Yes.  
13  
14 Q. Have you read that report?  
15 A. I have.  
16  
17 Q. All right. We'll come back to that report later. In  
18 terms of the training of others within your organisation on  
19 the question of electroconductivity of water, do you know  
20 whether runners or field crew have test equipment on them  
21 to test electrical conductivity? Is it part of their  
22 ordinary kit?  
23 A. I don't know apart from seeing all the records when we  
24 go out that that's tested.  
25  
26 Q. I see. So far as you understand it, is it the primary  
27 method by which an assessment is made about whether the  
28 water is South East Water's water or the water has come  
29 from another source?  
30 A. I wouldn't say it's the primary method because there's  
31 the different ways that I sort of described. So one is  
32 sort of visual observation, the practice of  
33 electroconductivity and of the acoustic testing, and then  
34 often people - there's also observations from people  
35 around. So often there might be residents or others as  
36 well that provide additional information around the  
37 situation.  
38  
39 Q. And is it important to use more than one tool so as to  
40 come to the most accurate conclusion that's possible?  
41 A. I think one of our key learnings from this has been to  
42 relook at our standard practices in terms of leak  
43 detection. Maybe to give you an example, you know, we've  
44 got about 2,500 to 3,000 bursts or leaks of mains each  
45 year, and the practice that I described before is the  
46 practice that we use, and obviously our learnings from this  
47 means that we're relooking at what we need to do to try and

1 find a leak like this one that's obviously different to  
2 what we've had before.  
3  
4 Q. The fact that you have said that electroconductivity  
5 testing is not the primary method but there are in fact  
6 four methods - that is visual, electroconductivity,  
7 acoustic testing and observation - I'm not sure if  
8 observation is different to visual?  
9 A. All right. No, it's not, sorry.  
10  
11 Q. All right.  
12 A. I meant when people go out often there's people around  
13 that provide additional information, sorry.  
14  
15 Q. I see.  
16 A. Maybe feedback or --  
17  
18 Q. Yes. Thank you. That is other sources of  
19 information?  
20 A. That's right.  
21  
22 Q. And are those four methods co-equal in determining  
23 whether or not the water that's been identified is South  
24 East Water?  
25 A. I'm sorry, I don't know.  
26  
27 Q. All right. But, in any event, the fact that there are  
28 four methods used is indicative of at least the fact that  
29 electroconductivity testing in and of itself might not be  
30 definitive; do you accept that much?  
31 A. I do, because that - it's that first test. So even if  
32 it's - you know, says it's similar to our mains then we do  
33 another test. We don't then assume it's ours.  
34  
35 Q. All right. Are you familiar with the term "task  
36 summary"?  
37 A. Could you - do you mean in relation - sorry.  
38  
39 Q. No, that's all right. It might be used in some  
40 various forms. I'll put one on the screen and you can tell  
41 me if you would consider that a task summary or you call it  
42 something else. SEW.0001.0001.0085.  
43 A. Yes.  
44  
45 Q. I called it a task summary because that's what it says  
46 in the top left-hand corner. But that doesn't mean that's  
47 the colloquial name used within South East Water. Do you

1 know what this document is?  
2 A. Yes.  
3  
4 Q. Sorry, I withdraw that.  
5 A. I refer to it as a Montage record, which is our works  
6 management system.  
7  
8 Q. A Montage record?  
9 A. Yes.  
10  
11 Q. Montage is the name of a system?  
12 A. That's right.  
13  
14 Q. And is Montage used for a variety of different aspects  
15 of the business?  
16 A. That's right. It covers different parts of our works  
17 management, if you like, or tasks.  
18  
19 Q. All right. And one reason that data might be inputted  
20 into Montage is after a runner or field crew have attended  
21 a particular site?  
22 A. That's right. So it's also if there's a job  
23 allocated. So that might be the job to actually allocate  
24 the runner.  
25  
26 Q. I see. So looking here, so that we can understand the  
27 way these documents work, there's a task number. That's a  
28 number allocated to it by the system; is it?  
29 A. That's right, and - yes. That's right.  
30  
31 Q. There's then an address, which is here 1 Charlesworth  
32 Street?  
33 A. Yes.  
34  
35 Q. The task work type is planned maintenance repair.  
36 There's then two fields that are not completed, source of  
37 work and facility, and then we get to the meat of it, which  
38 is the task story, and that starts with a name. Who would  
39 that person be?  
40 A. I'm not sure.  
41  
42 Q. Okay. What about the next name in square brackets?  
43 Do you know who that person is?  
44 A. No, I'm not sure.  
45  
46 Q. Okay. And so the first name, which is Kate, there's a  
47 date and then it says "awarded". Do you know what the

1 "awarded" means in this context?  
2 A. I understand that means that it's been allocated, but  
3 I can see there's a different allocation, so I'm not sure.  
4  
5 Q. Okay. And then there's then a reference to [Name redacted for personal  
6 information]. You don't know if that's a person  
7 within your organisation?  
8 A. No, I don't.  
9  
10 Q. Okay. And then that says "allocated" and then it says  
11 "checked by Donna Nguyen"; do you know what that means?  
12 A. No, I don't.  
13  
14 Q. Okay. It then says in square brackets "in transit".  
15 Do you know who's in transit?  
16 A. No, I don't.  
17  
18 Q. Okay. Just before we step through the document, could  
19 you just explain to the chair what this - what is being  
20 recorded in this record in the Montage system?  
21 A. Do you mean what - sorry, could you repeat that?  
22  
23 Q. What's going on here?  
24 A. Oh, right, yes. So, just in reading the record, it's  
25 a description of the person that's called in or has spoken  
26 to us, and then our actions that we're taking to understand  
27 the matter.  
28  
29 Q. The names of the people in here might be SEW staff but  
30 might equally be contractors?  
31 A. That's right. That's my understanding.  
32  
33 Q. Do your contractors input data directly into the  
34 Montage system?  
35 A. I'm not sure.  
36  
37 Q. Is it important that South East Water have a record of  
38 the work undertaken by its contractors?  
39 A. Yes.  
40  
41 Q. But you don't know how it is that that work is  
42 reported in to South East Water?  
43 A. Personally, no, I'm not sure.  
44  
45 Q. Okay. So you saw the first date there at the top is  
46 28 November 2024?  
47 A. Yes.

1  
2 Q. I should ask you have you seen this document before?  
3 A. Yes, I've - I mean, I don't know if I've gone through  
4 all of them, but I've tried to understand in the lead-up in  
5 terms of the discovery of the leak.  
6  
7 Q. All right. So it says in the first line of the task  
8 story 28/11/2024, and then if you drop down about six  
9 lines, perhaps seven, there's another square box that says  
10 the same date, although the time has moved on a little bit,  
11 and it says "on site". Do you understand that to mean that  
12 an SEW contractor or employee has arrived at the site?  
13 A. That would be my understanding.  
14  
15 Q. All right. And it says there, "Arrived and the  
16 council are on site. Found water is seeping out of the  
17 middle of the road opposite number 3. The road is very  
18 spongy. Council have filled in a small pothole. I tested  
19 the water a few times and got readings of over 1350, which  
20 is well out of mains range"?  
21 A. M'hmm.  
22  
23 Q. Now, you don't know whether this is an employee or a  
24 contractor, but whoever it is has conducted a test and got  
25 a reading of 1350. Do you know or can you infer what that  
26 test was?  
27 A. I can only assume that it's an EC test, but I don't  
28 know.  
29  
30 Q. You mean electrical conductivity?  
31 A. Sorry, yes.  
32  
33 Q. Then speaks of "I sounded nearby services"; do you  
34 know what that means?  
35 A. Yes. So that is that acoustic leak detection that  
36 I was speaking about before.  
37  
38 Q. Okay. "Picked up no sounds"?  
39 A. M'hmm.  
40  
41 Q. "Looks to be a drainage problem from the heavy  
42 downpour from last night. Told the council blokes of my  
43 findings and they have put bollards around the area and  
44 they are going to get a crew to come back tomorrow  
45 morning"; see that?  
46 A. Yes.  
47



1 Q. So, just so we all understand exactly what this is,  
2 this is somebody on South East Water's behalf attending to  
3 an issue connected with a road where there's water seeping  
4 out of the middle of the road and the road's very spongy.  
5 Can you tell from looking at this document whether or not  
6 the - to be neutral about it, I'll call it the South East  
7 Water representative who's attending is attending because a  
8 local resident has called them out or attending for some  
9 other reason?

10 A. No, I can't tell.

11  
12 Q. Okay. But, in any event, this is the type of data  
13 that is logged when an attendance is made by South East  
14 Water in response to something that may be a leak?

15 A. That's right.

16  
17 Q. Okay. Have you gone through quite a number of these  
18 documents in connection with the McCrae area in preparation  
19 for giving evidence to this board of inquiry?

20 A. Yes, I wouldn't say that I'm an expert across each of  
21 them, but I've tried.

22  
23 Q. Do you accept that there were a number of complaints  
24 made by members of the local community between November  
25 2024 and 31 December 2024?

26 A. Yes, I do.

27  
28 Q. I won't ask you to verify this, but you can take it  
29 from me on my count there were at least 10 complaints made  
30 by local residents in that period about leaking water or  
31 damage to property?

32 A. Yes.

33  
34 Q. And on my count South East Water conducted at least  
35 eight onsite inspections in the McCrae area before the leak  
36 was located?

37 A. I don't know the exact number, but I certainly take  
38 your point in terms of, you know, yes, absolutely not what  
39 we would want.

40  
41 Q. When I say eight onsite inspections in the McCrae area  
42 I mean generally Charlesworth Street, Waller Place and  
43 Coburn Avenue, which is a relatively confined area within  
44 McCrae. As you have read through those task summaries have  
45 you formed any views about South East Water's conduct?

46 A. As part of understanding this incident, as mentioned,  
47 we're reviewing our full leak process, including the alarms

1 that you spoke about and including the process that we  
2 generally go through. As I mentioned, we do go to a number  
3 of leaks each year and we use that, you know, EC testing  
4 and the acoustic detection, and that's obviously worked for  
5 other leaks, and in this area clearly it didn't work for us  
6 here, and so that's why we're relooking at that process in  
7 terms of what to do in a case where you're going back to  
8 site multiple times.

9  
10 Q. All right. But have you formed any views about the  
11 efficacy of South East Water's conduct in November  
12 2024/December 2024 in connection with these particular  
13 callouts?

14 A. Yes, as mentioned, it was our standard practice and it  
15 previously worked. I think what, you know, is clear is  
16 that it's not - we want to find every leak and we want to  
17 find it as soon as we can, and that's why we're reviewing  
18 that process.

19  
20 Q. I understand that you're doing a review, but the  
21 question that I've now asked you twice --

22 A. Sorry.

23  
24 Q. -- and I'll ask a third time --

25 A. Sorry.

26  
27 Q. -- is whether you've formed any views about the  
28 efficacy of South East Water's conduct in November and  
29 December in response to these callouts?

30 A. And please ask me again and I'm trying to answer it.  
31 It was standard practice at the time but we recognise it  
32 needs to be better.

33  
34 Q. You accept it wasn't good enough?

35 A. We want to try - it was our practice at the time, but  
36 we want to try and find all leaks we can as soon as we can,  
37 and so that's why we're relooking at it.

38  
39 Q. Let's just assess it objectively. Do you think that  
40 it is defensible that it took somewhere between six and  
41 eight weeks to identify the source of the leak?

42 A. It's certainly not what we would want to happen, so  
43 that's why we're relooking at it.

44  
45 Q. Ms Olsen, plainly you wouldn't want it to happen.

46 A. No.

1 Q. Nobody would want it to happen.  
2 A. Sorry.  
3  
4 Q. I'm asking you in more definitive terms than that.  
5 A. Oh, sorry.  
6  
7 Q. I want to know if it is your evidence that South East  
8 Water's conduct in ascertaining the source of the leak of  
9 the burst water main was acceptable?  
10 A. It was our practice at the time and we're relooking at  
11 it, and, yes, I am sorry that it took us so long.  
12  
13 Q. Do you think that there are particular circumstances  
14 connected with this particular leak that meant that six to  
15 eight weeks was a defensible time to have taken to find and  
16 stop the leak?  
17 A. I certainly wish it was better.  
18  
19 Q. Well, I'm not so much concerned with what you wish.  
20 A. Sure.  
21  
22 Q. I'm concerned with the views that you as the managing  
23 director of the organisation have formed.  
24 A. Sure.  
25  
26 Q. Have you caused yourself to investigate the  
27 circumstances by which this leak was ultimately found?  
28 A. Yes, sorry.  
29  
30 Q. Have you read the callout notes --  
31 A. Yes, I have.  
32  
33 Q. -- of the field crews?  
34 A. Yes.  
35  
36 Q. Have you seen the circumstances, for example, of  
37 the main that was burst?  
38 A. Yes, I have.  
39  
40 Q. Taking all of that information into account and any  
41 other information that's been provided to you by your  
42 staff --  
43 A. Yes.  
44  
45 Q. -- do you consider that the time it took for this leak  
46 to be identified and stopped was acceptable?  
47 A. It was our practice at the time, but, no, I don't

1 think that it's okay that it took so long.  
2  
3 Q. Do you think that it ought to have been identified and  
4 stopped at an earlier date?  
5 A. We would have if we could have, but we couldn't find  
6 it, and we were using the practices that we had at the  
7 time.  
8  
9 Q. What do you consider to be the reasons why it took so  
10 long?  
11 A. Yes. I think partly because we were using our  
12 standard practices that had worked previously. When I read  
13 through the records about what's happened you can see that  
14 there's a conclusion made using those practices or through  
15 discussions where our team members conclude that it's not  
16 our asset, that it's groundwater or something else.  
17  
18 Q. Could I go to SEW.0001.0001.0076, please. This is  
19 another collection of what I refer to as task summaries?  
20 A. Yes.  
21  
22 Q. You can see that this one is dated 16 December 2024?  
23 A. Yes.  
24  
25 Q. Can you see that it's concerning 4 Waller Place,  
26 McCrae?  
27 A. Yes.  
28  
29 Q. Do you have a general idea of where that is?  
30 A. Yes, I do.  
31  
32 Q. Can you see about mid-way through the block of text  
33 there's square brackets with "data complete" in it?  
34 A. Yes.  
35  
36 Q. Can you see there there's a reference to Margaret  
37 Campbell calling with another report for this one?  
38 A. Yes.  
39  
40 Q. She was advised that SEW had already attended --  
41 A. Yes.  
42  
43 Q. -- and there doesn't seem to be any leaks from  
44 the mains or nearby?  
45 A. Yes.  
46  
47 Q. She reports water bubbling up from the ground around

1 number 1 on the corner of Charlesworth Street?  
2 A. Yes.  
3  
4 Q. You see that?  
5 A. Yes, I can.  
6  
7 Q. So this is 16 December, and there's a further call  
8 that's been made by Ms Campbell in respect of water  
9 bubbling up from the ground?  
10 A. Yes.  
11  
12 Q. And you can see there that it's said that there  
13 doesn't seem to be any leaks from the main or nearby?  
14 A. Yes.  
15  
16 Q. Now, how would that be determined?  
17 A. Going up - again, I can just read this in terms of  
18 rather than being there, but they do that standard process,  
19 if you like, in terms of they test it and then they do the  
20 sounding, and so they've - again, I'd be inferring it, but  
21 I believe that they've probably used those two to - in our  
22 standard practice to then suggest it's not our asset.  
23  
24 Q. So you accept, though, that at this point in time the  
25 main at Bayview Road was burst?  
26 A. Yes.  
27  
28 Q. This is 16 December?  
29 A. Yes.  
30  
31 Q. There can't be any doubt of the burst by this point in  
32 time?  
33 A. No, absolutely, yes.  
34  
35 Q. And we were talking before about datasets --  
36 A. Yes.  
37  
38 Q. -- and the ability to ascertain usage and premises?  
39 A. Yes.  
40  
41 Q. From meters?  
42 A. Yes.  
43  
44 Q. All the more accurate and timely if it's a smart  
45 meter?  
46 A. Yes.  
47

1 Q. And the other source of information being water  
2 passing through --  
3 A. Our telemetry.  
4  
5 Q. -- the network in a relevant area?  
6 A. Yes.  
7  
8 Q. And how is it that your telemetry hasn't told you that  
9 there's a leak in this area at this point in time?  
10 A. Yes. So in terms of that when we've looked into the  
11 alarms, there's one on the 11th and then there's one on the  
12 16th, and in terms of that 16th then it gets associated  
13 with this job. That's why we're also looking at the  
14 telemetry in terms of as part of that process, leak review  
15 process.  
16  
17 Q. I directed you to the square brackets that says "data  
18 complete". Can you see above that there - so it looks as  
19 though that's perhaps 17 December 2024 that relates to?  
20 A. Yes.  
21  
22 Q. And that was relating to a second callout. The first  
23 callout is the one above. Do you see it says, "17 December  
24 2024, 6.35 on site"?  
25 A. Yes.  
26  
27 Q. "Water seeping from the nature main on the other side  
28 of the roadway. Sounded all along and short side.  
29 Services sounded nearby valves and fire plug, no noise.  
30 Gained access to number 1. Water sitting in front yard  
31 tested at 225"?  
32 A. Yes.  
33  
34 Q. "Meter not turning." Where it says, "Water sitting in  
35 front yard tested at 225," if this was to be slightly more  
36 grammatical, would you put a full stop after that, or do  
37 you think the words "meter not turning" relate to the 225?  
38 A. "225 meter not turning raining on site". I think it  
39 would be after the 225 maybe, yes, a full stop, comma. The  
40 "meter not turning" I think is a separate thing, yes.  
41  
42 Q. Yes. In any event, it moves to a different topic?  
43 A. Yes, yes.  
44  
45 Q. And so when it's speaking of "water sitting in the  
46 front yard tested at 225", do you understand that to be a  
47 conductivity test?

1 A. I don't know, but I'd absolutely assume so.  
2  
3 Q. Is there any other reading that you're aware that is  
4 conducted on site other than an electrical conductivity  
5 test?  
6 A. No, not that I'm aware of.  
7  
8 Q. All right. And so is it safe to assume that that's  
9 what's being referred to here?  
10 A. I would absolutely assume so, but - I don't know, but,  
11 I mean, I think --  
12  
13 Q. I'm not asking you to attest what --  
14 A. All right. No, yes, I think absolutely, yes.  
15  
16 Q. But only to your understanding as you read it?  
17 A. Absolutely, yes.  
18  
19 Q. And was your evidence earlier that you would expect  
20 mains water generally, not necessarily within your network,  
21 to be within the range of 80 to 200?  
22 A. I think ours is 83, and my understanding was at like  
23 50 to 200, but I could have that wrong.  
24  
25 Q. 50 to 200?  
26 A. Yes.  
27  
28 Q. Thank you. So if that's accepted to be the range,  
29 then you would accept that 225 is getting pretty close?  
30 A. Absolutely. I think that's why we sort of do those  
31 two tests, do you know what I mean, because there is  
32 sometimes - and I just want to acknowledge, like, we  
33 absolutely missed the Bayview Road leak. It's not that.  
34 But in terms of the standard tests that we do we sometimes  
35 see water that tests in our range and then they do  
36 listening on the assets to see, though, is it our assets  
37 versus just water in the environment.  
38  
39 Q. Yes. Yes, I understand that --  
40 A. Yes. Sorry.  
41  
42 Q. -- there's good sense in doing more than one check?  
43 A. Sure. Sorry.  
44  
45 Q. But in this particular circumstance the reading at 225  
46 would be at least a cause for concern, wouldn't it?  
47 A. Yes, I agree so; yes.

1  
2 MR COSTELLO: All right. Madam Chair, is that a  
3 convenient time?

4  
5 CHAIRPERSON: Yes. We'll have a break for 15 minutes.  
6

7 **SHORT ADJOURNMENT**  
8

9 MR COSTELLO: I apologise, Madam Chair.  
10

11 CHAIRPERSON: No, I think I'm a bit early.  
12

13 MR COSTELLO: That's the first time for me to ever be  
14 late. Ms Olsen, I want to try and do this in a fairly  
15 efficient way.

16 A. Sure.  
17

18 Q. And, if need be, I'll go to each particular task  
19 summary. But, in general terms, do you accept that from at  
20 least 28 November 2024 there were reports of water seeping  
21 from roads and footpaths in the McCrae area?

22 A. Yes, I do.  
23

24 Q. And do you accept that at various times staff or  
25 contractors of South East Water attended so as to  
26 investigate whether or not there was a leak of South East  
27 Water infrastructure?

28 A. Yes, I do.  
29

30 Q. And do you accept that at various times South East  
31 Water staff and contractors conducted electrical  
32 conductivity tests and concluded that the water was likely  
33 not South East Water water?

34 A. And in addition to that that they go out and they do  
35 their soundings as well and those tests that you mentioned,  
36 speak to residents, yes, I do.  
37

38 Q. And those various investigations caused them to think  
39 that the source of the leak was not your infrastructure?

40 A. That's correct.  
41

42 Q. Do you accept that in that period there were reports  
43 of very significant amounts of water running through the  
44 stormwater system?

45 A. Yes, I do.  
46

47 Q. Are you aware that on 20 December 2024 Fulton Hogan,



1 contractor engaged on behalf of the shire council,  
2 contacted South East Water concerning the amount of  
3 pressurised water running through the stormwater system?  
4 A. I'm not, but I know that - I remember in the records  
5 that Fulton Hogan's mentioned, so --  
6

7 Q. I see.

8 A. Sorry.  
9

10 Q. Do you accept that the results of electrical  
11 conductivity testing were a crucial aspect of South East  
12 Water's conclusions up to the point of 30 December that  
13 there was no relevant leak from its infrastructure?

14 A. I think it's the - when I read the records and speak  
15 to our people, I think it's those three different parts.  
16 So it's the EC testing; it's the sounding, which we, you  
17 know, often use to find it; and then it's the different  
18 conversations that - you'll see in the records that a  
19 number of time the residents mentioned the springs or that,  
20 you know, in some cases they talk about it's just been  
21 going for a short while or it's being going for years. And  
22 so I think a combination of all of those.  
23

24 Q. Do you have an idea of the range that the audible leak  
25 detection works in?

26 A. No, I don't.  
27

28 Q. Do you have an understanding of whether or not there  
29 are any limits to the range that that type of testing works  
30 in?

31 A. There would be specialists that would, but, no,  
32 I don't, sorry.  
33

34 Q. Okay. And you haven't enquired before giving evidence  
35 today whether or not a leak on Bayview Road, for example,  
36 could be picked up by audible detection in Waller Place?

37 A. I haven't enquired into that. I enquired looking to  
38 understand where we'd gone with the acoustic detection and  
39 if we had gone over the freeway before we found it.  
40

41 Q. So are you satisfied that the acoustic leak detection  
42 that was conducted was sufficient?

43 A. It was standard practice but didn't find this leak  
44 until the person went over the freeway.  
45

46 Q. Do you accept that it was sufficient?

47 A. I'm sorry, do you mean sufficient to find the leak?

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Q. Do you think that the acoustic leak detection testing that was done in November and December in relation to the events in McCrae was sufficient?

A. It was our practice at the time, but it's not sufficient - it wasn't sufficient to find the leak.

Q. All right. You've said a number of times now that it was "consistent with our practice at the time"?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you formed any views about whether your practices at the time were adequate?

A. They were adequate within the sense that we'd used them previously to - and we do have, you know, leaks like others, but they weren't in terms of this type of situation where the leak itself is a distance from where any water is surfacing and where there's - you know, it's hard to find. It made me realise that there's a range of factors that generally occur with leaks, like people detecting water near the surface, et cetera.

Q. Has your organisation made any amendments to its policies concerning electrical conductivity testing as a consequence of the learnings from the McCrae event?

A. We're doing a full review in terms of all of that and the alarm - all of the different components, so the alarms, the acoustic testing, the EC testing and what happens if we go out to a site multiple times.

Q. Is that part of the same work that's being done by the general manager that you mentioned before?

A. No, that's actually separate.

Q. All right. And who's responsible for that work?

A. That's Tim Lloyd.

Q. All right. And what's his title?

A. He's the general manager of service delivery.

Q. And that work includes consideration of the protocols for electrical conductivity testing, does it?

A. Leak detection more broadly including that, yes.

Q. All right. Could I have on the screen, please, SEW.0001.0001.0076. I think that's a very long document, but if I could have page 0140. Yes, thank you, that's it.

1 Ms Olsen, have you seen this image before?  
2 A. I can't remember. I have gone through all the  
3 documents, or tried to, of the leak detection reports.  
4  
5 Q. This is a photograph that was supplied by South East  
6 Water as part of a bundle of documents in answer to a  
7 notice to produce?  
8 A. M'hmm.  
9  
10 Q. And it is associated with one batch of the task  
11 summaries?  
12 A. Yes. Thank you.  
13  
14 Q. And, as I understand it, what it is showing here is a  
15 sample of water taken by an SEW staff member or contractor  
16 for the purposes of electrical conductivity testing. Do  
17 you accept that?  
18 A. I'm not sure, sorry.  
19  
20 Q. Okay. Is there any other reason why a South East  
21 Water staff member or contractor would take a sample of  
22 water?  
23 A. I don't know.  
24  
25 Q. You're not aware of any?  
26 A. No, I'm not aware of any. Actually, I am aware of  
27 one, in terms of they might be testing it at the site and  
28 sometimes then we take samples to test off site.  
29  
30 Q. That's right. And so is the offsite testing more  
31 extensive than the onsite testing?  
32 A. Yes, it is. I mean, generally, yes.  
33  
34 Q. You don't know, though, whether the onsite testing is  
35 for anything more than electrical conductivity?  
36 A. I don't.  
37  
38 Q. Okay. And are you aware of whether or not the  
39 electrical conductivity of water can be affected by the  
40 circumstances in which the water's found?  
41 A. I'm not, although it's part of what we're looking to  
42 understand, as part of our broader leak detection process.  
43  
44 Q. Having a look at the sample there --  
45 A. Yes.  
46  
47 Q. -- would it be surprising to you if that sample,

1 having been tested, came back as not being water from South  
2 East Water?

3 A. No, sorry, I should have answered that in terms of  
4 I think that's partly what we're looking to understand in  
5 terms of how those results might be changed.  
6

7 Q. When did this work commence in reviewing your policies  
8 and procedures?

9 A. We started our broader leak detection work in July  
10 2024. That's not specific to this. That's sort of  
11 broader, looking at what we could do to reduce leaks across  
12 our network. And then there's specific work sort of based  
13 on some of the McCrae findings. I'm not sure, but we could  
14 come back to you on it.  
15

16 Q. And there's no particular deadline by which that  
17 work's to be completed?

18 A. I'm not sure, sorry.  
19

20 Q. Why are you not sure?

21 A. Only because I think there's some information that we  
22 probably don't have sort of along the lines of the  
23 questions that you were going to in terms of how does the  
24 electroconductivity change or not or when it could be a  
25 useful measure or not in terms of if it interacts with  
26 groundwater, et cetera. So I think - I imagine that we  
27 might need to do it in phases because we may not have all  
28 the information to be able to determine something like  
29 this, how we would solve it next time.  
30

31 Q. You're the sole water supplier, domestic water  
32 supplier, for the whole of the Mornington Peninsula?

33 A. That's correct. Some people have tanks.  
34

35 Q. Yes. And you accept that there are quite a number of  
36 hilly regions in the Mornington Peninsula area?

37 A. Yes, I do  
38

39 Q. Are you aware that there are now six separate erosion  
40 management overlays that can apply to areas within the  
41 Mornington Peninsula?

42 A. Yes, I am.  
43

44 Q. And you're aware that the hilly area here where the  
45 landslides occurred was not the subject of an erosion  
46 management overlay?

47 A. Yes, sir.

1  
2 Q. And so it necessarily follows that, even all of the  
3 areas - even amongst all of the areas covered by an erosion  
4 management overlay, that is not a complete description of  
5 the hilly areas within the Mornington Peninsula?

6 A. Yes, I understand.  
7

8 Q. Are you concerned that your policies and procedures as  
9 they currently exist might mean that a leak went undetected  
10 for an extended period of times in one of those areas as it  
11 did here?

12 A. I think that is exactly why we're reviewing it at this  
13 stage and trying to treat leaks in McCrae and other areas  
14 as fast as we can.  
15

16 Q. I want to be fair to you, Ms Olsen --

17 A. Sure. Sorry.  
18

19 Q. -- so you can respond to this however you wish.

20 A. Sure.  
21

22 Q. From the evidence that you have given today and the  
23 evidence that you have provided to this commission in  
24 writing, there is not the slightest evidence to suggest  
25 that South East Water take any of this as being an urgent  
26 matter; is that a fair description of your internal view?

27 A. No, it's not. So in terms of for the McCrae area -  
28 and I'm sorry if I've given that impression - we now are  
29 doing proactive leak detection every two weeks there. All  
30 of the jobs there are priority 1, which is our highest job  
31 to go to, and then more broadly we've tried to understand  
32 all of our processes that could have included landslide as  
33 a risk and that would be better improved because of it, and  
34 that's why we're reviewing all of those processes.  
35

36 Q. Jobs within the McCrae area have been given a priority  
37 1. What about jobs in other areas that are not dissimilar  
38 geographically and geologically to the McCrae area?

39 A. I'm not sure.  
40

41 Q. Well, isn't that potentially a very large problem for  
42 your organisation, Ms Olsen?

43 A. I think it's something that we can take on as we try.  
44 Obviously there's different safety concerns across all of  
45 our areas. Sometimes it might be hills, sometimes it might  
46 be something else in terms of determining the leaks. But  
47 I very much take your point.

1  
2 Q. Well, what I want to understand is the extent to which  
3 you as the leader of this organisation have actively turned  
4 your mind to these questions?  
5 A. Absolutely.  
6  
7 Q. There are obviously competing safety priorities?  
8 A. Sure.  
9  
10 Q. And I fully accept that hilly areas are one but not  
11 the only one?  
12 A. Yes.  
13  
14 Q. But it took two months, perhaps six weeks at best, for  
15 this leak to be identified. And I accept that the cause of  
16 the McCrae landslide is a matter that is under very serious  
17 investigation by this board and that no conclusions have  
18 yet been drawn. But, given the sheer volume of water  
19 involved here and the propensity for water to induce  
20 landslides, isn't this a very, very serious matter for your  
21 organisation, not just in the McCrae area but more  
22 generally?  
23 A. Absolutely it is a serious matter and we have been  
24 focused on it too.  
25  
26 Q. One of the reasons that I said to you that the matter  
27 doesn't appear to be given appropriate urgency and perhaps  
28 treated with the concern that it ought be is that in your  
29 witness statement you are quite definitive on a number of  
30 points. In paragraph 70 of your witness statement, in  
31 answer to the question - in answer to a question about the  
32 effects of any surface water on public infrastructure land  
33 or private property, you have answered, "SEW is not aware  
34 of any detrimental effects directly caused by the burst  
35 water main." Do you recall saying that in your written  
36 material?  
37 A. Yes, I do.  
38  
39 Q. Is that still your evidence?  
40 A. No, well, partly in terms of the report that we  
41 received, the report you referred to as the SMEC report, we  
42 note that in that SMEC report it says that the upwelling in  
43 Charlesworth Street and Waller Place may be attributable to  
44 South East Water, and so, whilst we will continue to focus  
45 on investigating the landslide, we will also investigate  
46 that. As I mentioned, we have other bursts and leaks where  
47 we are at fault, and then we have a series of processes for

1 doing that. I think up until that report we didn't even  
2 have that it may be, and it may be feasible, I recognise we  
3 still need to understand if it is, but that is a line of  
4 enquiry that we will keep following.

5  
6 Q. As you sit there now, are you aware of detrimental  
7 effects directly caused by the burst water main?

8 A. That are definitely, no, I'm not. I mean, around the  
9 area - around the area in terms of the burst. We also then  
10 commissioned the report that you referred to because we  
11 thought it was clearly for everyone really important to  
12 understand if our assets could have contributed to the  
13 landslip, and that's why we commissioned that report to  
14 understand it.

15  
16 Q. All right. Well, let me just make sure I understand  
17 your evidence.

18 A. Sure.

19  
20 Q. Perhaps if you could attempt at least to begin with a  
21 yes or no answer --

22 A. Sure.

23  
24 Q. -- and if you want to give more evidence after that  
25 you can.

26 A. Absolutely.

27  
28 Q. As you sit there now, are you aware of any detrimental  
29 effects directly caused by the burst water main on Bayview  
30 Road?

31 A. No, not directly. We will investigate based on that -  
32 given they said it may be feasible.

33  
34 Q. Putting aside the direct effects of the landslide --

35 A. Sure.

36  
37 Q. -- as you sit there now, is it your evidence that you  
38 do not believe that the burst water main on Bayview Road  
39 even caused damage to council property?

40 A. That's the area that I meant in terms of the  
41 Charlesworth and Waller Place, that the expert report notes  
42 that that may be feasible, and so that's what we need to  
43 investigate, and, as I mentioned, where we have bursts and  
44 where, as we said before, are accountable, then we take  
45 accountability for it. So we will keep concentrating on  
46 the landslip, but we will also investigate that separately.  
47

1 Q. You mentioned the SMEC report a number of times?

2 A. Yes.

3

4 Q. Actually, before I come to that, could we just move to  
5 the first page of that document, please. Commissioner,  
6 I tender that document.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON: The document on the screen or the SMEC  
9 report?

10

11 MR COSTELLO: The document on the screen, please.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON: The task summary with document ID  
14 SEW.0001.0001.0076 is exhibit CA26.

15

16 **EXHIBIT #CA26 TASK SUMMARY WITH DOCUMENT ID**  
17 **SEW.0001.0001.0076**

18

19 MR COSTELLO: And while I'm there, Madam Chair, might  
20 I also tender the task summary that I referred to earlier,  
21 which is SEW.0001.0001.0085.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON: Yes. That will be part of CA26.

24

25 **EXHIBIT #CA26 (ADDED) TASK SUMMARY WITH DOCUMENT ID**  
26 **SEW.0001.0001.0085.**

27

28 MR COSTELLO: And the final one to which I will refer that  
29 might be put in the same bundle is SEW.0001.0001.0088.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON: Yes, that will be part of the same bundle.

32

33 **EXHIBIT #CA26 (ADDED) TASK SUMMARY WITH DOCUMENT ID**  
34 **SEW.0001.0001.0088.**

35

36 MR COSTELLO: Thank you. Could I have on the screen,  
37 please, SEW.0001.0001.0142, and if I could have page 0082.  
38 Can you see the paragraph immediately above the heading  
39 "Observations" that commences with reference to figure 37?

40 A. Yes.

41

42 Q. Could you just read that paragraph to yourself,  
43 please?

44 A. Sure. Yes. I've read it, Mr Costello.

45

46 Q. This is the report prepared by SMEC?

47 A. Yes.



1  
2 Q. On the instructions of your solicitors?

3 A. That's right.  
4

5 Q. And, having read that paragraph, is there any basis -  
6 do you have any basis to conclude other than that it was  
7 South East Water - a leak from South East Water's  
8 infrastructure that caused the damage to Charlesworth  
9 Street and Waller Place at least?

10 A. I take that, and apologise that I sort of read that it  
11 may be feasible and we said that we would investigate it.  
12 So I recognise it says "reasonable to conclude".  
13

14 Q. Is the current state of affairs in respect of the  
15 repair works at Charlesworth Street and Waller Place that  
16 council effected those repairs and South East Water has not  
17 been billed for them?

18 A. That would be my understanding, yes.  
19

20 Q. It would be or it is?

21 A. I don't know.  
22

23 Q. You don't know?

24 A. No.  
25

26 Q. We'll come to the SMEC report in more detail in a  
27 moment but, just so I can understand it, this report was  
28 commissioned after this board of inquiry was announced by  
29 the government; is that correct?

30 A. I think it was 18 February, yes.  
31

32 Q. It was commissioned because this board of inquiry was  
33 announced by the government?

34 A. It was - when we first looked up post the landslide  
35 and looked at our assets and did the tests in the vicinity  
36 of the landslide, we determined that our assets were  
37 performing well and that we didn't have any leaks or other  
38 causes to believe that they could impact the landslide.  
39 But we had customers and others contact us to ask about the  
40 Bayview Road leak and if that could have impacted the  
41 landslide. And we also had other hypotheses around could  
42 water either from the Bayview Road leak or other sources of  
43 water have travelled down some of our assets and  
44 contributed to the landslide. We wanted to know if we  
45 could have contributed to the landslide and so that, if we  
46 did, we could put that information in and look to address  
47 it and provide that information.

1  
2 Q. Was this report commissioned because the board of  
3 inquiry was called?  
4 A. No.  
5  
6 Q. Why was this report commissioned by solicitors?  
7 A. Partly because my understanding is that we needed a  
8 finalised report, and we needed a finalised report that we  
9 could take to insurers before we could release it. And my  
10 understanding - I'm not sure if this is right or not - is  
11 that that's an important step to get the insurers to tick  
12 off, before it gets released it needs to be a final report  
13 to do that, so that if South East Water had contributed  
14 that there would be insurance for it. If we didn't get  
15 that tick-off from insurance we have funds, and so South  
16 East Water could pay, but our funds come from the overall  
17 customer base, and so that felt like an important step to  
18 me.  
19  
20 Q. Why does any of that relate to solicitors being  
21 involved?  
22 A. My understanding was that it needed to be finalised  
23 and to go to the insurers before it got released, and so  
24 that was an important step.  
25  
26 Q. Are you aware of who Mr Hugo Bolton is?  
27 A. No, I'm not.  
28  
29 Q. He's the technical principal hydrologist at SMEC?  
30 A. Okay.  
31  
32 Q. And he is the person who was instructed on behalf of  
33 South East Water's solicitors to produce what is described  
34 in the covering letter and in his report as a  
35 multi-disciplinary expert report?  
36 A. Yes.  
37  
38 Q. And in the letter of instructions from Thomson Geer to  
39 Mr Bolton it says, "In order to advise SEW in preparation  
40 for the board of inquiry the State government has announced  
41 into the incident, we are instructed to engage you to  
42 provide a quantitative report that assesses the impact  
43 SEW's infrastructure is likely to have had on groundwater,"  
44 and so on?  
45 A. Yes.  
46  
47 Q. Is that your understanding?

1 A. That it's for the board of inquiry? Sorry.

2

3 Q. That the report was commissioned in order to advise  
4 SEW in preparation for the board of inquiry?

5 A. My understanding is that we wanted to understand if we  
6 had contributed to the landslip. We've had that discussion  
7 internally as well, that if we have contributed in any way  
8 that we will own it and acknowledge it, and, you know, I'm  
9 sure that we were going to do this report. We kept hoping  
10 it would be earlier, but it takes time. But I'm sure it's  
11 in relation to the board of inquiry too.

12

13 Q. I asked you before whether this report was  
14 commissioned by reason of the board of inquiry being  
15 called, and I'd understood your evidence to be no. Are you  
16 correct or is Thomson Geer correct? Because the two  
17 statements appear at least to me to be contradictory.

18 A. Sure. I understand what you're saying. I believe we  
19 would have done this report to understand if we had  
20 contributed anyway. We wanted to understand that.  
21 I understand what you're saying, that this report - that  
22 the instructions for this report were for the board of  
23 inquiry.

24

25 Q. And so is it the case that before this report was  
26 commissioned on 18 February no report had been sought in  
27 relation to what might be generally described as the  
28 landslide?

29 A. We hadn't sought a report. Post the hypothesis that  
30 we started hearing from customers and others, we started to  
31 look into it ourselves. But we don't have - you know,  
32 we've got people that know sewers and waters, but we don't  
33 have people that have got geotechnical or hydrology  
34 experience or expertise, and so we couldn't - don't know  
35 the answers internally.

36

37 Q. All right. Let's get into the Bayview Road burst  
38 itself.

39 A. Sure.

40

41 Q. Before that, I ought tender that report.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON: Yes. The SMEC report dated 5 May 2025 is  
44 exhibit CA27.

45

46 **EXHIBIT #CA27 SMEC REPORT DATED 5 MAY 2025.**

47

1 MR COSTELLO: Your evidence is that South East Water first  
2 became aware of the burst water main at approximately 1 pm  
3 on 30 December?

4 A. That's right.

5

6 Q. Do you know who identified the burst water main?

7 A. It was one of our team members, Garry.

8

9 Q. What's his role in the organisation?

10 A. I believe he's part of our water maintenance team.

11

12 Q. All right. You say in paragraph 42 of your witness  
13 statement that the discovering employee, who we now know to  
14 be Garry, attended Waller Place to assist a contractor in  
15 relation to a report of a possible leak?

16 A. Yes.

17

18 Q. It then says, "The discovering employee heard and then  
19 observed the movement of water in the council's stormwater  
20 system at Waller Place"?

21 A. Yes.

22

23 Q. There's then a reference in 43 to the discovering  
24 employee reviewing water tank data?

25 A. Yes.

26

27 Q. What is the water tank data?

28 A. So one of the things that Garry looks at is to try and  
29 understand if there's a difference between flow in December  
30 23 and December 24 as a way of trying to ascertain if there  
31 is another sign of a leak.

32

33 Q. It was the evidence of Mr Cooper to this inquiry that  
34 he told South East Water personnel on 24 December that they  
35 needed to check the other side of the freeway; are you  
36 aware of that?

37 A. I am, yes.

38

39 Q. Are you aware of whether there is any internal record  
40 that confirms that account?

41 A. I don't know if it's a different - a question of  
42 dates, and I'm not saying that Mr Cooper is wrong, but  
43 there is a record that goes to 21 December which notes a  
44 conversation, I believe that's with Brett, and then we look  
45 on the other side of the freeway, but unfortunately don't  
46 find the leak at that stage.

47

1 Q. Did not find the leak at that stage?  
2 A. No, we did not.  
3  
4 Q. Mr Bolch gave evidence about a class 12 150mm UPVC  
5 pipe that was marked on the map as installed on 1 January  
6 1963. Did you hear that evidence?  
7 A. Yes, I did.  
8  
9 Q. Is that accurate?  
10 A. I'm not sure about the first part, but certainly that  
11 it's PVC and it's 1963 in terms of the installation.  
12  
13 Q. All right. In your company's submission to the board  
14 of inquiry --  
15 A. Yes.  
16  
17 Q. -- something is said about the identification of the  
18 Bayview Road leak. I'll take you to it.  
19 A. Sure.  
20  
21 Q. It's SEW.0001.0001.0111. I asked you at the start of  
22 your evidence whether or not you had approved this  
23 document, and your evidence was yes; is that correct?  
24 A. Yes, it was.  
25  
26 Q. All right. If we could go to page 10 of the document,  
27 please. Do you see here under the heading "How the Bayview  
28 Road water main burst was identified"?  
29 A. Yes.  
30  
31 Q. Before we get to the content, just so I can understand  
32 the internal processes and thinking of South East Water,  
33 why is this information set out in the form of a submission  
34 rather than in the form of a witness statement?  
35 A. We thought in terms of the witness statement it was  
36 answers to particular questions and that there might be  
37 broader information that would be useful.  
38  
39 Q. Thank you. And are you aware of how this document was  
40 prepared?  
41 A. Yes, the team worked on it.  
42  
43 Q. Who's the principal author of this document, or is it  
44 not fair to describe a single person as being the principal  
45 author?  
46 A. I was - so there was multiple people that worked on  
47 it.

1  
2 Q. Are all of those people employees of South East Water?  
3 A. Yes, they are.  
4  
5 Q. Okay. So you say that this - "the leak in this main  
6 was not readily detectible"; do you see that?  
7 A. Yes.  
8  
9 Q. And you then give some general commentary about  
10 circumstances in which leaks and bursts might be more  
11 difficult to detect?  
12 A. Yes.  
13  
14 Q. And then in the fourth paragraph you say, "The Bayview  
15 Road water main burst was not readily detectible owing to  
16 its location in bushland, distance approximately 150 metres  
17 from the area in Waller Place where water issues were  
18 initially reported, being on the other side of the freeway,  
19 and concurrent issues of surfacing groundwater." I just  
20 want to address each of those.  
21 A. Sure.  
22  
23 Q. The first is the location of the burst water main. If  
24 that could be put down, please, and we could see the  
25 photograph at the top. This is figure 3, which is said to  
26 be a photo of the site of the Bayview Road burst located in  
27 bushland?  
28 A. Yes.  
29  
30 Q. Can you see that?  
31 A. Yes, I can.  
32  
33 Q. Is that - to be clear, is that a photograph of near  
34 the burst site or is that where the main is?  
35 A. I don't know.  
36  
37 Q. All right. But you do know that this is in the  
38 general vicinity of the water main?  
39 A. Yes, that's my understanding, yes.  
40  
41 Q. And you know that there's no identification above  
42 ground that identifies the site of the water main?  
43 A. Sorry, could you repeat that?  
44  
45 Q. Do you know that there was no identification -  
46 aboveground identification that identified the site of  
47 the water main?

1 A. Do you mean like is there a fence or something that  
2 could have --  
3  
4 Q. Is there any way of somebody immediately ascertaining  
5 that there was a water main beneath the land there?  
6 A. Our people know where our water mains are.  
7  
8 Q. Is there any way that your people can identify that a  
9 water main is above ground without reference - sorry, is  
10 below ground without reference to a map, for example?  
11 A. There's different posts at different times, yes, in  
12 terms of that.  
13  
14 Q. Okay. And do you know whether there was a post here?  
15 A. I actually don't know, no.  
16  
17 Q. You have not enquired about that matter?  
18 A. No, sorry.  
19  
20 Q. All right. Do you accept, though, that this water  
21 main was located in an area of fairly dense bushland?  
22 A. Yes.  
23  
24 Q. Scrub?  
25 A. Yes, I visited. That's how I would describe it. It's  
26 at the - like, you - it's at the edge of the scrub, but  
27 yes.  
28  
29 Q. And do you have internal policies and procedures about  
30 the maintenance of areas above mains?  
31 A. You mean in terms of vegetation clearing, all those  
32 type of things?  
33  
34 Q. Yes.  
35 A. I'm not sure.  
36  
37 Q. Are you aware whether or not South East Water has  
38 rights, for example, by way of an easement to access land  
39 where its mains are located?  
40 A. I'm not sure, but I expect so.  
41  
42 Q. Do you understand - do you know, rather, who the owner  
43 of the land was where this main was located?  
44 A. I'm not sure.  
45  
46 Q. You know, though, that the contractors and employees  
47 that arrived on site were not able to gain immediate access

1 to the water main?  
2 A. Yes.  
3  
4 Q. And they weren't able to obtain that access by reason  
5 of the bushland and scrub?  
6 A. That's right, and the fence.  
7  
8 Q. And the fence. But you don't know whether or not you  
9 have internal policies about access to water mains, for  
10 example?  
11 A. No, sorry, I don't.  
12  
13 Q. I'll come back to that document in a moment, but  
14 I want to show you another photograph which is at  
15 SEW.0001.0001.0076, and it's at page 0191, which I think is  
16 the last - might be the second last. This is the location  
17 of the water main; are you aware of that?  
18 A. It looks like it, yes.  
19  
20 Q. Yes. Have you seen this photograph before?  
21 A. I'm sure I probably have if it's in that file, yes.  
22  
23 Q. Okay. On 30 December at 1.58 pm someone from South  
24 East Water, that may have been Garry, arrived on site to  
25 find the burst 150mm UPVC main and reported that the valve  
26 was very stiff, he used a heavy key wrench to turn, it was  
27 very stiff and he didn't want to snap the top, may need to  
28 extend the shutoff, there's a gas transmission area in the  
29 area and it's about 30 metres away from the excavation.  
30 Are you aware of that?  
31 A. I've read that report, yes.  
32  
33 Q. Okay. That meant that on 30 December the leak  
34 couldn't be repaired or stopped; is that your  
35 understanding?  
36 A. Yes. So they attempted to put a valve in and that  
37 they were unsuccessful at that time.  
38  
39 Q. That's right. And putting a valve in was one method  
40 of stopping the flow?  
41 A. Stopping it faster, yes.  
42  
43 Q. And that didn't work?  
44 A. No.  
45  
46 Q. So they had to come back the next day?  
47 A. Yes.



1  
2 Q. And they had to dig out the main?  
3 A. Yes.  
4  
5 Q. Are you aware of the fact that they needed to remove  
6 vegetation to get access to the main?  
7 A. Yes, I am.  
8  
9 Q. And you're aware that the fence created a further  
10 difficulty?  
11 A. Yes, I am.  
12  
13 Q. And having reviewed the task summaries in relation to  
14 the callout to the water main, and knowing the significant  
15 difficulties that were involved in managing to get access  
16 to the main and then shut off the water, have you had any  
17 reflection on the practices, policies and procedures of  
18 South East Water in connection with access to mains?  
19 A. In terms of that procedure we have steps to contact  
20 other utilities if we need to or get permission from other  
21 entities. I believe we got permission from council so that  
22 we could remove those trees and keep going. But in terms  
23 of that - sorry, your question, have I had - have I thought  
24 about the sort of vegetation or clearing, no, I have not.  
25  
26 Q. Are you aware of whether there are other mains within  
27 your network that would be in not dissimilar locations to  
28 this in the sense of the terrain?  
29 A. Sorry, could you repeat the question?  
30  
31 Q. Is this - I'll put it in a different way.  
32 A. Yes, thank you.  
33  
34 Q. Is this so unusual as to be a one-off, the location of  
35 this main?  
36 A. No, it wouldn't be.  
37  
38 Q. There would be other mains in your network that are in  
39 positions that are difficult to access?  
40 A. Mains that have vegetation around them or on them,  
41 yes.  
42  
43 Q. And the presence of vegetation around a main  
44 necessarily will cause a delay in accessing a main, won't  
45 it?  
46 A. There could be other reasons, but that would be one,  
47 yes.

1  
2 Q. It's one of the reasons that might be?  
3 A. That's right, yes.  
4  
5 Q. A fence might be another reason?  
6 A. That's right.  
7  
8 Q. It being in an isolated spot might be another reason?  
9 A. That's correct.  
10  
11 Q. Are there others?  
12 A. It might be on - that to access it there's safety  
13 issues or, you know, different things need to be closed  
14 down or someone's built over different areas, et cetera.  
15  
16 Q. All right. And are you aware of whether there are  
17 restrictions, for example, in construction occurring over  
18 mains?  
19 A. I don't know the details, but I understand that there  
20 generally is, yes  
21  
22 Q. If we could go back to the submission document,  
23 please, which is SEW.0001.0001.0111, and if we could go to  
24 page 11. You set out in 6.3 some information about how the  
25 main was repaired?  
26 A. Yes.  
27  
28 Q. You say the repair was complex?  
29 A. Yes.  
30  
31 Q. It was complex for a variety of reasons, including the  
32 presence of a gas main nearby?  
33 A. That's right.  
34  
35 Q. Is that a relatively common thing?  
36 A. That there's other utilities? There can be, yes.  
37  
38 Q. And does that necessitate obtaining permission from  
39 the other utility before you dig?  
40 A. Generally, if there's another utility, then that's  
41 required, yes.  
42  
43 Q. All right. Can you see in the sixth bullet point it  
44 says, "Deemed the site unsafe to complete job owing to  
45 large trees that risked causing collapse and causing the  
46 area" - "we closed the area with safety markings"?  
47 A. Yes, I can.

1  
2 Q. Are you aware of whether the state of those trees had  
3 been affected by the leak?  
4 A. No, I'm not.  
5  
6 Q. Okay. And then a few bullet points down, "approval  
7 was necessary from the council to remove fencing and  
8 trees"; do you see that?  
9 A. Yes.  
10  
11 Q. And once all of that was done there was then access to  
12 the main and there was the identification of a small split?  
13 A. Yes.  
14  
15 Q. Approximately 100mm long?  
16 A. That's right.  
17  
18 Q. And so that pipe, it says, was repaired. It was  
19 repaired by it being - a section of the pipe being  
20 replaced?  
21 A. That's right.  
22  
23 Q. And does the section of the pipe that was removed from  
24 that main still exist?  
25 A. I don't know.  
26  
27 Q. Where does the information about the size of the split  
28 in that bullet point come from?  
29 A. My understanding is that comes from the report.  
30  
31 Q. Which report?  
32 A. I believe either the task summary or the description  
33 from the employee.  
34  
35 Q. Thank you. The amount of water that leaked from the  
36 burst main is, as I understand it, a matter that South East  
37 Water is still considering?  
38 A. We've got, I suppose, a point in time and, yes, the  
39 last one that I saw was 8 May.  
40  
41 Q. All right. We'll come to 8 May.  
42 A. Sure.  
43  
44 Q. But did you hear the evidence of Mr John Bolch earlier  
45 in the week?  
46 A. Not all of it, but some parts, yes.  
47

1 Q. All right. In one part of it he gave evidence of a  
2 calculation that he had done where he thought that a  
3 25mm opening of a pipe of that size could have leaked up to  
4 80 million litres of water over two months. Did you hear  
5 that evidence?  
6 A. I did hear that bit, yes.  
7  
8 Q. And have you had any enquiries made about Mr Bolch's  
9 method of calculation?  
10 A. Yes.  
11  
12 Q. All right. And what's your view about that  
13 calculation?  
14 A. I should say my view is based on conversations with  
15 people who have got a more detailed understanding than me,  
16 is that in terms of the split that's one part of  
17 information that goes to the leak, but it also sort of  
18 depends - pressure changes over time, and the size of that  
19 split is likely to have changed over time.  
20  
21 Q. That's right. So although there is reference to a  
22 split, what you describe in paragraph 55 of your witness  
23 statement as a small split --  
24 A. Yes.  
25  
26 Q. -- of 100mm long, that might not have been the size of  
27 the split for the entire time?  
28 A. That's right.  
29  
30 Q. And why do you describe a 100mm split as a small  
31 split?  
32 A. Because other times that there's a structural failure  
33 it might be larger.  
34  
35 Q. How do you know that?  
36 A. That's my understanding, in terms of people that know  
37 this area better than me, of how they describe it.  
38  
39 Q. You asked somebody whether or not a 100mm split was a  
40 small split or a large split?  
41 A. No, I didn't.  
42  
43 Q. You just gave that descriptor yourself, did you?  
44 A. I didn't write the word "small".  
45  
46 Q. Well, let's just be clear about something, Ms Olsen.  
47 A. Sorry.

1  
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Q. You signed a witness statement only hours ago --  
A. Sure, no, absolutely, I take accountability for writing the word "small".  
  
Q. So "small" is your description by reason of signing it, but you didn't choose that word?  
A. No. I take accountability for that word. I just --  
  
Q. All right. Who chose that word?  
A. Well, I - I'm not sure who actually wrote it, but I take accountability for that word.  
  
Q. Someone prepared this statement for you?  
A. That's right.  
  
Q. And that word, that descriptor was used, and you adopted it?  
A. That's right.  
  
Q. And, as you sit there now, can you say to the chair definitively that that's an accurate description of a 100mm-long split?  
A. I suppose it's relative to how people think when there's a burst, how big they think the split will be. It's more trying to say it's not, you know, a huge, gaping hole. It's a - yes, this size.  
  
Q. Well, it's a 150mm diameter pipe, isn't it?  
A. Yes.  
  
Q. So the size of the split's got to be viewed in the context of the pipe, doesn't it?  
A. I take your point.  
  
Q. And my question to you is in terms of splits in pipes do you know that a 100mm split is in fact a small split relative to other splits that occur?  
A. Good point. No, I do not.  
  
Q. Thank you. Now, at paragraph 64 of your witness statement --  
A. Yes.  
  
Q. -- you state that, "South East Water estimates approximately 37 megalitres of water escaped from the burst water main between November until its isolation on

1 31 December 2024"?

2 A. Yes.

3

4 Q. How was that calculated?

5 A. So that was looking at the water balances. So we

6 don't have telemetry that would tell us exactly what it is.

7 So it's trying to look at the water in versus the water

8 out, and then looking over a number of years to take out

9 other seasonal factors, et cetera, and then a range is come

10 up with. That's partly because we also don't and can't

11 know the exact date that it started.

12

13 Q. You say in this witness statement that between

14 November and its isolation on 31 December. When in

15 November did you use as the date for the calculation?

16 A. Yes, so there is different ranges. The sort of the

17 first range that people look at is believed to be

18 1 November, and I appreciate that there will be people that

19 are more expert than I in explaining this, but what we sort

20 of tried to do is to get it where it's like a zero, where

21 it zeros out, and that's sort of the 1 November time, or

22 you could say that - do another one and say that it's

23 August.

24

25 Q. So in paragraph 64 of your witness statement, where it

26 says, "SEW estimates approximately 37 megalitres of water

27 escaped from the burst water main between November 2024 and

28 its isolation on 31 December 2024," would that statement

29 still be true if the number 1 was put in front of November?

30 A. Sorry, could you repeat that?

31

32 Q. Sorry, let me put it on the screen for you.

33 A. Sure.

34

35 Q. SEW.0001.0001.0110, page 11, paragraph 64. Sorry, it

36 might be - yes, there. Thank you.

37 A. Yes, it is. So that current range still based on the

38 work from 1 November is currently between 36 and 40. So,

39 you know, approximately 37.

40

41 Q. Right. So that calculation there was done between

42 1 November and 31 December, was it?

43 A. That's estimating that time period, yes.

44

45 Q. Yes.

46 A. Yes.

47

1 Q. And you said there has been more recent work done on  
2 this question?  
3 A. It's still ongoing, yes.  
4  
5 Q. But the most recent work provides an estimate as at  
6 8 May?  
7 A. That's the one that I've got, yes.  
8  
9 Q. All right. And what was the conclusion, provisional  
10 though it is, reached on 8 May?  
11 A. That if it's between 1 November and 31 December the  
12 estimated range is between 36 and 40, and then if you take  
13 it back to August it's between - I can't remember the lower  
14 figure, and up to 45.  
15  
16 Q. All right. And why didn't you say that when you  
17 amended your witness statement this morning?  
18 A. We looked at that and because it's approximately 37  
19 and it's between 36 and 40 we thought that's similar.  
20  
21 Q. All right. You've spoken about that calculation  
22 perhaps differing if one takes the date back to August?  
23 A. Yes.  
24  
25 Q. Do you think that there is a prospect that this water  
26 main was burst from August?  
27 A. I don't know.  
28  
29 Q. Why are they taking it back to August?  
30 A. They're trying to work out when definitively is it  
31 definitely zero.  
32  
33 Q. So the data that SEW has available to it is indicative  
34 of the fact that the burst may have occurred before  
35 1 November; is that right?  
36 A. When they try to estimate when it started, yes. We  
37 don't exactly know when the burst started.  
38  
39 Q. The data doesn't say definitively that the burst began  
40 on 1 November?  
41 A. No, it doesn't.  
42  
43 Q. It doesn't say definitively that the burst began some  
44 time in November?  
45 A. No, it doesn't.  
46  
47 Q. But it does say definitively that the burst did not

1 occur before August?  
2 A. Unfortunately we'll definitely never know. The best  
3 we're going to be able to do is an estimate.  
4  
5 Q. I think that's fair. Does the data at least suggest  
6 that the burst didn't occur before August?  
7 A. That's right, yes.  
8  
9 Q. All right. And so the possibility is that the burst  
10 may have occurred as early as August and, in the manner  
11 that these things will often operate, it may have started  
12 as a smaller burst and grown over time; is that the advice  
13 you've been given?  
14 A. That's right. So, in terms of the graph, it sort of  
15 shows - again, it's an analysis and an estimate; it sort of  
16 goes up towards the end.  
17  
18 Q. When you say "towards the end" what period do you  
19 mean?  
20 A. I mean towards the - when the burst was detected and  
21 ceased.  
22  
23 Q. The 36 to 40 megalitres --  
24 A. Yes.  
25  
26 Q. -- is that range that if the burst began in August it  
27 was more likely to be 40 megalitres, but if it started  
28 later it's likely to be 36?  
29 A. No, sorry, there's sort of two ranges --  
30  
31 Q. Right.  
32 A. -- sort of depending on when you take the date from.  
33 And so the 36 to 40 is based on November, and then the -  
34 which I believe then where you can see it most likely to  
35 start. And then they go broader and they go up to - out to  
36 August. Then it's - I can't remember the bottom number,  
37 but we could provide it, and it goes up to 45.  
38  
39 Q. 45. And did you say that work is continuing --  
40 A. Yes.  
41  
42 Q. -- in quantifying the amount of water?  
43 A. Attempting to, yes.  
44  
45 Q. Are you aware of bursts in the South East Water system  
46 where more than 36 megalitres of water have been lost?  
47 A. We asked that question and, I am aware of another



1 burst that has been the case.

2

3 Q. When did that occur?

4 A. I don't have the exact date but we could come back to  
5 you.

6

7 Q. Did it occur during your time as managing director?

8 A. It did.

9

10 Q. And whereabouts was that burst?

11 A. Caldermeade.

12

13 Q. And how long did that burst operate until it was  
14 repaired?

15 A. I unfortunately don't have that data, but we could --

16

17 Q. Were there any adverse consequences caused to public  
18 or private property as a consequence of that burst?

19 A. The water went into farmland. So not of my  
20 understanding, no.

21

22 Q. All right. And how many megalitres are estimated to  
23 have flown from that burst?

24 A. I believe that's 60 megalitres, from my recollection.

25

26 Q. Some work was done on this question of the volume that  
27 had escaped from the burst water main in February?

28 A. Yes, that's right.

29

30 Q. Are you aware of that?

31 A. Yes. So the initial employees when they looked at it,  
32 without doing the seasonal factors, thought it could be  
33 60 megalitres.

34

35 Q. That's right. They concluded that it might be  
36 60 megalitres on the basis that it could be two megalitres  
37 a day?

38 A. That's right.

39

40 Q. Let me take you to that document. It's  
41 SEW.0001.0001.0036. This is an email chain between various  
42 people with South East Water addresses. Actually, don't  
43 blow that up because we might go over the page, please.  
44 Now, this email is from Gary Loudon?

45 A. Yes.

46

47 Q. That's a different Gary to the Gary before?

1 A. No.  
2  
3 Q. It's the same Gary?  
4 A. It's Gary, yes.  
5  
6 Q. This is the person that actually attended on site, is  
7 it?  
8 A. That's right.  
9  
10 Q. And he has done some initial analysis?  
11 A. That's right. The red arrow that you can see at the  
12 bottom there, that's his looking at for the flow going up.  
13  
14 Q. And the flow going up from where? What's it a  
15 measurement of?  
16 A. I'm not sure.  
17  
18 Q. Can I move to page 6 of the document, please.  
19 Actually, if we could go one page before. That's the  
20 photograph there that's used in the submission?  
21 A. M'hmm.  
22  
23 Q. And I asked you if that was the location of the main,  
24 and I think your evidence was you weren't sure if it was  
25 precisely there or near to there. And then if we go over  
26 the page there's another photograph, and there's a red  
27 circle in the middle there. And do you know what that's  
28 signifying?  
29 A. I don't, but --  
30  
31 Q. Can you see the text underneath it that says, "Once  
32 the repair was done by Service Stream" --  
33 A. Yes.  
34  
35 Q. -- "Dat and I were able to determine the approximate  
36 time and volume of the trend of the change step from the  
37 outlet of the tank at McCrae."  
38 A. Yes.  
39  
40 Q. And then it says below, "Red line is baseline."  
41 A. Yes.  
42  
43 Q. "Yellow is increase."  
44 A. Yes.  
45  
46 Q. "I believe it started early November until the end of  
47 December. So 60 days at the end it was a two megalitre

1 burst, volume wise about 60 megalitres."

2 A. Yes.

3

4 Q. If we go over the page you can see the graph that he  
5 refers to, which is a little hard to read, although obvious  
6 in its effect. The red line here is said to be baseline.

7 The yellow is said to be increase. Now, have you inspected  
8 this graph in preparation for coming here today?

9 A. No, I have not.

10

11 Q. Have you seen this graph before?

12 A. I have, yes.

13

14 Q. But you haven't analysed it?

15 A. I haven't analysed it in terms of the analysis that  
16 then was done internally. It looks to remove seasonal  
17 factors and other things. But, as mentioned, one of the  
18 things that tends to happen in our network over summer is  
19 that water usage goes up. So in trying to estimate the  
20 most likely volume that's what, amongst other things, that  
21 our analysts have taken into account.

22

23 Q. So does that mean that a potential error in this graph  
24 is the consistent baseline when the baseline ought to move  
25 to reflect seasonal changes?

26 A. That's right.

27

28 Q. And a consequence of moving the baseline up is that  
29 the amount of water being used by consumers is increased,  
30 which means that the total volume of the burst is  
31 decreased?

32 A. That's right.

33

34 Q. All right. And the seasonal factors that you've  
35 spoken about are they just based on assumptions or are they  
36 based on data?

37 A. So it looks at five years and then tries to  
38 incorporate COVID, et cetera. Yes, so data from the other  
39 years.

40

41 Q. But can't you just look at the meters of the  
42 properties in the relevant area to work out what the usage  
43 was?

44 A. There's a range of factors that get taken into  
45 account. I'm not the right expert, but certainly we could  
46 provide that.

47

1 Q. Presumably, Ms Olsen, you have interrogated your own  
2 staff about this?

3 A. Sure.

4  
5 Q. And do you understand why the data that can be  
6 captured from domestic meters isn't a sufficient answer as  
7 to the amount of household usage?

8 A. Partly because the tank network in that system, it  
9 flows two ways. So the tanks go both in and out, and  
10 that's partly due to the pressure in the McCrae area. So  
11 that needs to be taken into account rather than just a  
12 straight balance.

13  
14 Q. The flow of the tanks won't affect the reading of the  
15 meters at domestic premises, will it?

16 A. No, so it doesn't affect the readings at domestic  
17 premises. It's in terms of that water balance and how it's  
18 done.

19  
20 Q. So, as I understand it, you need at least two pieces  
21 of data. But I might be making it overly simple, so you  
22 correct me where I'm wrong. One thing you want to  
23 ascertain is how much water was being used by your  
24 customers in the relevant area?

25 A. Sure.

26  
27 Q. And the source of truth for that is the water meter?

28 A. That's right.

29  
30 Q. The other piece of data you want to know is how much  
31 flowed out of the pipe that was broken. The baseline here  
32 is said to be baseline usage, the red line?

33 A. Sure.

34  
35 Q. Your evidence, as I understand it, is that that is  
36 insufficiently accurate because it doesn't take into  
37 account the fact that usage changes seasonally?

38 A. That's right.

39  
40 Q. And my point is simply that in seeking to understand  
41 the amount of usage for any period from your customers that  
42 can be definitively ascertained by reading their meters; am  
43 I wrong about that much?

44 A. I think in terms of that I'm not the expert. I just  
45 know that we asked our key data person to look at it so  
46 that he could take into account all the factors to try and  
47 get the most accurate estimate we could.

1  
2 Q. Ms Olsen, I want to be plain with you about this?  
3 A. Sure.  
4  
5 Q. I'm not calling you here today because you're an  
6 expert. I'm calling you because we asked questions of  
7 South East Water and you were the witness that was put up.  
8 A. I absolutely understand.  
9  
10 Q. And this is a matter of very serious concern --  
11 A. I completely understand.  
12  
13 Q. -- to the community and presumably to your  
14 organisation as well.  
15 A. Yes.  
16  
17 Q. And I find it astonishing that you have not  
18 interrogated this data in a way that means you understand  
19 the basic integers in the assessment.  
20 A. I'm sorry, and I'm trying to explain what gets taken  
21 into account, that it's not as simple as looking at the  
22 yellow line and the red line to determine it; but to  
23 determine, which I understand everyone wants to do, the  
24 most accurate amount that we need to take into - seasonal  
25 factors and also the fact that there are different tanks  
26 operating in different ways in that network.  
27  
28 Q. What's the relevance of the tank data to this graph?  
29 A. Because the tanks go - have water that flows in and  
30 out at different times. It's not just a one-way tank.  
31  
32 Q. Water flows out of the tank to where?  
33 A. To other tanks.  
34  
35 Q. And how does that trigger a reading that's relevant to  
36 this graph?  
37 A. Mr Costello, I'm sorry, I wish I could help you, but  
38 I think I am at the limit of what I understand of this.  
39 So, I'm sorry.  
40  
41 Q. Is there an internal South East Water document that  
42 gives more up to date calculations as at 8 May?  
43 A. Yes, it's the one I saw on 8 May.  
44  
45 Q. All right. Could I ask that that document be produced  
46 to the inquiry?  
47 A. Absolutely. I'm sorry.

1  
2 Q. Who is the person that if I wish to question somebody  
3 further from South East Water about these matters that has  
4 the necessary skill set and information to be able to  
5 answer my questions?  
6 A. Jonathan Crook.  
7  
8 Q. And what's his title?  
9 A. He's the group manager of data analytics or a similar  
10 title.  
11  
12 Q. Did you say Brook?  
13 A. Sorry, Crook.  
14  
15 Q. Crook. Has Mr Crook informed you when he's likely to  
16 reach a final conclusion as to the amount of water that  
17 leaked from the Bayview Road main?  
18 A. I think we'll never definitively know. So I think  
19 this is our best estimate currently.  
20  
21 Q. Is further work being done or has the work now  
22 concluded on the basis that you've reached the closest  
23 determination that you can possibly reach?  
24 A. I'm not sure.  
25  
26 Q. You don't know if Mr Crook and his team are doing  
27 further work on this question or not?  
28 A. I'm not sure at the moment, no.  
29  
30 Q. And so, based on your relatively little understanding  
31 of this data and of the work done by Mr Crook, as you sit  
32 there now you can't tell the commissioner that you are  
33 personally satisfied that the answer as to the amount of  
34 water that leaked from the pipe on Bayview Road is 36 to 40  
35 megalitres or the 60 megalitres that was initially  
36 estimated by Mr Loudon?  
37 A. We will never know what the exact amount is, but  
38 I feel like that the work that Jonathan has done is the  
39 best data tools that we've got to estimate it.  
40  
41 Q. Is this a fair way of describing it: you don't know  
42 whether or not the work that's been done by Mr Crook and  
43 his team produces an accurate result? You don't know that  
44 yourself?  
45 A. I understand that that's what they're looking for, but  
46 I don't have the skills to be able to say if it's the right  
47 process to do it.

1  
2 Q. You have confidence in Mr Crook and his team?  
3 A. Yes, I do.  
4  
5 Q. And so he telling you that the answer is something  
6 between 36 and 40 megalitres gives you some degree of  
7 assurance?  
8 A. Yes.  
9  
10 Q. But you yourself cannot be sure that that's the right  
11 answer?  
12 A. That's correct.  
13  
14 Q. It's outside your expertise?  
15 A. That's correct.  
16  
17 Q. And have you asked Mr Crook or have you sought to  
18 engage anybody from outside your organisation to verify the  
19 results that Mr Crook's arrived at?  
20 A. I don't believe that we have engaged anyone to verify  
21 it.  
22  
23 Q. Is it surprising to you that, taking the lowest  
24 possible estimate that South East Water has given, 36  
25 megalitres of water can leave your system in a two-month  
26 period without detection?  
27  
28 MS SIEMENSMA: Madam Chair, I think the estimate in  
29 Ms Olsen's witness statement is an estimate of  
30 approximately 37, not 36.  
31  
32 CHAIRPERSON: Thanks, Ms Siemensma.  
33  
34 MR COSTELLO: Yes, thank you. I gave the lower estimate  
35 of Mr Crook; that is, in fairness to South East Water, the  
36 lowest possible estimate, Mr Crook's 8 May estimate not  
37 provided to this inquiry until from the mouth of Ms Olsen,  
38 was 36 to 40 megalitres, is that correct?  
39 A. Sorry, could you repeat the question?  
40  
41 Q. 36 to 40 megalitres is Mr Crook's assessment?  
42 A. That's my understanding, from November, yes.  
43  
44 Q. And, in fairness to you, I'm taking the lowest  
45 possible estimate, which is 36 megalitres.  
46 A. Sure.  
47

1 Q. Is it surprising to you that 36 megalitres of water  
2 can escape from a water main and not be detected for at  
3 least two months?  
4 A. Yes.  
5  
6 Q. Is that acceptable?  
7 A. We don't want any water to escape, and it's certainly  
8 one of our biggest bursts. So, no, it's not okay.  
9  
10 Q. And it's all the less acceptable that it's occurred in  
11 a region that - or at least close to an area that's  
12 susceptible to landslides, isn't it?  
13 A. I take that point, yes.  
14  
15 Q. You accept that a burst in this type of area can have  
16 potentially catastrophic consequences?  
17 A. I know that a burst in different areas, including this  
18 one, can absolutely have, yes, catastrophic consequences.  
19  
20 Q. Are you aware that South East Water communicated with  
21 residents shortly after the landslides about the amount of  
22 water that had been reported by local residents in the  
23 area? Is that something that you're aware of, that there  
24 was a communication to residents?  
25 A. I'm aware of different communications to residents,  
26 yes.  
27  
28 Q. And you're aware that a statement was published by  
29 South East Water on or around 17 January --  
30 A. Yes, I am.  
31  
32 Q. -- indicating that samples had been taken?  
33 A. Yes.  
34  
35 Q. And those samples were sent to a laboratory for  
36 analysis?  
37 A. Yes, I am.  
38  
39 Q. And do you know where those water samples were taken  
40 from, yourself?  
41 A. No, I do not, but I know that there's a table that  
42 contains that.  
43  
44 Q. That statement was put on South East Water's website;  
45 is that correct?  
46 A. Yes, it was.  
47



1 Q. Has that statement been removed from South East  
2 Water's website since it was put up?  
3 A. I think we update the statements. But I'm sure we'd  
4 have a copy, if it was helpful.  
5  
6 Q. Are you aware that the statement was taken down?  
7 A. No, I'm not.  
8  
9 Q. But you're aware of the fact that it may have perhaps  
10 been updated?  
11 A. I'm aware of website updates, yes.  
12  
13 Q. All right. Who authorised the making of the statement  
14 on 17 January 2025?  
15 A. I did.  
16  
17 Q. And why did you decide to communicate with residents  
18 at that point in time?  
19 A. Yes, I wanted to let residents know what we had been  
20 doing, what we found, and that we would keep going or  
21 continue to investigate.  
22  
23 Q. You and Mr Tim Lloyd attended the meeting at Dromana  
24 Hall on 22 January?  
25 A. Yes, we did.  
26  
27 Q. Do you recall Mr Lloyd telling residents that South  
28 East Water had reviewed its water network and saying words  
29 to the effect that the network was performing well and  
30 above average?  
31 A. I don't recall the exact words, but I certainly recall  
32 it along those lines, yes.  
33  
34 Q. Do you recall that those words were made in respect of  
35 leakage rates?  
36 A. I don't recall that, but I certainly know at that time  
37 what we were - or I understand Mr Lloyd was referring to  
38 was the assets that we believed could impact the landslide  
39 of McCrae. I don't know if Mr Lloyd knew of this burst at  
40 that time.  
41  
42 Q. Did you know of the burst at this time?  
43 A. No, I didn't.  
44  
45 Q. When did you first become aware of the burst?  
46 A. 30 January.  
47

1 Q. And how did you become aware of it?  
2 A. Mr Lloyd contacted me about it.  
3  
4 Q. And so on 17 January when you authorised the statement  
5 to be made to the residents you weren't aware that there  
6 had been a leak?  
7 A. No, not this leak, no, or any others.  
8  
9 Q. But you didn't ask for that statement to be removed  
10 from the website after you became aware of the leak?  
11 A. No.  
12  
13 Q. Were you concerned that a statement had been made to  
14 the residents on 17 January as to the likelihood of the  
15 water being - having emerged from a South East Water asset  
16 in circumstances where you didn't know that there had been  
17 a burst at the time you made the statement?  
18 A. Yes, I think when I found out about the burst then we  
19 had some further conversations around it to understand  
20 maybe exactly where you're going of if this burst could  
21 have impacted the landslide. It was a significant amount  
22 of water, but also 450 metres away and, you know, that's  
23 partly why we started to look into it. Even though it was  
24 450 metres away and people believed that it couldn't have  
25 impacted the landslip, we needed to know. I checked in  
26 with another general manager who's had more longer  
27 experience in water than me just to say, "We've had a very  
28 large burst. It's 450 metres away. Do you think it could  
29 have affected it?" He also did not. But we clearly needed  
30 to understand if it had. And we don't internally have the  
31 right expertise in terms of geotechnical or hydrology to  
32 determine that.  
33  
34 Q. Is it fair to say that a very significant factor in  
35 the making of the statement to residents on 17 January was  
36 the results of electrical conductivity testing?  
37 A. We'd done a portfolio of testing to try and find out.  
38 To your point, electroconductivity testing is one. But,  
39 just like we do in a normal leak, we also then listen to  
40 our assets. So, you know, even if it looks like mains  
41 water, we then listen to see if it is. We had also done  
42 night flow analysis, which is the best way to determine  
43 often or one way to determine a leak because we sort of  
44 look between - at night to see if the overall tank moves.  
45 And then we had done some work in terms of sewer assets as  
46 well.  
47

1 Q. And what did all that work reveal to you?  
2 A. That indicated - and, again, I should say we're  
3 looking at the area within the sort of where we believed  
4 could impact the landslip - that the network was performing  
5 well.

6  
7 Q. None of those tests indicated the fact that there had  
8 been a burst at Bayview Road?

9 A. No, it didn't. That - I was going to say, partly  
10 because we were looking at that time, do you know what  
11 I mean, in that area.

12  
13 Q. In paragraph 58 of your witness statement you say that  
14 SEW conducted a portfolio of tests following the landslide.

15 A. Yes.

16  
17 Q. Are they the tests you've just referred to now?  
18 A. Yes, sorry.

19  
20 Q. Thank you. And so are the results of those portfolio  
21 of tests held by South East Water?

22 A. Yes.

23  
24 MR COSTELLO: Thank you. I tender that document, please,  
25 Madam Chair.

26  
27 CHAIRPERSON: Can the operator please move the document  
28 back one page? And forward, sorry. Is this part of  
29 another document?

30  
31 MR COSTELLO: No, this is a separate email chain  
32 separately produced. If the operator could go to the first  
33 page, please.

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Email chain from Charles Swain  
36 at South East Water to Declan McCreesh dated 3 February  
37 2025, and that's exhibit CA28.

38  
39 **EXHIBIT #CA28 EMAIL CHAIN FROM CHARLES SWAIN AT SOUTH EAST**  
40 **WATER TO DECLAN MCCREESH DATED 3 FEBRUARY 2025**

41  
42 MR COSTELLO: One of the forms of testing that you  
43 referred to then in the portfolio of testing was acoustic  
44 leak detection?

45 A. Yes.

46  
47 Q. And you accept, don't you, that the acoustic leak

1 detection completely failed to identify the burst at  
2 Bayview Road?  
3 A. I do.  
4  
5 Q. Another was nighttime data analysis?  
6 A. Yes.  
7  
8 Q. It appears from the submission that that analysis was  
9 done between January and April 2025; is that your  
10 understanding?  
11 A. In terms of the statement in January or --  
12  
13 Q. Sorry, I'll put it again.  
14 A. Sorry.  
15  
16 Q. It appears to me that the nighttime data analysis was  
17 conducted from January 2025; is that your understanding?  
18 A. Yes. Do you mean that we weren't doing it before?  
19  
20 Q. It was conducted after the main had been repaired?  
21 A. That's right.  
22  
23 Q. All right. And so is it likely that the nighttime  
24 data analysis could shed any light on this question?  
25 A. Of the Bayview Road leak?  
26  
27 Q. Yes.  
28 A. So some of that nighttime analysis, I believe and  
29 understand, is part of that tank flow to try and ascertain  
30 the size of the leak.  
31  
32 Q. That is you looked to what occurred in the period,  
33 say, January to April and compared it to what had been  
34 going on in the earlier period when the burst was  
35 operative?  
36 A. Oh, right, no, sorry.  
37  
38 Q. Is that what you mean?  
39 A. No, sorry, I haven't been clear.  
40  
41 Q. Okay. You explain it to me.  
42 A. Yes, sure. So, in terms of identifying how large the  
43 leak is, part of that is those tank flows, and it's those  
44 same tank flows that we look at at night to try and  
45 identify if we've got a leak on that, you know, particular  
46 day.  
47

1 Q. But, insofar as Bayview Road was concerned, you didn't  
2 have a leak because it had been repaired at the time?  
3 A. In January; that's right, yes.  
4  
5 Q. You also referenced, I think, sewer dye testing; did  
6 you say that?  
7 A. That's right. I don't know - I can't remember if that  
8 was done then or it was done in January; I'm not sure.  
9  
10 Q. What was the intention of the sewer dye testing?  
11 A. It's to test - to follow the trenches or put it into  
12 the sewer, there's two different types, to see if the sewer  
13 is leaking.  
14  
15 Q. A sewer dye testing is done within the sewer pipes?  
16 A. There can be both.  
17  
18 Q. Both meaning what?  
19 A. So you can test both - and, again, not my area of  
20 expertise but at a high level, just because I think it  
21 might be useful, you could test both within the sewer and  
22 also outside. I'm not sure if it's the dye testing that  
23 does both. So I'll have to get an expert --  
24  
25 Q. Do you know whether the dye testing can test the  
26 trenches?  
27 A. I'm not sure if it's dye testing. I know that the  
28 trenches can be tested and that some were excavated and  
29 tested in January.  
30  
31 Q. Could I have on the screen, please, the submission  
32 document SEW.0001.0001.0111, and could we go to page 7,  
33 please.  
34  
35 CHAIRPERSON: Mr Costello, it's five past one.  
36  
37 MR COSTELLO: I apologise.  
38  
39 CHAIRPERSON: Perhaps finish this document.  
40  
41 MR COSTELLO: You'll see at 5.2.4 sewer dye testing?  
42 A. I can.  
43  
44 Q. And it speaks to pouring coloured dye into the sewer  
45 network?  
46 A. Yes.  
47

1 Q. And it says in the second last sentence, "The injected  
2 dye remained within the sewer pipes."

3 A. Yes.

4

5 Q. Do you see that?

6 A. Yes, I can.

7

8 Q. That was 22 January 2025?

9 A. Yes.

10

11 Q. After the burst had been repaired. And then if we go  
12 over the page to 5.2.4 - sorry, 5.2.5, this deals with  
13 sewer trenches.

14 A. Yes.

15

16 Q. "Excavated down two and a half metres to expose the  
17 pipe in Charlesworth Street. Placed dye in the trench  
18 around the outside of the pipe. Monitored any build-up of  
19 water in the trench, of which there was very little. Three  
20 days later we backfilled the excavation and subsequently  
21 seen no evidence of the dye surfacing. This suggests the  
22 water that continued to surface at the intersection of  
23 Coburn Road and Charlesworth Street is not surfacing from  
24 the sewer trench." And do you think that the conditions in  
25 the trench as at 24 January 2025 were likely similar to the  
26 conditions that existed before the burst was repaired?

27 A. I'm sorry, I don't know.

28

29 Q. All right. So have you taken any particular comfort  
30 from the sewer dye tests in terms of understanding whether  
31 or not the likelihood that water from the burst main has  
32 travelled?

33 A. I think that's why we asked the expert report -  
34 experts to look at it. I think we're conscious that we had  
35 done our tests, but one of the hypotheses that we had heard  
36 was that it had travelled down there. So that's why we  
37 asked.

38

39 MR COSTELLO: All right. Is that a convenient time?

40

41 CHAIRPERSON: Yes. We'll take a break for lunch,  
42 Ms Olsen.

43 A. Okay. Thank you.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON: And resume at 2.15.

46

47 **LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT**

1  
2 **UPON RESUMING AT 2.15 PM:**  
3

4 MR COSTELLO: Thank you, Chair. Ms Olsen, I just want to  
5 finish off on this testing before we get to the SMEC  
6 report. We were talking about the different types of  
7 testing that are set out in the submission that South East  
8 Water filed, which is SEW.0001.0001.0111, and if we could  
9 go to the page before, please, page 7, and you'll see the  
10 nighttime data analysis at 5.2.3. While I think of it,  
11 Chair, I've referred to this document a number of times and  
12 I have not yet tendered it.  
13

14 CHAIRPERSON: You haven't yet?  
15

16 MR COSTELLO: No. But I will. We had an exchange about  
17 nighttime data analysis and tank data in this area?  
18

19 A. Yes.  
20

21 Q. You say in the second paragraph - sorry, it is said at  
22 the second paragraph of your organisation's submission  
23 that, "Our analysis of water tank data has not detected any  
24 major leaks or bursts in the period of January to April  
25 2025"; see that?  
26

27 A. Yes.  
28

29 Q. Are you aware of whether nighttime data analysis for  
30 the relevant tanks was conducted for the period before  
31 January 2025 while the burst was in operation?  
32

33 A. I'm not, but it would have - the burst would have  
34 shown on the tanks.  
35

36 Q. Right. Just so that I'm clear, what is the inquiry to  
37 take from the statement that the water tank data has not  
38 detected any major leaks or bursts in the period January to  
39 April 2025?  
40

41 A. In terms of that we were looking at the landslide  
42 area, and so to say that there's no leaks in that area  
43 between January - no large leaks that showed up in terms of  
44 our water tank data, any major leaks in that period.  
45

46 Q. And are you aware of whether that analysis was done  
47 for the period including November and December of 2024?  
48

49 A. I'm not aware if regular nighttime analysis was  
50 underway at that time, but certainly in terms of that tank  
51 data that's the data that's sort of used to estimate the  
52 burst.  
53

1  
2 Q. All right. I'll take you to - might I tender that.  
3  
4 CHAIRPERSON: Yes. Just remind me, Mr Costello, what's  
5 this document, what's the title of it?  
6  
7 MR COSTELLO: This is the submission of South East Water.  
8  
9 CHAIRPERSON: The submission, yes. South East Water  
10 submission dated - is there a date on the document,  
11 Mr Operator?  
12  
13 MR COSTELLO: It's dated April 2025 on the front page.  
14  
15 CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. April 2025, and that is exhibit  
16 CA29.  
17  
18 **EXHIBIT #CA29 SUBMISSION OF SOUTH EAST WATER DATED APRIL**  
19 **2025.**  
20  
21 MR COSTELLO: Thank you. I might just say that has two  
22 annexures, and so I would seek to have those included as  
23 part of the exhibit.  
24  
25 CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. They'll be added; thank you.  
26  
27 **EXHIBIT #CA29 (ADDED) TWO ANNEXURES TO SOUTH EAST WATER**  
28 **DATED APRIL 2025.**  
29  
30 MR COSTELLO: Thank you. I'll take you to another  
31 document, please, SEW.0001.0001.0032. Just have a look at  
32 that document and tell me if you've seen it before?  
33 A. I'm not sure.  
34  
35 Q. You're not sure if you've seen this before?  
36 A. I'm not sure, no.  
37  
38 Q. Do you know Greta Pullen?  
39 A. Yes, I do.  
40  
41 Q. And what's Ms Pullen's role?  
42 A. Yes. She leads our work on sort of non-revenue water,  
43 which is --  
44  
45 Q. What does that mean?  
46 A. It's water that isn't charged for. So it includes  
47 leaks. That's the large part of it. But it also



1 includes - some of the water that we don't charge for is for fire services or it  
2 might be incorrect metering.  
3

4 Q. I see.

5 A. But it's sort of the broader area that looks to try  
6 and make sure that we've got better performance in terms of  
7 leak and use of water.  
8

9 Q. I see. If we could move to - just to be fair to you,  
10 Ms Olsen, since you can't remember seeing this document  
11 before, I might just ask that we go to the final page of  
12 it, which is page 14, and I'll just ask the operator to  
13 slowly scroll through each page just so you can have a  
14 glance and it may remind you if you've seen it before. But  
15 if I'm going to ask you about anything in particular I'll  
16 draw your attention to the particular part of the document.

17 A. Sure.  
18

19 Q. Can you see there somebody by the name of Carl Gent is  
20 emailing Declan McCreesh about night flows between 2 to  
21 4 am each day?

22 A. Yes.  
23

24 Q. In - I think that says in litres a second. Is that  
25 what you would describe as nighttime data analysis?

26 A. Yes, a form of, yes.  
27

28 Q. All right. And then if we go over the page, please,  
29 to 11, can you see in the email at the bottom there from  
30 Mr McCreesh that he says, "Night flows are consistently low  
31 and as expected for the Waller Place distribution zone and  
32 seasonal usage patterns"?

33 A. Yes, I can.  
34

35 Q. And do you accept that the Waller Place distribution  
36 zone includes the area of McCrae with which we're  
37 concerned?

38 A. Yes, that's my understanding.  
39

40 Q. Yes. All right. And so it appears that what's being  
41 done here is some nighttime data analysis in respect of the  
42 relevant area; do you accept that?

43 A. Yes, I do.  
44

45 Q. All right. If we could go over the page, please. And  
46 then if we could go one more. Can you see there that  
47 there's a number of SEW people involved in this email

1 chain, but this is now a Mr McClurg to Mr Hook, "Can you  
2 please look at extending night flow analysis back to July  
3 22. Let me know how you go with Greta re leakage data for  
4 the network"; do you see that?

5 A. Yes.

6

7 Q. So is it possible to pull data and do night flow  
8 analysis for earlier periods?

9 A. I believe so, yes.

10

11 Q. Okay. If we could go over the page, please. At the  
12 top of the page there, this is from Mr Hook to Mr McClurg,  
13 answering questions in red; you see that? And then can you  
14 see underneath the graph there in red, "Can you also give  
15 me an indication of what the typical night flow is so we  
16 have some comparison? Do we have an estimate for lost,  
17 non-revenue, unaccounted for, leakage in that zone and how  
18 it compares to other areas? This would be a very useful  
19 fact if we can say with confidence something like, "The  
20 data tells us the leakage in that area is XX per cent lower  
21 than we would typically expect across our area. You get  
22 the objective here?" Are you aware of the work that was  
23 being undertaken here by Mr Hook, Mr McClurg, Mr Gent and  
24 Ms Pullen?

25 A. No.

26

27 Q. You've not been involved in this particular work?

28 A. No.

29

30 Q. All right. Having seen what you've seen so far, do  
31 you understand why this work is being done?

32 A. I think so, yes.

33

34 Q. How would you describe the reason - what would you  
35 describe is the reason this work was being done?

36 A. To understand the night flows over a period of time.

37

38 Q. I see. And the night flows in the Waller Place area?

39 A. That's right.

40

41 Q. All right. And are you aware of whether an  
42 understanding was come to of the night flows of the Waller  
43 Place area for 2024?

44 A. No, I'm not, but I - no, I'm not.

45

46 Q. Did you ask for night flow data for the Waller Place  
47 area for 2024 to be included in the submission?

1 A. No, I did not, and that's partly - yes, I didn't.  
2  
3 Q. Was there any discussion about whether night flow data  
4 for 2024 ought be included in the submission?  
5 A. No, and it's partly around - we knew that we had a  
6 large leak, the Bayview Road leak, but, as I mentioned  
7 before, internally there was an understanding that it  
8 didn't contribute to the landslide. We knew we needed to  
9 check that, and that's why we got the expert opinion around  
10 that, the SMEC report, which is obviously preliminary but  
11 also indicates that it's not feasible for that water to  
12 have impacted the landslip.  
13  
14 Q. Okay. Can we move forward, please, to page 4 of that  
15 document. Do you see here, the bottom of the page, this is  
16 Ms Pullen to Mr McClurg and others, and she says, "Hi all,  
17 we pulled the data from the meters in the area and compared  
18 to the inflow of the zone, but this calculation was  
19 indicating losses of 33 per cent, which seems too high and  
20 abnormal"?  
21 A. Yes.  
22  
23 Q. And then there's a reference above, "The zone we're  
24 looking at is the Waller Place PR zone only." So it may be  
25 that Ms Pullen's email there of 256 might have related to  
26 more than just the Waller Place zone. And then if we go  
27 over the page to page 3, at the bottom of the page  
28 Ms Pullen says, "Hi Declan, we looked at the zone only.  
29 However, the schematic below shows that it's not  
30 interconnected to another zone."  
31 A. Yes.  
32  
33 Q. "Due to the abnormal result we would like you to  
34 confirm this." Do you understand what is meant by the  
35 concept of an interconnection to another zone?  
36 A. Broadly, yes.  
37  
38 Q. And how would you describe it?  
39 A. If it flows between one area and another there's a  
40 connection.  
41  
42 Q. I see. And then if that could be shrunk down. Can  
43 you see at the top of the page the very first line says,  
44 "I can confirm that PRV WB149 only supplies a single  
45 hydraulic zone with approximately 100 customers"?  
46 A. Yes.  
47

1 Q. Are you aware of what PRV WB149 is?  
2 A. No, I'm not.  
3  
4 Q. Are you able to make an educated guess based on your  
5 understanding of SEW's network?  
6 A. I believe the first three would be a pressure  
7 reduction valve, but I'm not sure.  
8  
9 Q. Thank you. And so there's further work being done to  
10 try and come to an estimate. If that could just be taken  
11 off. I might just ask you, Ms Pullen, just to read the -  
12 Ms Olsen, rather, to read the balance of that email at the  
13 top of the page --  
14 A. Sure.  
15  
16 Q. -- just in fairness to you, so you can see what the  
17 extent of the communications was and, if you want to make  
18 any comment, having read it, feel free to do so.  
19 A. Do you want me to read it aloud or --  
20  
21 Q. No, no, no, just read it to yourself, thank you. Have  
22 you read that?  
23 A. Sorry, I'm finished, yes, sorry.  
24  
25 Q. Thank you. So you understand the work that's being  
26 done here in a general sense?  
27 A. I believe I do.  
28  
29 Q. There's a desire to try and understand the extent of  
30 the night flows?  
31 A. Yes.  
32  
33 Q. And the extent of the leak rate?  
34 A. Yes.  
35  
36 Q. Is that fair? If we go over the page, please. This  
37 email begins on the preceding page, but the only  
38 information on the preceding page, it just says, "Hi Nico."  
39 It's an email from Ms Pullen to Nico MacWilliams and  
40 others, including Mr McCreesh, and there's some discussion  
41 there about difficulties with comparing with mechanical  
42 meters. And can you see the second last paragraph,  
43 "@morrishelen, if the team advises, could you look at the  
44 other three quarters before the one we looked at to have a  
45 total of 12 months if possible and provide a breakdown of  
46 bill estimation"; see that?  
47 A. Yes, I can.

1  
2 Q. And then if we go over the page do you see at the top  
3 there there's an email from Ms Pullen to Mr McCreesh,  
4 "Jonathan has looked at the data and reconciled four  
5 quarters of the data shown below as water loss as a  
6 percentage of total system input for the McCrae Waller  
7 Place zone"; can you see that?  
8 A. Yes, I can.  
9  
10 Q. Do you see that it's broken down in quarters?  
11 A. Yes.  
12  
13 Q. Do you know if the date range there, that's the start  
14 date? Is that how you would understand it?  
15 A. I don't know.  
16  
17 Q. The date range indicating a start date for each  
18 quarter or indicating the end date?  
19 A. I don't know, sorry.  
20  
21 Q. Can you see that there's quarter 1, 2, 3 and 4, each  
22 with a date?  
23 A. Yes.  
24  
25 Q. 1 January, 1 April, 1 July and then 1 October?  
26 A. Yes.  
27  
28 Q. And can you see the days, 91, 91, 92, 58?  
29 A. Yes.  
30  
31 Q. Is it immediately apparent to you why the fourth  
32 quarter would have only 58 days?  
33 A. No.  
34  
35 Q. All right. Can you see the water loss as a percentage  
36 is the fourth column?  
37 A. Yes.  
38  
39 Q. 29 per cent for quarter 1. That compares I think to  
40 your evidence that an average is - the average is about  
41 10 per cent across the whole of the network?  
42 A. Yes.  
43  
44 Q. 5 per cent for quarter 2, 18 per cent for quarter 3  
45 and then for what appears to be a partial quarter 4,  
46 28 per cent?  
47 A. Yes.

1  
2 Q. Now, although 10 per cent is the average across the  
3 network, presumably these things fluctuate. But would you  
4 agree that at least quarter 1 and quarter 4 there, 29 and  
5 28 per cent are abnormally high?  
6 A. I'm not sure about "abnormally", but it's certainly  
7 higher than 10 per cent.  
8  
9 Q. Plainly higher than 10 per cent, but --  
10 A. Yes.  
11  
12 Q. I mean, it's nearly three orders of magnitude higher  
13 than 10 per cent. Is a 30 - is a 30 per cent - sorry,  
14 I withdrew that. Is a 29 per cent water loss a high  
15 percentage of loss?  
16 A. If it's based on the same definition of water loss  
17 that I am thinking of, then yes.  
18  
19 Q. Do you recall that there was a reference earlier in  
20 the email chain to rates being abnormally high and the need  
21 for further analysis?  
22 A. Yes.  
23  
24 Q. But you can't say whether 29 per cent is abnormally  
25 high?  
26 A. I'd like some further analysis to understand if this  
27 was the final figure reached. It doesn't appear to equate  
28 with the understanding that I had that it, you know,  
29 performed well.  
30  
31 Q. And now that you have been through that email, albeit  
32 at a reasonably fast clip, can you recall if you've seen  
33 this email before?  
34 A. I can't remember if I have, no.  
35  
36 Q. Have you seen data similar to the data here for the  
37 McCrae Waller Place zone before?  
38 A. No, I don't believe that I have. No. I mean,  
39 I imagine I would have, but I can't remember.  
40  
41 Q. In your capacity as managing director --  
42 A. Yes.  
43  
44 Q. -- do you receive a regular range of reports from your  
45 direct reports?  
46 A. Yes, I do.  
47

1 Q. Do any of those reports include information as to  
2 water loss rates?  
3 A. Not regular ones, no.  
4  
5 Q. Okay.  
6 A. Oh, sorry.  
7  
8 Q. Did you want to amend your answer?  
9 A. Yes. So we receive - we look at our overall rates of  
10 performance at least every year across a whole range of  
11 factors, and I believe that's every six months as well.  
12  
13 Q. I see. Do you receive data on an annual basis as to  
14 water loss for each of the zones?  
15 A. No, I do not.  
16  
17 Q. That's too granular for your level.  
18 A. Correct.  
19  
20 Q. And who is the senior executive with the most direct  
21 responsibility for water loss as an issue if there is such  
22 a person?  
23 A. Yes, there's sort of two different parts of that.  
24 Sometimes water loss is to do with our planning or areas  
25 that we might need to renew, and sometimes it's to do with  
26 the operations of the network. And so they're the two  
27 general managers that I mentioned before: Charlie  
28 Littlefair, who does capital planning, and Tim Lloyd, who  
29 looks after our service delivery.  
30  
31 Q. And are the performance appraisals of either of those  
32 people tethered in any way to percentage of water loss  
33 across the network?  
34 A. So we have all of our corporate plan KPIs which  
35 includes performance like use of recycled water, bursts,  
36 bursts per 100 kilometres et cetera, and different ones of  
37 those are included in those two general managers'  
38 performance.  
39  
40 MR COSTELLO: Thank you. I tender that document.  
41  
42 CHAIRPERSON: The email chain from Greta Pullen to Declan  
43 McCreesh dated 22 January 2025 is exhibit CA30.  
44  
45 **EXHIBIT #CA30 EMAIL CHAIN FROM GRETA PULLEN TO DECLAN**  
46 **MCCREESH DATED 22 JANUARY 2025**  
47

1 MR COSTELLO: Could I have on the screen, please,  
2 SEW.0001.0001.0142. I want to ask you some questions in  
3 connection with the SMEC report.

4 A. Sure.

5

6 Q. Now, Ms Olsen, I appreciate this isn't your document.  
7 It's been prepared by others for your organisation. You've  
8 read this document?

9 A. I have, but I'm certainly not an expert in this.

10

11 Q. I understand. Were you involved in setting the scope  
12 of the works for this document?

13 A. No. We knew what we wanted to test because we had  
14 heard those hypotheses that I mentioned before, so  
15 particularly around our Bayview Road leak and also the  
16 trenches and could the trenches be driving or carrying our  
17 water or other water, and could they have been a  
18 contributing factor to the landslide.

19

20 Q. All right. Do you understand this report to be based  
21 principally, if not exclusively, on data that had been  
22 produced by others, including South East Water?

23 A. Sorry, could you repeat that?

24

25 Q. Do you understand this report to be based on data  
26 produced principally by others, including South East Water?

27 A. Do you mean, like - yes, so they relied on some of the  
28 data.

29

30 Q. This was primarily a desktop study?

31 A. Oh, right, sorry; yes, I understand that. I know that  
32 there were site visits as well.

33

34 Q. That's right. So it was a desktop study. If we could  
35 go to page 7, which is 0015. It was a desktop study of  
36 data, information and analysis that was provided to SMEC by  
37 South East Water?

38 A. Yes, and using some other data, is my understanding.

39

40 Q. Yes. Also readily available publicly accessible  
41 information that SMEC obtained?

42 A. Yes.

43

44 Q. And you'll see this is the first bullet point,  
45 "Desktop study of", and the third area is "academic  
46 papers". Now, there was a site visit with photographic  
47 survey and opportunistic walkover activities. And so this



1 wasn't a report where SMEC did testing of their own; is  
2 that as you understand it?

3 A. I'm not sure. Yes, I'm not sure.

4  
5 Q. Based on what you see there and your prior reading of  
6 the report, do you understand that SMEC did any testing or  
7 investigation at the site other than the site visit with  
8 photographic survey and opportunistic walkover activities?

9 A. I don't know, but I can certainly understand that's  
10 what that document says.

11  
12 Q. Thank you. If we could go over the page, please, to  
13 0018. Do you see here at 4.4 they set out their  
14 methodology of analysis?

15 A. Yes.

16  
17 Q. And do you see in the second last paragraph, "SMEC  
18 emphasises that the analyses are based on a dataset which  
19 may not be complete and is considered smaller than what  
20 standard practice would indicate to be robust."

21 A. Yes.

22  
23 Q. Do you see that?

24 A. Yes.

25  
26 Q. And then you can see that "SMEC has not had direct  
27 access to the subject site" is one of the things that they  
28 point to. And then over the page, "has not had access to  
29 any site specific geotechnical factual data or information,  
30 and has not been able to scope, direct or supervise  
31 sampling of groundwater, drainage or other sources of water  
32 within the subject site, or the area of the subject site."

33 A. Yes.

34  
35 Q. So, just taking now those caveats that SMEC have  
36 placed on the report and the fact that it is a desktop  
37 analysis based on the work of others, do you accept that  
38 this is a highly conditional report?

39 A. It's definitely a preliminary assessment; that's  
40 absolutely my understanding. And we said we'd keep going.

41  
42 Q. And for that reason neither you nor South East Water  
43 have drawn any definitive conclusions from this document?

44 A. We've noted the conclusions and said that we'd keep  
45 going, subject to the board, because it's a preliminary  
46 assessment.

1 Q. Okay. If we could go over the page, please, to 0021.  
2 Can you see at the bottom of the page there there's a table  
3 and it says, "The following requests for information from  
4 SEW have been requested by SMEC to inform this report"?  
5 A. Yes.  
6  
7 Q. And it seeks photos of the water leak at Waller Place  
8 on 1, 16 and/or 17 December 2024, and it notes that it's  
9 not provided?  
10 A. Yes.  
11  
12 Q. Do you know why that's not been provided?  
13 A. No, I don't  
14  
15 Q. Do you know whether those photographs are available?  
16 A. No, but - well, the photographs are generally in our  
17 Montage reports.  
18  
19 Q. I see. Can you see that the items requested at 4 and  
20 5 are said to be not available?  
21 A. Yes.  
22  
23 Q. And is that the situation so far as you understand it?  
24 A. I'm not sure.  
25  
26 Q. Who was it within your organisation that had principal  
27 responsibility for this report?  
28 A. Do you mean working with SMEC to provide the  
29 information?  
30  
31 Q. Yes.  
32 A. Julian Tully.  
33  
34 Q. Thank you. And what's Mr Tully's role?  
35 A. He's one of our technical directors. So we have a  
36 range of technical directors in particular engineering  
37 professions.  
38  
39 Q. So he's an engineer, is he?  
40 A. Yes, he is.  
41  
42 Q. If we could move over to page 0023, please. See  
43 there's also been a range of information requested from  
44 third parties?  
45 A. Yes.  
46  
47 Q. None of that information had been received by SMEC at

1 the time that they produced this report; do you see that?  
2 A. Yes.

3  
4 Q. And are you aware of whether this information is being  
5 sought?

6 A. I know that we sought stormwater information from  
7 council; that we received that information; that it wasn't  
8 in a form that we could use that's not - that we were  
9 looking for. That's not intentional, just more what we  
10 were looking for.

11  
12 Q. All right.

13 A. I'm not sure about the others.

14  
15 Q. Thank you. If we could go to 0090, please. Do you  
16 see the final sentence there? Sorry, I'll take you to the  
17 paragraph before that where it speaks of "further  
18 investigation of the condition extent of stormwater  
19 drainage" --

20 A. Yes.

21  
22 Q. -- "embedded material and sewerage embedment material  
23 down View Point Road."

24 A. Yes.

25  
26 Q. That's what's recommended. It's also recommended  
27 that, "The invert levels, gradient, condition and jointing  
28 details of the stormwater drainage network from number 12  
29 Prospect Hill Road to the turning circle is verified". And  
30 it's then stated that, "It's the expectation that further  
31 intrusive investigations will be carried out and the result  
32 of those investigations may impact on this assessment and  
33 may alter the likelihood of the mechanisms occurring."

34 A. Yes.

35  
36 Q. In this context the mechanisms occurring are the  
37 relevant theories that this report seeks to test?

38 A. Yes.

39  
40 Q. And so that's another indication that this is a highly  
41 provisional and conditional report; do you accept that?

42 A. I certainly accept it's preliminary, yes.

43  
44 Q. Thank you. This report tests three potential  
45 hypotheses as to what may be the cause of the landslide.  
46 It's perhaps most easy to identify what those are from the  
47 executive summary at 0009. Can you see the first three

1 bullet points there, "Mechanisms proposed to understand how  
2 SEW assets could have impacted on the subject site" were  
3 "that a leak occurred within the SEW assets in the vicinity  
4 of the subject site (that is within 100 metres of the  
5 subject site." Now, just pausing there that's not the  
6 Bayview Road burst, is it?

7 A. No, that one's not.  
8

9 Q. "That groundwater or mains water from a leak flowed  
10 along SEW asset trenches." That could include but not be  
11 limited to the Bayview Road burst?

12 A. That's correct.  
13

14 Q. Thank you. "That groundwater levels within the  
15 subject site increased due to water from SEW asset leaks,  
16 and not private water usage"; do you see that?

17 A. Yes.  
18

19 Q. And so they are the mechanisms that SEW is  
20 investigating in a preliminary way. And in part 8 of  
21 the report those three potential causes are assessed. If  
22 we go to 0079 we see the conclusion at 8.1.5. And it's  
23 concluded that, "It is considered not feasible that known  
24 and repaired leaks within SEW assets have impacted to the  
25 landslides of 5 January and 14 January 2025"; do you see  
26 that?

27 A. Yes.  
28

29 Q. The language is a little difficult, but do you  
30 understand what's being conveyed by the phrase "SEW assets  
31 having impacted to the landslides" that it's actually  
32 speaking to whether SEW assets have had an effect that may  
33 have caused the landslides; is that what you would  
34 understand that to mean?

35 A. Or contributed to.  
36

37 Q. Thank you, or contributed to. There's then some  
38 mention of laboratory tests, which I'll come back to. Do  
39 you see there that it says, "It's noted that the water  
40 taken on 6 January at subject site had an EC level that was  
41 very high in comparison with other tests on water sampled  
42 in the locality of the site"?

43 A. Yes.  
44

45 Q. There's then a reference to slope failure within the  
46 same escarpment in November 2022. And do you see there it  
47 says, "A day before the leak a mains burst was identified

1 and repaired on the day of the slope failure"?  
2 A. Yes.  
3  
4 Q. So this is a burst water main within the vicinity of  
5 the slope failure of the 2022 landslides.  
6 A. Yes.  
7  
8 Q. Were you aware of that before you read this report?  
9 A. I was aware of the 2022 burst when we started to  
10 collate information around the 2022 landslide, but not  
11 before that.  
12  
13 Q. Are you aware of whether South East Water had ever  
14 informed the council that there had been a burst water main  
15 in the vicinity of the subject site immediately before the  
16 2022 landslide?  
17 A. I don't know.  
18  
19 Q. Are you aware that there's been a causal investigation  
20 into the 2022 landslide conducted by a geotechnical  
21 engineer on behalf of the council?  
22 A. Yes.  
23  
24 Q. And are you aware that that geotechnical engineer  
25 considered various hypotheses as potential causes including  
26 a leaking pipe on the property at 10-12 View Point Road?  
27 A. Yes.  
28  
29 Q. And are you aware of whether or not he was made -  
30 whether he was informed there had in fact been a burst from  
31 a South East Water main the day before?  
32 A. I don't know.  
33  
34 Q. You'll see there that he goes on to say, "On the day  
35 before over 80 millimetres of rainfall was recorded." You  
36 understand he's talking here about 2022, not 2025?  
37 A. I understand, yes.  
38  
39 Q. "The leak led to several areas of surface damage,  
40 including pavement distress and sinkholes within the  
41 adjacent private property."  
42 A. Yes.  
43  
44 Q. And then there is a conclusion by SMEC, or the  
45 relevant officer, that, "The evidence of 15 November 2022  
46 suggests that defects are most likely to occur within the  
47 proximity of the burst. It is considered as not feasible

1 that water can flow down buried service trenches and leave  
2 the trench without resulting in defects being observed  
3 close to, within five metres, of the burst." Do you see  
4 that?  
5 A. Yes, I can.  
6  
7 Q. So had SMEC been asked to investigate whether or not  
8 South East Water's infrastructure had contributed to the  
9 2022 landslide?  
10 A. No, not to my knowledge.  
11  
12 Q. This is conclusions that they have drawn because  
13 they've become aware of the fact of a burst within the same  
14 escarpment a day before an earlier landslide; is that as  
15 you understand it?  
16 A. That's right, and then consider it not feasible.  
17  
18 Q. Yes. And was that the first that you became aware of  
19 the fact that there had been a burst within the same  
20 escarpment before the 2022 landslides?  
21 A. Yes, in terms of collation of this information; yes.  
22  
23 Q. Could we move to 0083, please. You see there under  
24 8.2.5, "It is feasible and moderately likely that the water  
25 observed at Charlesworth Street and Waller Place may be  
26 associated with the leak at Bayview Road."  
27 A. Yes.  
28  
29 Q. And so SMEC concludes in this preliminary way that  
30 it's at least feasible and moderately likely that water  
31 travelled from the Bayview Road leak at least to  
32 Charlesworth Street and Waller Place?  
33 A. Yes.  
34  
35 Q. And, in your own mind, are you able to think how far  
36 that is from the burst site?  
37 A. Yes, I sort of have that map in my mind.  
38  
39 Q. Yes. It involves the water travelling underneath or  
40 over the top of the freeway?  
41 A. Yes.  
42  
43 Q. Yes. And you're aware that Charlesworth Street and  
44 Waller Close are reasonably proximate at least to View  
45 Point Road, which is the identified source of  
46 the landslide; are you aware of that?  
47 A. I think they're different distances, and I suppose

1 that's why we asked them to look at to say could it be  
2 feasible for it to travel to the landslide site.

3  
4 Q. But at least in the preliminary assessment of SMEC  
5 it's at least feasible and moderately likely that water  
6 travelled at least to Charlesworth Street and Waller Place?

7 A. I agree. That's why we need to do that investigation  
8 in parallel to the landslip site.

9  
10 Q. And do you understand the mechanism by which the water  
11 would have travelled from the burst site to Charlesworth  
12 Street and Waller Place?

13 A. No.

14  
15 Q. Do you accept, though, that if water travelled from  
16 the burst site to at least Charlesworth Street and Waller  
17 Place it meant that not all of the water from the burst  
18 travelled down the nearby stormwater grate? That must be  
19 the case, mustn't it?

20 A. Yes, unless there was a - it came from the stormwater  
21 at that place. But I understand what you're saying.

22  
23 Q. Yes, that's fair. An alternative path might be that  
24 if the water entered the stormwater grate and then somehow  
25 exited from the stormwater system to Charlesworth Street  
26 and Waller Place.

27 A. I'm not saying that's what happened.

28  
29 Q. No, but as a matter of theoretical possibility.

30 A. Sure.

31  
32 Q. All right. Could we move then, please, to 0086,  
33 please. This is dealing with what they describe as the  
34 water table theory. Can you see under 8.3.5, "There is not  
35 enough evidence to confirm or dismiss the mechanism."

36 A. Yes.

37  
38 Q. But it's assessed on a preliminary basis as being  
39 highly unlikely.

40 A. Yes.

41  
42 Q. "It is considered more likely that sources other than  
43 a leak in the mains would occur close enough to the subject  
44 site to impact on the stability of the escarpment"; do you  
45 see that?

46 A. Yes.

1 Q. Now, is it clear to you, based on the evidence  
2 available to you in your position as managing director of  
3 South East Water and the evidence that's been heard in the  
4 course of this board of inquiry so far, that the area the  
5 subject of the landslides was at least quite wet to an  
6 unusual degree?

7 A. I've heard the different reports from residents and  
8 also as part of these hearings, too, in terms of the  
9 different wetness they describe; yes.

10  
11 Q. And you know that around the general McCrae area there  
12 had been a variety of complaints made as to the effects of  
13 excess water not just near the intersection of View Point  
14 Road but in Waller Place, in Charlesworth Street and indeed  
15 in other streets; you're aware of that?

16 A. Yes.

17  
18 Q. And so as far as you are aware as you sit there now  
19 are you aware of any other potential source of significant  
20 water other than South East Water's own network?

21 A. I wouldn't say it's significant. We are aware that  
22 there's or understand there's groundwater in that area, and  
23 a number of residents have referenced it at different times  
24 as well, and also private property leaks at different  
25 stages in that area as well, too, which we can provide more  
26 information on.

27  
28 Q. You have information on those topics, do you?

29 A. Yes, we do.

30  
31 Q. In your witness statement, which I'll bring up, it's  
32 SEW.0001.0001.0110, if we could have page 11, please, 0011.  
33 This is the part of your witness statement that's concerned  
34 with the possible paths of water?

35 A. Yes.

36  
37 Q. And you understand this to be a critical issue for  
38 investigation by this board?

39 A. Yes.

40  
41 Q. And you can see there at 67 you say, "SEW considers  
42 that a significant portion of the drinking water released  
43 from the burst water main travelled above ground to a  
44 stormwater pit approximately 30 metres away from the burst  
45 site"?

46 A. Yes.



1 Q. And that's what I was referring to before as the  
2 stormwater grate?  
3 A. Yes.  
4  
5 Q. And is that still SEW's position as you sit there  
6 today?  
7 A. Based on our observations at the time, and then the  
8 SMEC report starts to look at that as well in terms of what  
9 proportion may or may not, noting that we'll never know.  
10  
11 Q. Do you accept that if in the order of - accepting your  
12 lower range estimates - 36 to 40 megalitres of water  
13 escaped from the burst main --  
14 A. Mmm.  
15  
16 Q. -- that even if the overwhelming proportion of that  
17 water travelled down and into the stormwater system by the  
18 nearby stormwater pit, that the sheer volume of water left  
19 over would still be sufficiently significant as to be able  
20 to cause disturbances in the McCrae area?  
21 A. That's why we asked the SMEC report to look into it in  
22 terms of understanding what it might mean and how it might  
23 impact either directly or by travelling through other ways,  
24 including our assets, to get there.  
25  
26 Q. Now, the stormwater grate sits at the surface - at  
27 surface level; is that correct?  
28 A. Do you mean in terms of the top of the grate?  
29  
30 Q. Yes.  
31 A. The one near the burst site?  
32  
33 Q. Yes.  
34 A. Again, I'm not, you know, an engineer but I have  
35 walked to see it and, yes, it does.  
36  
37 Q. You physically inspected it yourself?  
38 A. Yes, I walked to see it.  
39  
40 Q. I see. And you'd describe it as being at ground  
41 level?  
42 A. Well, there's a grate that sits at the top.  
43  
44 Q. It might be slightly depressed.  
45 A. I just mean it's on a slope, but it's like --  
46  
47 Q. Yes, of course. I'm not asserting the ground is

1 perfectly flat, but it's at ground level?  
2 A. Yes.  
3  
4 Q. And you understand from all of your experience at  
5 South East Water that stormwater infrastructure is only  
6 designed to capture water at ground level; it doesn't catch  
7 subterranean water?  
8 A. Yes, I understand that.  
9  
10 Q. It's important for a stormwater system to be effective  
11 that it's a closed system?  
12 A. Yes.  
13  
14 Q. And so do you recall how far down into the ground this  
15 water main was that was repaired?  
16 A. Our water main?  
17  
18 Q. Yes.  
19 A. No, I'm not sure, but that will be in our records.  
20  
21 Q. It's in your statement, I can tell you.  
22 A. Yes. Okay. Thank you.  
23  
24 Q. It's no criticism of you that you don't remember it.  
25 But it's said in paragraph 50 of your statement to be  
26 1.7 metres below the surface.  
27 A. Thank you.  
28  
29 Q. Could I have on the screen, please,  
30 SEW.0001.0001.0076. Could we please go to 0092. Have you  
31 seen this picture before?  
32 A. Yes, I believe I have.  
33  
34 Q. And it might be a little difficult to tell but does it  
35 look to you as though that hole is full of water?  
36 A. It does look that way, yes.  
37  
38 Q. It does?  
39 A. Yes. Full of something, maybe.  
40  
41 Q. Yes. You know, don't you, that this is the site of  
42 the burst main, there or thereabouts?  
43 A. Yes, that's my understanding.  
44  
45 Q. If we could go to the next page, please. So that's a  
46 more close-up shot, I think, of the area, and that again  
47 looks to be full of water, doesn't it?

1 A. That looks like there's water present there, yes.  
2  
3 Q. Yes. Now, on the one hand we've got the stormwater  
4 pit sitting at ground level, we've got the main - I think  
5 it's been said to be about 30 metres away - 1.7 metres  
6 below ground. And you know, don't you, that beneath the  
7 main sits the sewerage system?  
8 A. Yes.  
9  
10 Q. In its own trench?  
11 A. Yes.  
12  
13 Q. And you know that sewerage systems are built on a  
14 constant downward slope because they rely upon gravity?  
15 A. Yes, that's right.  
16  
17 Q. Whereas your water's pressurised or can be  
18 pressurised?  
19 A. That's right.  
20  
21 Q. And that means that water escaping from the burst pipe  
22 will first fall into the trench that surrounds the pipe; is  
23 that right, as you would understand it?  
24 A. It depends on the nature of a burst or a leak.  
25 Sometimes obviously depending on the leak it goes up.  
26  
27 Q. If it's highly pressurised and the leak is at the top  
28 it might go straight up?  
29 A. That's right, yes.  
30  
31 Q. And do you know where the break in the pipe was?  
32 A. I don't.  
33  
34 Q. Okay.  
35 A. But it's underground.  
36  
37 Q. Quite.  
38 A. Yes.  
39  
40 Q. So the likelihood here is that the water exited the  
41 pipe, and the pipe is within a trench?  
42 A. The pipe's definitely within a trench, yes.  
43  
44 Q. And so the water will at some point at least,  
45 accepting it's got a hard roof, it will then follow gravity  
46 and will sit in the trench?  
47 A. I'm sorry, it's not my expertise, but it's exactly the

1 line of questioning in terms of asking SMEC if it could  
2 have gone down the trenches, either our sewer or water  
3 ones.  
4  
5 Q. Ms Olsen, you've got one up on me because you've got  
6 an undergraduate degree in chemical engineering. But  
7 I would have thought this was pretty basic physics. The  
8 water will find the lowest point, won't it?  
9 A. Generally, unless - or the easiest way to flow, which  
10 sometimes is the lowest point or it might be something  
11 that, you know, moves it towards somewhere else.  
12  
13 Q. But, in any event, for water to get up the 1.7 metres  
14 necessary before it can then travel along the path to get  
15 to the ground there needs to be a significant volume of  
16 water that fills the trench to the level of 1.7 metres,  
17 doesn't there?  
18 A. Again, it's not my expertise but we often have bursts  
19 or leaks that go above ground and have water that comes out  
20 at the top --  
21  
22 Q. But there's no suggestion that that's what was going  
23 on here. You needed to dig this trench out to find the  
24 break.  
25 A. All of our water mains are generally underground and  
26 most of them we will dig out to repair the leak. So the  
27 water --  
28  
29 Q. But this wasn't a geyser. Nobody said, "I think  
30 you've got a burst pipe over there because there's a geyser  
31 shooting out of the ground." There was water bubbling out  
32 of the ground as it was found; do you accept that?  
33 A. That's right, yes.  
34  
35 Q. And do you accept the likelihood is that if there's  
36 water bubbling out of the ground that that water has risen  
37 to surface level by reason of the trench becoming full?  
38 A. It's - I don't know that.  
39  
40 Q. I'll put it to you in a different way.  
41 A. Sure.  
42  
43 Q. This is obviously speculation.  
44 A. Sure.  
45  
46 Q. This is an investigation into a possible theory.  
47 A. Absolutely.

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Q. But do you accept that at least as a matter of possibility it would have been necessary for the trench to fill before the water got to the ground level?

A. I don't know. But we did as part of that report look to understand if it could have been our assets that transported it or it could have been adding to groundwater.

Q. I'm just trying to understand how it is that the water gets into the pit because, as I understand it, a significant part of SEW's theory is the water gets to ground level and travels into the stormwater system.

A. Which is --

MS SIEMENSMA: Objection, Madam Chair. There's a couple of problems with this questioning. There's references to trenches. It's not clear to me whether we're talking about sewerage trenches, water trenches. The other issue is Ms Olsen seems to be asked questions about the SMEC theory and hypothesis and whether it's workable. And, as she says repeatedly, she is not the expert. She may have a qualification, but she's never practised in that area. And this theory is being tested against her. She has no expertise.

CHAIRPERSON: Mr Costello?

MR COSTELLO: I thought I had made the trench point quite plain because I've only spoken so far about mains water trenches, and I made that very clear in my questioning and I said I will speak to the sewer trenches which sit below it. I asked you a question that was, "Are the sewer trenches below?" But for now I've been speaking about water filling in the mains water trench. As --

CHAIRPERSON: I think Ms Olsen - sorry.

MR COSTELLO: Pardon me, I was going to address the second part of the objection.

CHAIRPERSON: Do that, Mr Costello.

MR COSTELLO: I have made it quite plain that this witness is not being called as an expert. But the notion that the managing director of South East Water is unable to address theories in the expert report that has been commissioned by that organisation in circumstances where that organisation

1 has an ongoing investigation into the subject matter of  
2 the report and of this board of inquiry, and this is the  
3 sole witness that has been put forward by South East Water,  
4 is utterly unsustainable.

5  
6 CHAIRPERSON: Ms Siemensma, I'm --

7  
8 MS SIEMENSMA: If I might reply. These are questions best  
9 asked of the author of the SMEC report.

10  
11 CHAIRPERSON: And they will be, but I'm going to allow  
12 Mr Costello to ask the question.

13  
14 MR COSTELLO: I want to be clear to you, Ms Olsen, one of  
15 the reasons I'm asking you these questions is I have a very  
16 real concern about the extent to which this investigation  
17 is being seriously conducted by your organisation, and  
18 seeking to understand your level of understanding of this  
19 report is important for this inquiry understanding the  
20 extent to which South East Water is conducting its own  
21 serious investigation. Am I right to think that you've  
22 given this report serious consideration?

23 A. Yes. And I also want to be clear we do take this very  
24 seriously. It is why when there was internal beliefs that  
25 this couldn't have impacted, you know, on the landslide  
26 area we absolutely commissioned the report to do it. So  
27 I'm sorry that's how it's come across. It's absolutely  
28 very serious. I just know that I don't have the  
29 qualifications in terms of how geotechnical or how water  
30 travels to be able to answer some of your questions.

31  
32 Q. I understand that. You've got no better  
33 qualifications than any non-expert. But what you do have  
34 is a position of very serious responsibility.

35 A. Absolutely.

36  
37 Q. And you have an obligation to make sure that those  
38 advising you are looking into all theories?

39 A. Absolutely.

40  
41 Q. And let me put it frankly to you, Ms Olsen. You  
42 cannot discharge that function properly unless you have a  
43 very significant understanding of these matters, including  
44 alternative theories that have been put by others?

45 A. Absolutely.

46  
47 Q. And I want to explore the extent to which you

1 understand those theories --  
2 A. Yes.  
3  
4 Q. -- and have given them consideration.  
5 A. Sure.  
6  
7 Q. I do not expect you to give an expert opinion about  
8 anything.  
9 A. Thank you.  
10  
11 Q. Can I have on screen, please, RES.0011.0001.0016, and  
12 if we could go to the second page, please. Commissioner,  
13 this is exhibit CA18. Ms Olsen, have you seen this  
14 document before?  
15 A. Yes, I believe I have.  
16  
17 Q. This was a document produced by somebody else but  
18 you've been shown it, have you?  
19 A. It looks similar to one of our documents, so I might  
20 be confused. But I certainly know the areas.  
21  
22 Q. Thank you. You know that the yellow circle at the  
23 bottom right-hand side is the burst site?  
24 A. Yes.  
25  
26 Q. And then you know there's the freeway?  
27 A. Yes.  
28  
29 Q. And do you also know that the red lines are sewer  
30 trenches?  
31 A. Yes, I understand that.  
32  
33 Q. The blue lines are mains water trenches?  
34 A. Yes.  
35  
36 Q. And do you know that sometimes the mains water line  
37 sits directly above the sewer trench?  
38 A. Yes. Not always, but yes.  
39  
40 Q. Not always but sometimes, yes. And do you understand  
41 that what looked like the geysers or the sign for Wet &  
42 Wild are where significant amounts of water were detected,  
43 complained about, or works were conducted to repair roads?  
44 A. I understand that, yes.  
45  
46 Q. And do you understand that part of this theory that's  
47 being investigated - and it only is a theory - is that what

1 may have occurred is that at the site of the burst the  
2 mains water trench filled. It's possible that the mains  
3 water trench, having so much water in it, that some of that  
4 water - who knows the volume - may have travelled even  
5 further down into a sewer trench. And sewer trenches are,  
6 as we've said before, on a constant downward slope.

7 A. Gradient.

8  
9 Q. The water, having found a constant downward slope in  
10 the sewer trench, can then travel unrestrained. And so,  
11 depending on the volume of water, you may have a  
12 circumstance where water is travelling from the burst into  
13 the main, down into the sewer. So you now have a sewer  
14 with water travelling --

15 A. Yes.

16  
17 Q. -- a main with water travelling, but becoming  
18 sufficiently pressurised that the water comes to the  
19 surface, and potentially large volumes of it then sloughing  
20 off and going straight into the stormwater grate nearby.  
21 But on this thesis the water needs to get to the surface  
22 first, and it may be that in order to get to the surface it  
23 means there is a very significant volume of water at a  
24 subterranean level to have pressurised the water to get to  
25 the point where it then travels.

26 A. Yes.

27  
28 Q. And on this thesis the water is then in either the  
29 sewer main or the water main and capable of travelling.  
30 And you can see the path of the lines there across the  
31 freeway, travelling essentially along the path of the sewer  
32 mains?

33 A. Yes.

34  
35 Q. And various spots in what you might just generally  
36 call the McCrae area becoming sodden or roads becoming  
37 damaged. Do you understand this to be one of the theories  
38 that's been put forward as the cause of the McCrae  
39 landslide?

40 A. Yes, and that's the same one that we were looking for  
41 the SMEC report to investigate in terms of the trenches,  
42 both our sewer trenches and also the water mains trenches.

43  
44 Q. And just to be clear in terms of the types of volumes  
45 that might be necessary to actually travel into the site,  
46 now, 36 megalitres of water is an unimaginably large amount  
47 of water, and plainly if anywhere near that amount of water



1 travelled into the site then whole homes would have been  
2 washed away. So nobody is asserting that an enormous  
3 quantity of the 36 million litres, if that's in fact what  
4 it was, needed to travel to the site. But did you see any  
5 of the evidence of Mr Dane Pope, the council's --

6 A. Some, but not all.

7  
8 Q. Mr Pope, in connection with the 2022 landslide,  
9 equated over the 2022 landslide area, which is an area  
10 adjacent to but not the same area as the 2025 landslide,  
11 equated to 17 - sorry, 14,000 litres - well, no, I'll do  
12 the lesser amount, 7,000 litres of water entering that area  
13 being equivalent to 90 mm of rain, which he describes as a  
14 one in a 100-year rain event, and 14,000 litres of water  
15 being equivalent to 180 mms of rain. Now, it depends on  
16 the distribution of the area, so this is highly inexact.  
17 But his conclusion in respect of the 2022 landslide was  
18 that the primary mechanism that gave rise to the 2022  
19 landslide was the historic rains --

20 A. Yes.

21  
22 Q. -- that had so sodden and saturated the soils as to  
23 create the conditions for a landslide.

24 A. Yes.

25  
26 Q. And so when one considers that 90 mm of rain was  
27 sufficient to be, on Mr Pope's analysis at least, the  
28 primary cause of the 2022 landslides you can see how for  
29 the board of inquiry it becomes very relevant to understand  
30 not if huge volumes of water left this burst site and  
31 travelled into it but if any volumes of water left this  
32 burst site; do you understand that?

33 A. I understand. I think it's the same thing that we  
34 wanted to understand; like, could our assets have  
35 contributed.

36  
37 Q. Yes.

38 A. Holistically.

39  
40 Q. And aside from this burst water main on Bayview Road  
41 as we've been describing it --

42 A. Yes.

43  
44 Q. -- are you aware of any other burst water mains in the  
45 relevant period that might have possibly contributed water  
46 into the McCrae landslide area?

47 A. Just so I understand, do you mean sort of in November

1 and December?

2

3 Q. I mean in the period before the 5 and then 14 January  
4 landslides, yes. So, for present purposes, confine  
5 yourself to November and December.

6 A. Not that I am aware of. But the report did look at  
7 our burst history leading up into that time from I believe  
8 26 November.

9

10 Q. And what did it conclude?

11 A. This is the SMEC report.

12

13 Q. Sorry, but what did it conclude in respect of other  
14 possible bursts?

15 A. That those hypotheses that were shown before in terms  
16 of could a burst closer or a leak closer to the site or  
17 could one, you know, further away like this have  
18 contributed.

19

20 Q. Could I go to SEW.0001.0001.0076. Go to 0159, please.  
21 I apologise this is in portrait format when landscape -  
22 thank you very much. I didn't know that was possible.  
23 Have you seen this map before?

24 A. Yes, I have.

25

26 Q. All right. Could you explain to the chair what this  
27 map is, please?

28 A. Yes. It's a map of the McCrae area with the landslide  
29 site on the sort of top left at 10 View Point Drive, and  
30 then the yellow highlight is the areas surveyed by leak  
31 detection, and then there's some notes on it as well.

32

33 Q. All right. And here there are little red palm tree  
34 type diagrams. Do you know what they are?

35 A. I don't know what they are, but - no, I don't know  
36 what they are.

37

38 Q. All right. Can you see that on the right hand - well,  
39 let's start from the border. Can you see from the bottom  
40 right-hand border there's a highlighted notation that says  
41 "leak on main 100mm PVC"?

42 A. Yes, I can.

43

44 Q. And then if you move to the left there's the burst  
45 150mm PVC water main?

46 A. Yes.

47

1 Q. And you understand that to be the Bayview Road burst?  
2 A. Yes, I do.  
3  
4 Q. And then can you see, if one travels up, "Water coming  
5 to surface in nature strip"?  
6 A. M'hmm.  
7  
8 Q. And then you travel up again, "Water coming to surface  
9 from potholes"?  
10 A. Yes.  
11  
12 Q. And then across, "Water coming to surface from  
13 potholes in the road"?  
14 A. Yes.  
15  
16 Q. And then further up, "Customer number" - not sure -  
17 "reports increase in flow from GW basement pumps,  
18 discharges to the drain."  
19 A. So that's 5 Prospect Hill Road where we know that  
20 there was a customer leak.  
21  
22 Q. Thank you. And then can you see number 6, "Water  
23 coming to surface in nature strip"?  
24 A. Yes.  
25  
26 Q. And you know that - well, I'll finish it. Drains  
27 continuously flowing around Prospect Hill?  
28 A. Yes.  
29  
30 Q. And then you can see there landslide at the rear of  
31 the property of 10 View Point?  
32 A. Yes.  
33  
34 Q. Do you know who prepared this map?  
35 A. No, I don't.  
36  
37 Q. Okay. But it was prepared by South East Water? Was  
38 it prepared by South East Water?  
39 A. My understanding would be South East Water or maybe it  
40 was one of our industry partners; but I don't know.  
41  
42 Q. I see. It was prepared at a minimum for South East  
43 Water?  
44 A. Yes, sorry.  
45  
46 Q. And the areas of road, if you like, what look to be  
47 road, that are highlighted are the areas that were surveyed

1 for leak detection?

2 A. Yes, that's right.

3

4 Q. All right. And do you know when the acoustic leak  
5 detection that is indicated here was performed?

6 A. Not for this particular map, but we have a range of  
7 the maps of where leak detection is done on different  
8 dates. But I don't know this particular one.

9

10 Q. But I think that you agreed with me earlier that leak  
11 detection wasn't helpful in the particular circumstance of  
12 this burst; it never identified any?

13 A. Yes, the way that we did it. It wasn't until we did  
14 those steps and then our employee also could hear the  
15 stormwater drain and then followed it up past the freeway.

16

17 Q. And that might in part be a function of just the sheer  
18 distance between the burst and where the water was  
19 surfacing?

20 A. I think there was a number of factors, that being one  
21 of them. Also, as I sort of mentioned before, normally  
22 when water's pooling it's in an area that people see. And  
23 so that means it gets detected earlier.

24

25 Q. Could we please have Ms Olsen's statement back on the  
26 screen, SEW.0001.0001.0110, and if we could go to page 11.  
27 Can you see at 67 you say, "SEW considers that a  
28 significant proportion of the drinking water released from  
29 the burst water main travelled above ground to the  
30 stormwater pit."

31 A. Yes.

32

33 Q. And based on the exchange that we had before do you  
34 accept that, even if that is so, very serious investigation  
35 is required to ascertain what happened with that portion of  
36 the drinking water released from the burst water main that  
37 did not travel down the stormwater pit?

38 A. Yes, and hence our investigation.

39

40 Q. And then at 68 you say, "Based on the information  
41 currently available, SEW considers that drinking water that  
42 entered the ground and moved downslope, that drinking water  
43 would likely flow into and then follow the trenches of  
44 existing services" --

45 A. Yes.

46

47 Q. -- "because they are intentionally constructed on

1 varying downhill grades."  
2 A. That's right. Stormwater and sewer. As you  
3 mentioned, not necessarily water, but definitely stormwater  
4 and sewer.  
5  
6 Q. I see. And have you considered whether if water  
7 travels along either a stormwater main or a mains water  
8 main and arrives at, in effect, a hard stop, an  
9 intersection, what would then occur with the water?  
10 A. I would say that in terms of my knowledge I don't have  
11 that expertise, but I know that that is something that the  
12 report considered.  
13  
14 Q. There's a chance that in those circumstances the water  
15 may be forced to ground, for example?  
16 A. I think that it's sort of noted that it will generally  
17 flow down, unless there's an obstruction.  
18  
19 Q. The significant proportion that you talked about in  
20 paragraph 67, you don't have any idea as things currently  
21 stand of what that proportion is?  
22 A. No. That's another thing that the expert report  
23 considers. And I think we didn't measure it. I'm not sure  
24 that we will be able to know.  
25  
26 Q. But, for example, if the bottom of your estimate,  
27 current estimate, of 36 million litres is correct, if even  
28 10 per cent of it didn't travel down the drain we're still  
29 talking about 3.6 million litres?  
30 A. Unfortunately, I just don't know what proportion.  
31 I don't know.  
32  
33 Q. Anything other than a proportion - an extremely high  
34 proportion in the 90s is going to mean that there are  
35 millions of litres of water that still need to be accounted  
36 for; do you accept that?  
37 A. I think, yes, that's why we asked if our assets could  
38 have contributed.  
39  
40 Q. And you're aware of the fact that after the landslide  
41 water continued to flow in the landslide area, including -  
42 sorry, the landslides, including after the first landslide  
43 through and then under the Morans' house?  
44 A. I've heard different reports in terms of that, but  
45 I certainly heard the evidence given; yes.  
46  
47 Q. Did you see any of the vision yesterday after the

1 second 2025 landslide of water leaving the cliff  
2 immediately after the landslide had occurred?  
3 A. Yes, I saw some of that, too.  
4  
5 Q. All right. I asked you earlier about your statement  
6 that SEW is not aware of any detrimental effects directly  
7 caused by the burst water main.  
8 A. Yes.  
9  
10 Q. Do you recall that?  
11 A. I do.  
12  
13 Q. You say that at paragraph 60 and 70 of your statement.  
14 You also say at paragraph 49 that, "SEW is not aware of  
15 pecuniary losses or expenses incurred by persons as a  
16 result of the burst water main." Do you remember that?  
17 A. Yes.  
18  
19 Q. Now, would you qualify those statements in any way  
20 now?  
21 A. Yes, in the same way that we spoke about before,  
22 subject to the work that we need to do investigating  
23 Charlesworth and Waller, and we'll continue on with this  
24 work in terms of could we have contributed to the  
25 landslide, subject to the board's directions.  
26  
27 Q. You're aware that on 2 January South East Water  
28 confirmed to the local council's contractors that it would  
29 take responsibility in respect of the damage at  
30 Charlesworth Street and Waller Place; are you aware of  
31 that?  
32 A. No, I'm not.  
33  
34 Q. All right. To be fair, I'll show it to you. It may  
35 be that you may wish to correct the statement that's been  
36 made by another. Could I have MSC.9000.0001.0017. This  
37 might be a matter of which you're just not aware, Ms Olsen.  
38 A. Sure.  
39  
40 Q. And if I could have page 0032. This is not an SEW  
41 document and you may not be familiar with it. Do you see  
42 here this is an email from Jenna Kirk at Fulton Hogan. Do  
43 you know that Fulton Hogan are a contractor engaged by the  
44 Mornington shire council?  
45 A. I've heard as part of these proceedings.  
46  
47 Q. All right. You weren't previously aware of that?

1 A. No.  
2  
3 Q. This is concerning ongoing water issues at  
4 Charlesworth, Waller and now Coburn Avenue. Can you see it  
5 says "under the management of South East Water"?  
6 A. Yes.  
7  
8 Q. And it says, "Fulton Hogan have liaised with South  
9 East Water supervisor over the last few weeks to advocate  
10 on getting prompt action out here, given the impact to both  
11 private property and MPS assets."  
12 A. Yes.  
13  
14 Q. Then it says, "SEW have identified a burst water main  
15 and shut water off on 31 December. However, there is still  
16 water flowing."  
17 A. Yes.  
18  
19 Q. "South East Water have confirmed, given the amount of  
20 water flowing now for nearly six weeks, it's not an MPS  
21 stormwater concern."  
22 A. Yes  
23  
24 Q. Do you understand MPS to mean Mornington Peninsula  
25 Shire?  
26 A. Yes, I do.  
27  
28 Q. "Recent update as at 2 January 25 is that another leak  
29 detection team are heading down to further investigate. An  
30 update is also being provided as we speak to the SEW  
31 customer team to be sure to advise residents that the issue  
32 is under the management of SEW." Do you see that?  
33 A. I can.  
34  
35 Q. Are you aware of whether the content of that email is  
36 correct?  
37 A. I'm not, no.  
38  
39 Q. All right. But in any event at the time that you made  
40 your witness statement you weren't aware of the matters  
41 that are set out in --  
42 A. No.  
43  
44 Q. Sorry, to be clear, when I say "made your witness  
45 statement", I don't mean when you signed it this morning,  
46 I mean when it was originally provided you weren't aware of  
47 those matters?

1 A. No. I mean, yes, the burst water main, but not that  
2 it was our responsibility.

3  
4 MR COSTELLO: Is that a convenient time?

5  
6 CHAIRPERSON: We'll have a 15-minute break now, Ms Olsen.  
7 A. Okay. Thank you.

8  
9 **SHORT ADJOURNMENT**

10  
11 MR COSTELLO: Ms Olsen, I just want to ask you a few final  
12 questions and then I suspect others may have some questions  
13 for you.

14 A. Sure.

15  
16 Q. We were talking before about the Waller Place zone; do  
17 you recall that?

18 A. Yes.

19  
20 Q. And I directed you to the email where consideration  
21 was being given to the nighttime testing, including of  
22 the tank that services that zone?

23 A. Yes.

24  
25 Q. Are you aware of whether the site of the burst main in  
26 question here is in that zone?

27 A. I'm not sure about that particular email in relation,  
28 no, sorry.

29  
30 Q. Don't worry about the email. I was only just doing  
31 that to jog your memory about the phrase "Waller Place  
32 zone".

33 A. All right.

34  
35 Q. You're aware at least from what's gone on today that  
36 your organisation has a zone that's referred to at least  
37 sometimes as the Waller Place zone?

38 A. Yes.

39  
40 Q. And do you know whether or not the burst main that we  
41 have been discussing is in that zone?

42 A. I actually do not.

43  
44 Q. Is that something one would need to understand in  
45 order to do the appropriate testing?

46 A. It's not something that I understand, but it's  
47 absolutely something that our teams understand closer to



1 that to do the right testing; yes.

2

3 Q. If one wished to understand the water usage within the  
4 relevant zone one would need to understand the metes and  
5 bounds of the zone?

6 A. Absolutely, yes.

7

8 Q. And if this water main was outside of that zone that  
9 might be relevant to, for example, nighttime testing?

10 A. Yes, that's right.

11

12 Q. Or is nighttime testing only ever relevant to tanks?

13 A. In terms of nighttime testing, generally we do that on  
14 tanks. But it's related in the sense that, if there's a  
15 leak somewhere in the network, then the tank goes down  
16 faster than you would expect, if that makes sense.

17

18 Q. All right. I asked you some questions earlier about  
19 the location of this particular main and the difficulties  
20 in getting to it.

21 A. Yes.

22

23 Q. Do you know if South East Water has the right or  
24 ability to maintain the ground above water mains?

25 A. I'm not sure.

26

27 Q. Okay. Do you know if South East Water has any  
28 agreements or understandings in place with local councils  
29 as to that matter?

30 A. I'm not sure.

31

32 Q. Do you accept that the area around the burst main here  
33 was not maintained in a way that allowed for repairs to be  
34 undertaken expeditiously?

35 A. I accept that there's obviously vegetation around it  
36 that meant we needed to get approval for tree removal et  
37 cetera, yes, and the fence.

38

39 Q. Whether it's the responsibility of council, South East  
40 Water or some other entity, do you accept that the area  
41 around the burst main was not maintained in a way that  
42 allowed for repairs to be undertaken expeditiously?

43 A. No, not expeditiously in the sense that, you know, we  
44 do have 27,000 kilometres of pipeline and, maybe to give a  
45 sense of that, that is equivalent to the coastline around  
46 Australia. It's a lot of pipeline. And some of our  
47 pipelines are - makes it harder to get to. That might be

1 trees or other reasons. But we do it all the time in terms  
2 of being able to access those mains in a way once we've  
3 located a burst to be able to repair them.  
4

5 Q. So you are not concerned about the state of  
6 maintenance of the land above where this water main was;  
7 that's just a part of the ordinary operation of your  
8 organisation, is that right?

9 A. I think the fact that there are trees around where a  
10 water main is is something that does happen; yes.  
11

12 Q. Thank you. Do you accept that as at today South East  
13 Water cannot definitively say whether water from its  
14 network did travel to the land at 6 and 10-12 View Point  
15 Road before 5 January?

16 A. I accept that, yes.  
17

18 Q. Are you satisfied that appropriately comprehensive  
19 investigations are being made to determine whether water  
20 did travel to that location?

21 A. We took the investigation that we spoke about earlier.  
22 It's clear that it's a preliminary investigation that we  
23 need to keep going.  
24

25 Q. Is SMEC continuing to investigate that matter?

26 A. I believe at this stage we're just pausing, subject to  
27 if there's further direction. But we will keep going on  
28 that, the other matter. I don't know how that works in  
29 terms of that but, yes.  
30

31 Q. I don't understand your evidence.

32 A. Sorry.  
33

34 Q. So let me try and ask you some additional questions to  
35 make it clear.

36 A. Sure.  
37

38 Q. As things stand as at today SMEC have delivered a  
39 preliminary report?

40 A. Yes, that's right.  
41

42 Q. And we've been through that report.

43 A. Yes.  
44

45 Q. Does SMEC have current instructions to continue their  
46 work?

47 A. No.

1  
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Q. And were you suggesting that the reason SMEC don't have investigations to continue that work is because of the fact the board of inquiry is now operating?

A. No, that's our accountability. It's our intention that we would keep going, unless there was a different pathway proposed.

Q. Do you mean proposed by this board?

A. Yes, proposed by this board.

Q. The SMEC report's dated 5 May. Is that the date that you received it?

A. That's right.

Q. All right. And have you met with SMEC since then?

A. No, I have not.

Q. Who is it within your organisation that has responsibility for the engagement with SMEC?

A. Yes, it's Julian Tully.

Q. And is Mr Tully a direct report of yours?

A. No, he's not.

Q. To who does Mr Tully report?

A. He's a technical director, and our technical directors report to different people. I believe he reports to Charlie Littlefair.

Q. Sorry?

A. Charlie Littlefair.

Q. Is he a direct report of yours?

A. Yes, he is.

Q. So is it the case that no decision has been made by SEW as to whether SMEC ought be engaged for further work at this point?

A. We've discussed that it's our intent to keep going.

Q. But you haven't instructed them to keep going?

A. No, and that might be my misunderstanding in terms of how it works post this board.

Q. All right. Have you been given any indication by SMEC as to the timing by which they could complete a report that

1 was more definitive?  
2 A. No.  
3  
4 Q. Have you asked SMEC whether they're able to provide  
5 you with that timing?  
6 A. No.  
7  
8 Q. All right. Is this a matter that you have - no,  
9 I withdraw that. Have members of the board of South East  
10 Water been provided with a copy of the SMEC report?  
11 A. No, but they've been informed of it.  
12  
13 Q. Is there any particular standing board committee that  
14 would have responsibility for this matter?  
15 A. The overall board's been updated on this matter as  
16 we've gone.  
17  
18 Q. Is there a risk management committee?  
19 A. Yes, we do.  
20  
21 Q. Is the risk management committee a subcommittee of  
22 the board?  
23 A. It is.  
24  
25 Q. And is the risk management committee briefed on these  
26 matters?  
27 A. So the whole board has been briefed on this matter.  
28  
29 Q. Okay. And in terms of continued reporting to the  
30 board the reporting is to the whole of the board, is it?  
31 A. Yes, that's right.  
32  
33 Q. All right. I've asked you this question a number of  
34 times now but I'm not entirely clear as to your evidence so  
35 I'll just ask you a final time. In respect of the locating  
36 of the burst at Bayview Road --  
37 A. Yes.  
38  
39 Q. -- do you accept that South East Water was too slow to  
40 locate the burst?  
41 A. I wish we were faster. I accept that it's a lot of  
42 water. I accept that we would have liked to have found it  
43 earlier. And so I accept it took too long for us to find  
44 it. But we did our standard practices at the time.  
45  
46 Q. Does that mean the answer to my question is yes?  
47 A. I think it does. I just wanted to acknowledge - just,

1 yes.

2

3 Q. Are you reluctant to answer "yes" to that question  
4 because you're worried about legal liability?

5 A. No, I'm not. It's just more I want to acknowledge  
6 that our team tried in terms of trying to find that leak,  
7 and they were following their practices at the time. And  
8 I just want to acknowledge we didn't find it. You know, it  
9 took a large number of weeks to find it.

10

11 Q. And do you intend to put in place changes to the  
12 systems and processes of your organisation to try and avoid  
13 the risk of another leak of this magnitude lasting for as  
14 long as this leak lasted?

15 A. Absolutely, and that's already under way.

16

17 Q. And when do you expect to be in a position to have  
18 made those changes?

19 A. I think it will have to be in phases, as we discussed.  
20 So there's some immediate changes that we can make and are  
21 looking to make. I think there's some further work that we  
22 will need to undertake in terms of electroconductivity and  
23 groundwater and how that may or may not impact it to know  
24 how those tests are used.

25

26 Q. All right. Finally, Ms Olsen, can the chair be  
27 assured of full transparency and cooperation by South East  
28 Water as the board continues its work?

29 A. Yes.

30

31 MS COSTELLO: No further questions, thank you, Madam  
32 Chair.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON: Thanks, Mr Costello. Are there any  
35 questions?

36

37 MR VINEY: Yes, Madam Chair.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON: You're appearing for the shire?

40

41 MR VINEY: Yes. My name is Mr Viney, I'm appearing for  
42 the shire, and I seek leave to ask a small number of  
43 questions, which I have run past my friend Mr Costello,  
44 who's raised no objections.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON: You can ask the questions.

47

1 <EXAMINED BY MR VINEY:

2

3 MR VINEY: Hi, Ms Olsen.

4 A. Hello.

5

6 Q. My name is Cal Viney. I'm here today on behalf of  
7 the shire. Mr Costello showed you a Montage record this  
8 morning concerning the leak at 1 Charlesworth Street?

9 A. Yes.

10

11 Q. And it was dated 28 November 2024; do you recall that  
12 record?

13 A. Yes.

14

15 Q. Yes. And do you agree that that record showed that on  
16 28 November 2024, "Matthew, Mornington council, advised  
17 that they are on site and it is hazardous. Crew in  
18 transit. Matthew would like a call back regarding ETA so  
19 that he can set up traffic management." Do you agree that  
20 that's an accurate record?

21 A. I can't remember word for word, but I agree that  
22 broadly that's what it said; yes.

23

24 Q. Okay. So would you agree that that's a record of  
25 a representative of the shire contacting South East Water  
26 on 28 November 2024 about the state of the road at  
27 1 Charlesworth Street?

28 A. Yes.

29

30 Q. Now, Mr Costello didn't show you a record of this, but  
31 are you aware - as I take it, your evidence was that you  
32 have reviewed a number of Montage records in preparation?

33 A. I've tried, but I'm obviously not across all of them  
34 in detail. But, yes.

35

36 Q. I see. Well, are you aware after having reviewed  
37 those records of whether around about 4 December 2024 a  
38 representative of the shire contacted South East Water  
39 about Charlesworth Street and Waller Place?

40 A. I'm not. But our records in terms of those task  
41 summaries, many of them would hopefully list that. And I'm  
42 certainly aware of interactions during that time. I just  
43 can't remember if it's that date. But, yes.

44

45 Q. All right. Moving forward a little bit, I just want  
46 to take you to the SMEC report. If the operator could  
47 bring that up. The PDF page that I'm after is page 101.

1 SMEC The Bates is SEW.0001.0002.0001\_0101. I took that  
2 your evidence earlier was that you have read this report?  
3 A. Yes.  
4  
5 Q. Yes. Just to situate you as to where we are --  
6 A. Sure.  
7  
8 Q. -- we are in appendix A.  
9 A. Yes.  
10  
11 Q. Which is effectively a timeline of various events.  
12 A. Yes.  
13  
14 Q. Would you be able to look at the very final entry  
15 which is dated 20/12/2024, please?  
16 A. Yes.  
17  
18 Q. And do you see there that the entry is, "Fulton Hogan  
19 to South East Water. Advised amount of pressurised water  
20 running. They [FH] think it's not stormwater. They  
21 checked all the stormwater assets on behalf of council and  
22 no stormwater issues found. Said that road [Charlesworth  
23 Street perhaps] is getting bad and might have to close the  
24 road down due to water affecting condition of the road."  
25 A. Yes. I can't see the part over the --  
26  
27 Q. Yes, sorry.  
28 A. That's fine.  
29  
30 Q. The final part is over the page.  
31 A. Sure.  
32  
33 Q. Now, was it your evidence earlier that SMEC were  
34 briefed with information from South East Water?  
35 A. Yes.  
36  
37 Q. And am I right to assume that this timeline would be  
38 prepared based on records that South East Water have  
39 provided to SMEC?  
40 A. I would presume so. I'm not sure anything else that's  
41 in there. But, yes, certainly our Montage records are a  
42 part of this; absolutely.  
43  
44 Q. Okay. So have you reviewed yourself a Montage record  
45 that identifies that Fulton Hogan contacted South East  
46 Water to the effect that's set out in this appendix?  
47 A. I do remember a record that says that, yes.

1  
2 Q. Yes. Okay. I might then move back to the Montage  
3 record. It was put to you earlier today.  
4 A. Sure.  
5  
6 Q. It's SEW.0001.0001.0085\_0013.  
7 A. Yes.  
8  
9 Q. Yes. And when you look at this document, it is on  
10 page 13, you can see first of all that the task address is  
11 2 Waller Place?  
12 A. Yes.  
13  
14 Q. And you can see then that the task story identifies a  
15 number of dates. The first date is 1/12/2024?  
16 A. Yes.  
17  
18 Q. I would like you to look down a little bit further  
19 until you reach 20/12/2024. It's about in the middle of  
20 the page. It's square brackets "checked"?  
21 A. Yes.  
22  
23 Q. If we read down five lines there's a paragraph or a  
24 sentence that starts, "Steff passed me onto Jenna  
25 (infrastructure department at council) and Jenna advised  
26 spoke to supervisor at South East Water at 9.13 am this  
27 morning (did not get his name) and was told we have been  
28 out here several times. Jenna advised Fulton and Hogan  
29 were out there this morning and said too much water to be  
30 stormwater."  
31 A. Yes.  
32  
33 Q. You're aware, aren't you, from evidence today or  
34 perhaps rather from propositions put to you by Mr Costello  
35 that Fulton Hogan is the shire's roads and drainage  
36 contractor?  
37 A. Yes.  
38  
39 Q. Yes. Do you agree that the two records that I've  
40 shown you - so the first being the SMEC record and the  
41 second being the South East Water's own Montage record -  
42 demonstrate that I'll say representatives of the shire or  
43 Fulton Hogan had advised South East Water of a pressurised  
44 water issue around Charlesworth Street and Waller Place by  
45 20 December?  
46 A. I agree that they said that it wasn't stormwater, and  
47 that both representatives were there trying to work out



1 what it was: stormwater, groundwater or mains water.

2

3 Q. Yes. Do you accept, though, that in the earlier  
4 record that I took you to there was a reference to  
5 pressurised water? Do you accept that South East Water was  
6 advised by Fulton Hogan on 20 December that the issue was  
7 pressurised water running?

8 A. I can't see it here, but if that's what the record  
9 says.

10

11 Q. I'm quoting "advised amount of pressurised water  
12 running".

13 A. Sure. If that's what the record says, then I accept  
14 that.

15

16 Q. Okay. And do you agree that the two records that I've  
17 shown you show that as at 20 December 2024 the shire's  
18 representatives, being Fulton Hogan, had advised South East  
19 Water that Fulton Hogan had checked all stormwater assets  
20 on behalf of the council and that no stormwater issues were  
21 found?

22 A. I can read here that, yes, that it says that it's not  
23 stormwater.

24

25 Q. Staying on - sorry, I'll move to another exhibit.  
26 Operator, I'd like to go to MSC.9000.0001.0032. You were  
27 taken to this email earlier today. It's Q4.1 EAA of  
28 the exhibits of David Smith's second witness statement, if  
29 that's assistive. Would you like me to read it again?  
30 Perhaps while the email's coming up I'll just read you the  
31 excerpt from it?

32 A. Sure.

33

34 Q. It's an email you'll recall you saw a moment ago.  
35 It's an email from Jenna Kirk of Fulton Hogan dated  
36 2 January 2025, and the email states - it's to customer  
37 support leadership group at the Mornington Peninsula Shire  
38 Council and it says, "Please be advised the ongoing water  
39 issues at Charlesworth, Waller and now Coburn Avenue are  
40 under the management of South East Water. Fulton Hogan  
41 have liaised with South East Water supervisor over the last  
42 few weeks to advocate on getting prompt action out here,  
43 given the impact to both private property and MPS assets."  
44 Do you recall that?

45 A. Yes.

46

47 Q. Reading that earlier? Yes.

1 A. Not word for word but I recall the email, yes.  
2  
3 Q. Yes. And would you agree that for some weeks - based  
4 on the records that I've taken you to that for some weeks  
5 prior to the first week of January 2024 Fulton Hogan had  
6 been in contact with South East Water concerning the  
7 ongoing water issues at Charlesworth Street, Waller Place  
8 and Coburn Avenue?  
9 A. Yes.  
10  
11 Q. And would you agree that it's South East Water's  
12 responsibility to undertake testing to identify whether or  
13 not when there's a water leak whether or not that water is  
14 emanating from a South East Water asset?  
15 A. Yes.  
16  
17 Q. I'm just going to change tack for a moment.  
18 A. Sure.  
19  
20 Q. Now, in your witness statement at paragraph 8 you  
21 identify that sewerage infrastructure or assets in the  
22 McCrae landslide area are controlled, operated and managed  
23 or maintained by South East Water; is that correct?  
24 A. That's correct.  
25  
26 Q. And in your statement at 10 you say that water mains  
27 within the McCrae landslide area are controlled, operated  
28 and managed or maintained by South East Water?  
29 A. That's correct.  
30  
31 Q. You gave evidence this morning that South East Water  
32 conduct various tests to identify the source of water, and  
33 of course one of those is electroconductivity testing?  
34 A. Yes.  
35  
36 Q. And you have also said obviously you've reviewed the  
37 records that South East Water has concerning its  
38 contractors' response to water issues at Charlesworth  
39 Street, Waller Place and even Bayview Road; that's correct?  
40 A. Yes.  
41  
42 Q. That's the Montage records?  
43 A. Yes, that's the Montage records.  
44  
45 Q. Is it correct in some instances that those records  
46 show that customer complaints about water in those areas  
47 were ultimately referred to the shire on the basis that

1 water testing suggested the source of the water was not a  
2 South East Water asset?

3 A. And that's what happens often in those circumstances,  
4 that the shire - the Mornington Peninsula Shire or other  
5 shires might refer something to us if they think it's our  
6 assets, and then we might refer it to them if we think it's  
7 not ours.

8

9 Q. Yes, okay. And one of the records that you were taken  
10 to earlier today just as an example of this is the same  
11 Montage record that I've referred to a number of times now.  
12 It's, to assist, SEW.0001.0001.0085, and it's page 13 of  
13 that document. So it will be \_0013. Yes. And so you can  
14 see there, just moving sort of towards the top of that  
15 document --

16 A. Yes.

17

18 Q. -- the date 1/12/2024 there's a sentence that starts,  
19 "I tested the water a few times" --

20 A. Yes.

21

22 Q. -- "& the readings is alot more then task 001 & the  
23 reading is over 3700."

24 A. Yes.

25

26 Q. "This is a council issue. I rang the call back number  
27 & no answer." So is that a reflection of South East  
28 Water's standard practice at that time when South East  
29 Water have conducted - I take it that the reference to  
30 3,700 is an EC reading; would you agree with that?

31 A. That would be my assumption, too; yes.

32

33 Q. So was it South East Water's standard practice that  
34 when an EC reading is outside the parameters of drinking  
35 water, which you've given evidence earlier today of between  
36 50 and 200, that it is sent back to the shire?

37 A. So depending. Sometimes we might go out there and do  
38 an investigation and maybe it's a customer property  
39 identified. If we believe that it could be another asset  
40 like a stormwater impacted then we would let the council  
41 know.

42

43 Q. Yes. And would that be the case if you've been  
44 advised by the council or the council's contractor that  
45 they have identified that the water that they have observed  
46 or tested is not from a stormwater asset?

47 A. Yes, this is - I haven't really seen a situation where

1 it - normally what happens is there's a referral and then  
2 it gets dealt with. So I haven't really seen a case like  
3 this before where there's multiple referrals along the way.  
4 But I can see that's what's happened here.

5  
6 Q. Okay. And have you reviewed a Montage record at all  
7 that identifies after the leak was fixed at  
8 Bayview Road --

9 A. Yes.

10  
11 Q. -- the same approach was taken; so there had been a  
12 leak, and then a few days later South East Water  
13 effectively referred water issues at Charlesworth Street  
14 and Waller Place area back to council? Have you seen a  
15 record that shows that?

16 A. Not - I'm not sure of one, but --

17  
18 Q. Okay. Would it surprise you if there was one?

19 A. Just so I understand your question, if that post the  
20 Bayview Road leak --

21  
22 Q. Yes.

23 A. -- we had referred it back? It wouldn't - yes, it  
24 wouldn't have surprised me. I don't know of that record.

25  
26 Q. It wouldn't have surprised you, though? I misheard  
27 you, sorry.

28 A. Sorry, I don't know of that record. I would hope that  
29 that wouldn't be the case. I should say at that time we  
30 didn't know if it was groundwater. There can be three  
31 situations in terms of mains water, ground water or  
32 stormwater.

33  
34 MS VINEY: Yes. That concludes my questions.

35  
36 CHAIRPERSON: Thanks, Mr Viney. Ms Evans, do you have any  
37 questions?

38  
39 MS EVANS: No.

40  
41 MS SIEMENSMA: Madam Chair, there are a few topics, not  
42 many, that I had flagged with Mr Costello yesterday, but  
43 primarily just by way of re-examination.

44  
45 CHAIRPERSON: You can ask questions.

46  
47 **<EXAMINED BY MS SIEMENSMA:**

1  
2 MS SIEMENSMA: Ms Olsen, you were asked some questions  
3 about digital meters this morning?

4 A. Yes.

5  
6 Q. And the roll-out of those. And you touched on the  
7 impact of identifying a leak with a digital meter. Can  
8 I ask why it is the case that South East Water haven't  
9 rolled out digital meters much earlier, you know, two years  
10 ago, three years ago?

11 A. Every five years we seek permission for our prices to  
12 fund investments from the Essential Services Commission.  
13 We did a trial to prove the benefits of digital meters. We  
14 received the funding then to roll those out across from  
15 1 July 2023. Then we needed to go through a procurement  
16 process to purchase those meters. And then we've started  
17 to roll them out in earnest since.

18  
19 Q. And, as I understood your evidence earlier today, you  
20 had spoken about identifying some leaks on private  
21 property, and I made a note that you had made a reference  
22 to I think it was 30,000 litres at one place.

23 A. That's right.

24  
25 Q. Was that an isolated private property leak or have you  
26 found a number of them?

27 A. So there are 20 continuous flows that are greater than  
28 1,000 litres a day. Since we've started rolling out on  
29 28 April, that's the highest one that we have seen during  
30 that time.

31  
32 Q. And are you able to tell by reference to the data  
33 collected by the digital meter or its functioning when or  
34 for what period those leaks have been going for?

35 A. No. Once the meter goes on then we're able to track  
36 the water usage every half hour, but it doesn't look  
37 backward.

38  
39 Q. There's been some references today in evidence to  
40 5 Prospect Hill Road.

41 A. Yes.

42  
43 Q. And there was some evidence given by Mr Bolch a few  
44 days ago and he spoke of speaking to the owner of  
45 5 Prospect Hill Road and the fact that there was a sump  
46 pump pumping 5 Prospect Hill Road with an increasing volume  
47 of water, he said, from early December 2024. Can I ask you

1 about that.  
2 A. Yes.  
3  
4 Q. Was that water private water or is it South East Water  
5 water?  
6 A. I can't answer that question. What I can say is that  
7 there was a leak found at 5 Prospect Hill Road that we  
8 contacted the customer about, and that customer has let us  
9 know in April that he was able to fix that leak.  
10  
11 Q. And do you know when that leak commenced?  
12 A. No, we're not able to tell when that leak commenced.  
13 We just had the discussions about pumping out, as you've  
14 mentioned.  
15  
16 Q. And, the fact that the customer has had that fixed in  
17 April of 2025, is it your understanding that that was water  
18 leaking from the owner's property?  
19 A. Yes. So that's on the customer side. Sometimes  
20 they're hard to find where they are.  
21  
22 Q. Can I ask you about 10-12 View Point Road.  
23 A. Yes.  
24  
25 Q. Has Mr Borghesi's house switched to a digital meter?  
26 A. I don't know as yet. We haven't switched those where  
27 we can't access safely.  
28  
29 Q. How does the water usage at 10-12 View Point Road  
30 compare with water usage across your service area in McCrae  
31 over the last five years?  
32 A. So our average usage across households is about 141  
33 kilolitres a year, and that particular property over the  
34 last five years is about five times that average.  
35  
36 Q. And has that property received leak allowances or leak  
37 concessions?  
38 A. Yes.  
39  
40 Q. And in what period?  
41 A. There's been three across a period of time.  
42  
43 Q. Do you have any knowledge as to what period of time?  
44 A. I don't have the dates, no.  
45  
46 Q. Okay. Mr Costello asked you about leaks in the  
47 vicinity of the landslide area.

1 A. Yes.

2

3 Q. And he asked you in particular about the period from  
4 28 November 2024.

5 A. Yes.

6

7 Q. Can I ask you was there also a leak at Mr Borghesi's  
8 neighbour's house at 9-11 View Point Road on 27 November?

9 A. So there was a leak found on that customer's property  
10 on that date, and then the customer rang us on 23 December  
11 to let us know that that had been fixed.

12

13 Q. Was that a private property leak?

14 A. That's a private property leak.

15

16 Q. Mr Costello put to you that there were in the order of  
17 about 10 complaints made by people in relation to water in  
18 the period November 2024 through to January 2025.

19 A. Yes.

20

21 Q. The Montage records, do they record activities done in  
22 response to those complaints?

23 A. Yes, they do.

24

25 Q. Madam Chair, I wish to tender all of the Montage  
26 records that were produced from the period 1 November  
27 through to the end of January 2025 as part of perhaps CA26.  
28 Ms Olsen's been asked a great deal about different parts of  
29 it, and I think in fairness all of those ought to be  
30 tendered.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON: I'll give them a separate exhibit number.  
33 The Montage records dated 1 November 2024 to the end of  
34 January 2025 will be exhibit SEW2.

35

36 **EXHIBIT #SEW2 MONTAGE RECORDS DATED 1 NOVEMBER 2024 TO THE**  
37 **END OF JANUARY 2025**

38

39 MS SIEMENSMA: Thank you. You were asked about some  
40 evidence given by Mr Brett Cooper --

41 A. Yes.

42

43 Q. -- when he gave evidence saying he told South East  
44 Water to check at the other side of the freeway; do you  
45 recall that evidence?

46 A. Yes, I do.

47

1 Q. And I won't take you to it but in one of the Montage  
2 records, the one ending in 0076, there's an entry on  
3 27 December, "Will endeavour to have someone meet Jason on  
4 site on his request."  
5 A. Yes.  
6  
7 Q. Can I ask who Jason is?  
8 A. Jason is one of our employees who retired recently,  
9 but it's Jason Marsh.  
10  
11 Q. And there's no other entry that day. Do you know if  
12 Jason attended?  
13 A. Yes, we have confirmed with Jason. He's a very  
14 diligent person and that he did attend on the 27th.  
15  
16 Q. Okay. And is there any record of any activity he took  
17 on the 27th, because there does seem to be nothing further  
18 in the Montage records?  
19 A. Yes, and that's on us in terms of the Montage record.  
20 He's got some photos from that day, yes.  
21  
22 Q. Okay. And, if necessary, you're happy to produce  
23 those photographs?  
24 A. Yes.  
25  
26 Q. Okay. You were asked some questions about the pipe,  
27 and in particular - and this is the Bayview Road pipe --  
28 A. Yes.  
29  
30 Q. -- and about a description in your witness statement  
31 as to a split being 100 millimetres long.  
32 A. Yes.  
33  
34 Q. What was the length of the relevant pipe?  
35 A. I'm not sure of that particular section of pipe.  
36  
37 Q. There's been in evidence some plans that show pipes of  
38 many hundreds of metres in length. Do you know if it's one  
39 of those, or is it a small one, or do you have no idea?  
40 A. No, sorry, I don't know.  
41  
42 Q. You were asked about a portfolio of tests; you used  
43 that expression in your witness statement.  
44 A. Yes.  
45  
46 Q. When were those tests conducted?  
47 A. So the tests that I was referring to there in the



1 vicinity of the landslide were conducted from sort of the  
2 5th, so that first landslide on. We had a technician  
3 working with the council to do some of those tests, and  
4 then again after the 15th as well. There were some also  
5 that are - is done before that time as well.  
6

7 Q. And do I understand what you've just said then that  
8 the tests were taken from around the landslide area, not  
9 from the Bayview Road area?

10 A. So we've got a list of the overall tests. Our focus  
11 immediately after the landslide is on that landslip area  
12 that we believed our assets could have impacted.  
13

14 Q. You were asked about the 2022 burst.

15 A. Yes.  
16

17 Q. Are you able to say what period of time that burst was  
18 detected and over what period it was stopped?

19 A. Yes. So there was someone on site I believe within an  
20 hour and a half of it being reported, and then it was five  
21 hours that that water was running for before we did water  
22 off. Sometimes the repair takes longer, but the water was  
23 off after the five hours.  
24

25 Q. And in terms of volume of water do you have a sense of  
26 how much water escaped?

27 A. I believe that that has been calculated internally.  
28 There's a number I understand. I'm just not 100 per cent  
29 accurate in terms of what that number is.  
30

31 Q. Okay. And by comparison perhaps with the Bayview Road  
32 mains burst how did it compare to that?

33 A. It's much smaller in the sense that it was only five  
34 hours between detection and between when the water was off.  
35 But the team has looked at understanding - we know  
36 detection of the leak happens before that. So the team has  
37 looked holistically to understand what that volume could  
38 be.  
39

40 MS SIEMENSMA: I have no further questions.  
41

42 CHAIRPERSON: Thanks, Ms Siemensma. Do you have any  
43 further questions, Mr Costello?  
44

45 MR COSTELLO: I do not, thank you, Madam Chair.  
46

47 CHAIRPERSON: Ms Olsen, I just have one question.

1 A. Sure.  
2  
3 CHAIRPERSON: Have you assembled within South East Water a  
4 team of people or a working group to work solely on McCrae  
5 landslide related issues?  
6 A. We have assembled a team to work on McCrae issues and  
7 also a team to work on, I suppose, the related burst or  
8 leak detection issues. They're not 100 per cent all of  
9 them on that.  
10  
11 CHAIRPERSON: And how many people are on that team?  
12 A. In terms of that burst - the McCrae one?  
13  
14 CHAIRPERSON: Yes.  
15 A. I'd say there's more than 10 that are core members,  
16 and then more broadly there's others that provide  
17 information or analysis in.  
18  
19 CHAIRPERSON: And does the team have a name? Is it a  
20 working group with a name?  
21 A. It's the McCrae strategy group.  
22  
23 CHAIRPERSON: And is the McCrae strategy group working  
24 full time on McCrae related issues?  
25 A. Not full time, but spend most of their time doing it,  
26 yes.  
27  
28 CHAIRPERSON: Okay. Thank you.  
29 A. Thank you.  
30  
31 CHAIRPERSON: They're the only questions I had. Thank you  
32 for coming along to give evidence.  
33 A. Thank you.  
34  
35 CHAIRPERSON: I'll excuse you from - that completes your  
36 evidence today.  
37 A. Sure.  
38  
39 CHAIRPERSON: It may be that you're required back at a  
40 subsequent hearing block.  
41 A. Sure.  
42  
43 CHAIRPERSON: So you're excused today and you may leave  
44 the witness box.  
45 A. Okay. Thank you.  
46  
47 **<THE WITNESS WITHDREW**

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MR COSTELLO: No further witnesses today, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. We'll adjourn now, with further hearing dates to be published.

**AT 4.25 PM THE HEARING WAS ADJOURNED ACCORDINGLY**

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