Board of Inquiry into the McCrae landslide

Before: The Chairperson, Ms Renée Enbom KC

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

Thursday, 15 May 2025 at 4.13pm

(Day 6)

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.

Mr Costello, can I apologise to everyone for 1 CHAIRPERSON: 2 the extremely long delay today. The day developed in a way 3 that was completely unexpected and beyond my control. 4 5 MR COSTELLO: I've lived that experience before, Madam 6 Chair, so no adverse comment on my part. Continuing with 7 Mr Borghesi. 8 CHAIRPERSON: 9 Yes. 10 <GERRARD RAYMOND BORGHESI, recalled:</pre> 11 12 <EXAMINED BY MR COSTELLO: 13 14 15 Thank you, Mr Borghesi. MR COSTELLO: Mr Borghesi, when we rose yesterday we had been talking about the 2023 16 17 stormwater works and we had gone through what I might describe as the voids issue, the identification of them by 18 19 the ground penetration radar, the identification of a 20 particular void by reason of the roadworks going on, and we 21 saw the video of the void? 22 Α. Yes. 23 24 I didn't want to ask you any other questions in Q. 25 connection with that topic and was intending to move to But, just to be clear, am I right that it's 26 another topic. 27 your evidence that after the 2023 stormwater works were conducted by the council the area the subject of the 2022 28 29 landslides was considerably more dry than it had previously 30 been? 31 Α. That is correct. If I may add a little to that? 32 33 Q. Yes, please. 34 That area dried out over a period of between maybe Α. three to six months because of perhaps the amount of water 35 that was in the hillside; it didn't just dry out instantly. 36 It progressively dried out to today it's completely dry. 37 38 The last topic I want to touch 39 Q. All right. Thank you. upon before we move to 2025 concerns rectification works in 40 relation to the 2022 landslides. 41 42 Α. Okay. 43 Is it the case that there have not been any 44 Q. rectification works done to that land since the landslide 45 46 occurred? 47 Α. That is correct.

1 2 All right. And is it the case that you and the Q. 3 council are in dispute as to the extent of any 4 rectification works that need to be conducted? 5 No, I would not say that. Α. 6 7 Q. All right. Is it true that you and the council are in dispute as to who ought conduct rectification works? 8 9 Α. Yes. 10 11 Q. Is your evidence that there is agreement between you and the council as to the nature of the works that ought be 12 carried out? 13 14 Α. I would characterise it as very close to final 15 agreement. 16 Q. 17 I see. Α. Subject to perhaps another iteration on detail. 18 19 20 Q. All right. Well, let me cut to the chase. When I was 21 examining Mr Pope there was a discussion about a proposal 22 that involved in effect terracing part of the land where 23 the 2022 landslide was and the erection of I think four 24 retaining walls, and that was contrasted with the plan that 25 Mr Pope had developed that involved the use of soil nails and mesh? 26 27 Α. Correct. 28 29 Q. Do you recall me having that conversation? 30 Α. Yes, I do. 31 32 Q. All right. Is it the case that there's no longer a 33 dispute between you and the council as to the method of the 34 work? I would say not so much dispute but more finalisation 35 Α. of a final solution that would be lowest cost to whoever 36 37 ends up paying for it. 38 And does the solution involve one of those two options 39 Q. or is there a new solution that's been developed? 40 Α. 41 There were two other solutions being developed beyond 42 the two you mentioned. 43 Q. What were they? 44 One was what I would describe as surficial works, so 45 Α. surficial meaning on the surface of the hillside where the 46 47 2022 landslide was, with lighter, less expensive, less

1 invasive retaining walls to stop what are called 2 translational mudslides. And the other option that was 3 being considered was a Geobrugg retaining barrier like what 4 we see around the F1 circuit to capture errant F1 5 vehicles --6 7 Q. Sorry, what was the word you used before you said retaining barrier? A Geo? 8 9 Α. Geobrugg. 10 11 Q. Brugg? 12 Α. It's a commercial name for a type of tension barrier similar to what you might have on the side of a highway to 13 14 capture an errant vehicle. There was a discussion around 15 that being a potential solution on Penny Lane so that in the event there was a landslide that barrier would restrain 16 the soil and protect the inhabitants of the houses on 17 Penny Lane. And there's a third option, which is in play, 18 19 which is I think commensurate to the concept of the soldier 20 piles that we heard about in prior evidence, which is 21 essentially a heavy retaining wall on the back boundary of 22 the Willigenburgs' property and those other properties. 23 That doesn't act as a tension restraint. It's more a heavy 24 wall that would stop the flow of a landslide getting into the backyard. 25 26 27 So those options that I've described, if I may, I'd 28 say the Geobrugg option tension barrier has been dismissed 29 because it requires cables to go across Penny Lane, which would prohibit access for people going along Penny Lane. 30 31 But the other two options, the lighter surficial retaining walls and the soldier pile concept on the rear fences of 32 33 the properties on Penny Lane, are still very much in play, 34 and we're very happy to continue to talk to council about 35 those options. 36 So you and council have been having discussions about 37 Q. 38 those options? We've had one discussion. 39 Α. 40 41 Q. And those discussions are intended to continue, are 42 thev? We would very much like them to continue. 43 Α. 44 All right. And it's right, is it, that you're still 45 Q. involved in litigation with the council in connection with 46 47 losses that you sustained in the 2022 landslide?

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1 Α. Correct. 2 3 Q. And those proceedings remain on foot in the VCAT? 4 Α. They do. 5 6 All right. And are there extant proceedings on foot Q. 7 in the Building Appeals Board as well? 8 The Building Appeals Board has been heard. We're Α. 9 still waiting on the final ruling to come out in the next 10 day or two. 11 12 Q. I see. Mr Borghesi, I was going to move to 2025 now, but before I do that I just wanted to make sure that 13 14 there's nothing in connection with the 2022 landslides that 15 you wanted to convey to the chair that you haven't had an opportunity to convey by reason of my questions? 16 I have to think how to phrase it correctly, but 17 Α. I would like Madam Chair to understand that the - to fully 18 19 understand that the remediation works that the council 20 completed in May 2023 by virtue of putting in a new 21 stormwater drain and replacing the kerbs were in reaction 22 to, I would suggest, the 2022 landslide. So the issue 23 we've always had is why were those works completed at that 24 time. 25 Thank you, Mr Borghesi. 26 Q. Can we move to 2025? 27 Α. Yes, sir. 28 29 Q. In your statement commencing at about paragraph 30 you 30 make some comments about movement in the earth on the 31 property. This is underneath the heading "Chronology of relevant critical events between 1 January 2025 and 32 33 22 April 2025"? 34 Α. Okay. 35 And you say in paragraph 30, "In the eastern gully 36 Q. area and prior to January 5 there was approximately 150mm 37 38 of soil settlement behind the east end of the reinforcement 39 wall. There was no sign of water in this area, nor down 40 the eastern gully area"? Correct. 41 Α. 42 So that's prior to 5 January, and you then say, "On 43 Q. 5 January there was a substantial movement of earth"? 44 45 Α. (Witness nods). 46 47 Q. In fact I might call this paragraph up, in fairness to

It's RES.0001.0003.0002. And if we could go to 1 vou. 2 page 6 of that and expand on the screen paragraphs 31 and So you say there, "On 5 January there was a 3 32, please. 4 substantial movement of earth starting approximately 6m 5 below the ground level of the vegetable patch, when the 6 landslide occurred. This landslide exposed a substantial 7 flow of subterranean water emanating from the hillside at 8 this level," and we'll go to the photograph in a minute. And then, "Between 5 and 14 January the soil continued to 9 erode in the eastern gully area as the head scarp continued 10 to fail due to the continuous flow of water, threatening a 11 12 large gum tree in the gully as well as the reinforcement wall's foundations." Could we go to GB-14 now, which is 13 14 RES.0001.0003.0001, and it's at page 45. This is the photograph that you refer to in that part of your witness 15 statement, Mr Borghesi? 16

- 17 A. It is. 18
- 19 Q. And could you just explain to the chair what we're 20 looking at here?
- 21 We're standing on the veggie patch looking due north. Α. In the top of that photograph you can see the roof which 22 23 was number 3 Penny Lane. So if you were to lift your head 24 up you would see the ocean in front of you, so we're 25 What you can see here is the vegetation looking due north. that exists towards the base of the veggie patch. 26 At the 27 very bottom of this photograph if you were to look straight 28 down you'd be looking straight down that retaining wall. 29 So a substantial amount of soil and vegetation there. You 30 can see a gum tree on the right there. And then what 31 I would describe is quite a long way down the gully, the 32 best way to describe that would be approximately six metres 33 vertical drop from where my feet are, so the level of 34 the veggie patch, and perhaps 10 to 12 metres further north 35 is where that water is emanating. However, there were signs that - where that water is heavy there are signs that 36 37 the water - some of that water was actually emanating from 38 the scarp perhaps another metre or two back towards me.

But this is the site after the January 5 landslide, 40 41 and then what we're trying - what we were trying to convey 42 in my witness statement is the head scarp, which is 43 basically in the dead centre of this photograph where you can see the agapanthus and where that gum tree is off to 44 the right, was continuing to erode as the water beneath 45 that dirt and the agapanthus was liquefying the soil and 46 47 washing it down the gully.

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1 2 So we were watching that slow degradation on a daily 3 We were living in the house between 5 January and basis. We hadn't been evacuated at that point. 4 14 January. So 5 naturally this is the only thing that matters in our lives. 6 We're watching it, you know, 12 to 16 hours a day, and watching that head scarp come up towards the retaining 7 wall. 8 9 You refer to a video that you've provided to the board 10 Q. of inquiry in that paragraph. Would you like me to play 11 that video? 12 I would. 13 Α. 14 15 Could I please have RES.0001.0004.0189. I hope this Q. is the right one, Mr Borghesi, but you'll tell me. 16 If it plays I'll be able to tell you, but I'm not sure 17 Α. this is the right one. Well, this is - okay, this is just 18 19 a video taken from the same spot where the photograph was 20 taken. 21 22 Q. Yes. 23 This is useful. You can see there's water emanating Α. 24 there, and then goes towards that broader patch of wetness 25 that we saw on the still photograph, which is about there. 26 Yes. 27 28 And the water in that shot, how high up the hill is it Q. 29 coming out? It's coming out of the hill at some level. 30 How high up is it? We estimated six metres below the ground level of the 31 Α. veggie patch. 32 33 34 Q. Yes. Thank you. If I may add, difficult to measure. 35 Α. 36 37 Q. Yes. Yes, of course. 38 Α. So it could have been four. It could have been five. But our best estimate is six metres. 39 40 Madam Chair, that is not an exhibit to Mr Borghesi's 41 Q. statement, so I'll tender that video. 42 43 44 CHAIRPERSON: Yes. The video is exhibit CA23. 45 46 EXHIBIT #CA23 VIDEO RES.0001.0004.0189 47

Thank you. You then, Mr Borghesi, make some 1 MR COSTELLO: 2 statements regarding excess moisture on the property. You 3 begin by noting that there was very little rainfall in the McCrae area in December up to 14 January and that the 4 5 ground was dry throughout the property. You then estimate 6 the subterranean flow of water after the 5 January 7 landslide to be between 10 and 15 litres a minute? 8 Correct. Α. 9 That's the flow that we were just looking at there? 10 Q. 11 Α. Correct. 12 13 Q. And how did you come to that estimate? 14 Α. Through discussions with other people who were looking 15 at it and perhaps had more familiarity of how to sort of estimate water flow. 16 17 Q. I see. 18 And, secondly, the water flow that was flowing down 19 Α. 20 View Point Road in the cracked kerb, which we estimated to 21 be about 10 litres a minute continuously, I had previously 22 tried to capture some of that in a two-litre milk 23 container, not particularly successfully, but I had a good 24 idea of what 10 litres a minute looked like from that 25 exercise, and it was pretty evident to me that the water flow we were seeing here was the same or perhaps a little 26 27 bit more. 28 29 Q. I see. Thank you. It's at this point in your witness 30 statement that you make reference to an exhibit, which is 31 GB-15. Can I have it on the screen, please. It's 32 RES.0001.0003.0001. It's page 46. It's the document we 33 were just at but the next page. Now, Mr Borghesi, although 34 the colour's not necessarily readily apparent here, in your 35 witness statement you make reference to green dye? 36 Α. Correct. 37 38 Which is said to be shown by this photograph. Could Q. you just explain the circumstances by which the dye came to 39 be used and what the chair should take from this 40 41 photograph? 42 To the best of my knowledge, council representatives Α. 43 or their geotech had put green dye material in a borehole on the View Point Road nature strip. 44 I did not witness that occurring, but I was told that's what had happened. 45 I believe Dane Pope may have done that or, if not, if it 46 47 wasn't Dane, it was certainly a council representative.

1 And that green dye was inserted on the nature strip of View 2 Point Road in an attempt to identify the subterranean 3 pathway by which water could come from View Point Road down 4 to the head scarp here, and so what we see here is very, 5 very clear evidence of the green dye emanating from the 6 scarp in about the area that I was describing down from the 7 veggie patch approximately six metres, was our best 8 estimate. If you would like me to point to that? 9 10 Yes, if you wouldn't mind. Q. 11 Α. So just for clarity, so we're looking south here up towards our property. This is 6 View Point Road here. 12 The boundary line is right on that piece of wood. 13 So this is 14 the boundary between our properties. 15 You just anticipated my next question, which was 16 Q. Yes. 17 the boundary line. Oh, excuse me. 18 Α. 19 20 But just to be clear - sometimes with Q. No, not at all. 21 photographs angles can make things difficult, but do you 22 think that if you extend the boundary line from where you 23 just indicated down about the middle of the photograph 24 would that be a roughly accurate representation of 25 the boundary line here? I would say not quite. 26 The best way to imagine where Α. 27 the boundary line goes is to look at the wall here and the 28 direction the wall's pointing. So if you were standing 29 here and you projected on that same angle it would probably 30 come more --31 32 Q. I see. -- towards where this tree is --33 Α. 34 35 Q. Yes. But, for the purposes 36 Α. -- just because of that angle. 37 of making the point, on the head scarp here I'd say the 38 boundary is - well, actually, it's exactly on that line on the head scarp because it's coming across and then down, 39 which points to the soil loss on 6 View Point Road, and 40 41 then I think this way is on my property and my wife's And here is the green dye emanating here, and 42 property. the level of the veggie patch is - in fact, you can see a 43 planter box in the veggie patch up here. So we estimated 44 45 that drop to be six metres. 46 47 Q. Thank you. Before I come to the 14 January landslide

1 I just want to ask you some questions about your 2 communications with the council in the period between the 5 January landslide and the 14 January landslide? 3 4 Α. Yes. 5 6 Were you in contact at any point with the council Q. 7 after the 5 January landslide? 8 Yes, continuously. Α. 9 Were you in contact with a particular officer of 10 Q. the council or were you speaking to different people at 11 12 different times? 13 Different people at different times. Predominantly Α. 14 Matt Glover. 15 Q. Who was the MBS? 16 17 Α. Yes, the delegated MBS. 18 19 Did you speak to any of the elected representatives at Q. 20 the council or were your dealings with the employed staff 21 of the council? 22 Employed staff of the council. Α. 23 24 And, without going into each Q. Thank you. 25 communication, immediately after the 5 January landslide what were those communications about? 26 27 Α. So, if I may, on 6 January - can I look at my notes 28 here? 29 30 Q. Yes. 31 Α. On 6 January I communicated by text message to Claudio 32 Flores that we clearly had a bigger issue here than the 33 issues that were just surrounding the 22 landslide, and 34 I spoke to Matt Glover as well, so council people - and 35 I think there was Jimmy Jones as well. So on 6 January Claudio Flores, Matt Glover and Jimmy Jones. 36 In addition 37 to that we had SES people on site. But, in terms of 38 responsive to your question, the council people we spoke to on the 6th were those three. On the - do you want me to go 39 40 on to other days? 41 42 Yes, please. Q. So on 7 January we had a number of South East Water 43 Α. people present. We also had Claudio and Jimmy from council 44 present, and they were putting dye in drains at that point 45 in time, and we discussed the concept of drilling boreholes 46 47 or what John Bolch described as spears in View Point Road

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to extract water before that water emanated from the scarp,
 because we were all terribly concerned that, if we weren't
 capturing that water and redirecting it, this head scarp
 would continue to fail and lead to something disastrous.

6 8 January we had South East Water on site. They were 7 taking water samples. And I informed Claudio Flores of increased water flow. So this 10 to 15 litres a minute we 8 were estimating was fluctuating a little bit. 9 It would sometimes abate and then it would increase. 10 So I told him 11 it was increasing.

9 January we had Matt Glover, Jimmy Jones and two of
the students we've heard about previously attend the site
from council. They gave us an action report to consider
for interim works to stop further degradation of
the hillside.

19 On 10 January we had Matt Glover there to inspect the 20 Notably over the weekend 11 and 12 January property. 21 just - we tried to contact council but there was no-one They did have an after-hours 22 available over the weekend. 23 call-in voicemail system that we spoke to someone and 24 relayed our concerns that we were seeing further 25 degradation of the hillside.

And on Monday, 13 January Matt Glover was back. He was looking at the retaining wall and scrambled down it to look at where the separation from that soil was from the front of the retaining wall, and he was getting concerned about the retaining wall.

Then of course on 14 January we notified - not of course; excuse me. On 14 January we notified council of those bigger gaps occurring and those cracks I was describing yesterday, and then of course we had the failure on the 14th, on that day.

Q. Thank you. Is it fair to say that you were actively
concerned that there might be a further failure of
the slope after the 5 January landslide?
A. Absolutely, categorically.

Q. Thank you. That brings us to 14 January. Where were
you when the 14 January landslide occurred?
A. In my living room writing an email to council about
degradation on the slope.

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1 2 And you heard the landslide? Q. I see. 3 Α. I did. 4 How would you describe the noise? 5 Q. 6 Like a rumbling train, like - probably - like a Α. 7 thunderstorm. 8 Q. 9 I see. Α. A loud thunderstorm noise, lasted for about - it felt 10 11 like two minutes but it was probably 10 seconds. So I'd 12 say 10 seconds. 13 14 And was Mrs Borghesi with you at the home at that Q. 15 time? She was. 16 Α. 17 All right. And what did you do when you heard that 18 Q. 19 noise? 20 Both of us instantly ran out the backdoor, knowingly Α. 21 looking at each other that we knew what had happened, and 22 then went to not the veggie patch area but - if needed, 23 I could - you can't see it on the drawing here, on the 24 picture - to the paved area, which we considered to be 25 safe, and observed the back end of the landslip actually occurring, dust rising from down below. So we were outside 26 27 within 15 seconds of the initial collapse. 28 29 Shortly after going outside did you take video Q. 30 footage? 31 Α. Bronwyn did, my wife. 32 33 Thank you. I want to show three of those videos, and Q. 34 if you could just make any comment about what's being seen while the videos play. If you need them to be played a 35 second time, just say so. Could I first have 36 RES.0001.0004.0142. 37 38 Α. So you want me to talk to this? 39 Q. How soon after is this? 40 Yes. This is within seconds. 41 Α. You can see the dust rising 42 from below, so I would say 20 seconds, 15 seconds after the So what you can see here, as you're looking 43 landslide. along the edge of the retaining wall you can see moisture 44 there, you can see the collapsing soil coming from 45 46 underneath number 6 View Point Road, and that's probably 47 all I can say to that video. I think there's another video

1 that shows more soil. 2 Can I have, please, RES - before I do that I should 3 Q. 4 tender that. I'll tender that video, thank you. 5 6 CHAIRPERSON: That video will be exhibit CA24. That's a 7 video taken on 14 January 2025. 8 EXHIBIT #CA24 (ADDED) VIDEO TAKEN ON 14 JANUARY 2025. 9 RES.0001.0004.0142 10 11 Just to be clear, if these videos could be 12 MR COSTELLO: muted if they have sound; thank you. The next one is 13 14 RES.0001.0004.0194. Is this taken around the same time? 15 What you see there is deeply saturated soil Α. Yes. collapsing from underneath number 6 View Point Road, with a 16 consistency of what I would describe as tiramisu, the same 17 sort of colour, and then that soil - as Bronwyn pans, you 18 19 can see - once again that's in the same timeframe as the 20 earlier video. She pans back and you can see more water, 21 liquified soil - there it is - collapsing from beneath the 22 retaining wall at about that minus six level, completely 23 consistent with where that green dye area was. There you 24 can see - pause there. You can actually - may I point? 25 26 Yes, of course. Q. Please. 27 Α. Actually the cursor's on it. 28 29 Q. Yes. 30 You can see that deeply saturated soil. That's on Α. 31 number 6. If you rerun the video you can see it flowing 32 down --33 34 That looks almost like water. Do you think that's Q. soil? 35 It's almost like water, yes. It's actually - I would 36 Α. describe it as more liquified than that first slip we saw. 37 38 This is like water just flowing out of the hillside. 39 40 If we could play that video again from the start, Q. How soon after the landslide is this? 41 please. Is it 42 within a minute or? Within the same minute. The landslide I believe was 43 Α. 44 8.43, and this video has got metadata that says it's 8.43. 45 Do you want me to talk to this at all? 46 47 Q. If there's any comment you wish to make, please make

it. But you don't have to feel like you're giving 1 2 commentary. 3 I think you can see scoria falling from behind - and Α. 4 topsoil falling from behind the retaining wall, and then 5 you see that liquified soil under number 6 coming out. 6 7 Q. The trees that - or tree - might be trees; not sure -8 on the right of the picture there, they're on your 9 boundary? 10 Α. Right on the boundary. 11 12 Q. Are these the screening trees that you had said that 13 you've planted? 14 Α. Yes. 15 16 Q. Thank you. And we've - if I may? 17 Α. 18 19 Q. Yes, please. 20 But some have been lost in this landslide. I think -Α. 21 let me make sure I get the number right. I think three of 22 those trees have already gone down the hill, trees further 23 to the left of what you're looking at. 24 25 I might just play - I'll tender that video Q. Thank you. 26 too, thank you. 27 28 CHAIRPERSON: And that video will be part of CA24. 29 30 EXHIBIT #CA24 (ADDED) VIDEO TAKEN ON 14 JANUARY 2025. RES.0001.0004.0194. 31 32 33 MR COSTELLO: Thank you. There is a third, which is 34 RES.0001.0004.0195. 35 Α. Do you want me to speak to this? 36 37 Q. Yes, please. 38 Α. There is that tiramisu type sludge coming out on number 6, just flowing like - it had a - well, I said 39 40 tiramisu - almost like a lava type, totally liquified flow. 41 Is that the end of the video? Could that be played 42 Q. There seems to be quite an amount of water 43 again, please? 44 in this video? 45 Α. Agree. 46 47 Q. That water seems to be flowing from a particular

Is that point around about what you would think is 1 point. 2 the green dye area? 3 I would say that point - in fact in the middle of that Α. 4 photograph you can actually see like a puddle. 5 6 Q. Yes. If I can use that as the reference. 7 Α. I would say that 8 point is similar to the same height to where the green dye 9 was but fractionally maybe two metres further to the east 10 of where the green dye was. 11 12 Q. Thank you. 13 Α. But very close. 14 15 Q. And this video was taken shortly after the other two? Α. Correct. 16 17 Q. 18 Thank you. 19 20 CHAIRPERSON: So that video will also be part of CA24. 21 22 MR COSTELLO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Paragraph 38 - that 23 video can come down, thank you. Perhaps just to make 24 things move a little more quickly could we have 25 Mr Borghesi's statement on the screen, please. That's RES.0001.0003.0002. If we could have page 6, paragraphs 38 26 Mr Borghesi, you'll see there at paragraph 38 you 27 and 39. 28 speak to witnessing liquified soil falling away from 29 beneath 6 View Point Road. Is that what we've just seen in 30 the videos? 31 Α. Yes, it is. 32 33 In paragraph 39 you mention that, "Water Q. Thank you. 34 continued to flow in the eastern gully area at the same rate as witnessed prior to the 14 January landslide. 35 The reinforcement wall was partly destroyed by this landslide 36 37 as the liquified soil had removed the soil in front of (to 38 the north) the reinforcement wall and its concrete foundations (piers)." Can I just ask you a couple of 39 questions in connection with paragraph 39. 40 The water that 41 was continuing to flow, are you able to statement at what 42 distance that water was from the escarpment? 43 Α. From the escarpment? 44 Yes, from the top of the escarpment, pardon me. 45 Q. Well, if I can - if I may, when you say the top of the 46 Α. 47 escarpment perhaps we could use the level of the veggie

patch ground level as the reference point. 1 2 3 I just want to make sure that I understand your Q. 4 Is that the same as saying the top of evidence. 5 the retaining wall? 6 Α. Yes. 7 8 Q. Thank you. So consistent I think with what I have here. 9 Α. It's at the minus - six metres below the top of the retaining wall 10 is where we estimated this water and liquified soil was 11 12 coming. 13 14 Q. And you were viewing that from near to but not 15 directly behind the retaining wall? From where those videos were taken. 16 Α. 17 Yes, thank you. Now, are you able to say how long the 18 Q. 19 water continued to flow for? 20 So this is post 14 January. That water flowed Α. Weeks. 21 continuously for many weeks - I'd estimate at least five or 22 six weeks, but I'm not 100 per cent sure - and was flowing 23 down onto Penny Lane and through the pavement on Penny Lane 24 and into the drains on Penny Lane. So we were observing 25 that flow of water - this is post 14 January --26 27 Q. Yes. 28 -- for many weeks after that. And of course it has Α. 29 subsequently started to dry out as either the soil has 30 dried out or the source of the water has been identified 31 and terminated. 32 33 Q. Remind me, were you ever the subject of an evacuation 34 order? Yes, sir. 35 Α. 36 Do you recall when you became the subject of such an 37 Q. 38 order? I believe it was 14 January, after the major slide. 39 Α. 40 And how long were you out of the house for? 41 Q. We're out of the house till today. 42 Α. 43 And so how are you able to speak to the flow of water 44 Q. in the period after 14 January? 45 46 Through site visits that we were allowed to visit the Α. 47 property. But I think, more pertinently, by driving down

Point Nepean Road with a pair of binoculars or the naked 1 2 eye and just looking at the water. 3 4 If those paragraphs could come down, Q. Yes, thank you. 5 If we could go to the next page, and if we could please. 6 have paragraphs 40 to 43. Mr Borghesi, in this part of 7 your statement you're speaking to the issue of damage to roads and other infrastructure on View Point Road? 8 9 Α. Correct. 10 11 Q. And this seems to be from on or about the time of 12 the 5 January landslide; is that correct? 13 Α. Correct. 14 And you say that you - in 42 you repeatedly asked 15 Q. representatives from the shire and South East Water what 16 17 they were doing to respond to the water breaches that could be related to the landslides, however, you received no 18 19 substantive response, other than both authorities 20 constantly stating that they were continuing to identify 21 the source of the water. 22 Α. Correct. 23 24 Could you just expand upon the evidence you give in Q. 25 paragraph 42 to talk to your attempts to communicate with the shire and South East Water about this issue in that 26 period? 27 28 Well, once we were aware of the significant breaches Α. 29 uphill of us on Charlesworth and Waller Place and Coburn 30 Avenue, I think it is, we were, like other neighbours, 31 becoming interested as to whether or not those breaches had 32 anything to do with the water we were seeing in our 33 hillside and cause of the landslide. So we were - as 34 I went through each day after January 5 - between January 5 and January 14 just 15 minutes ago, we were meeting with 35 36 council representatives and South East representatives 37 effectively every day, except for the weekend, and this 38 question came up a number of times. And we didn't get any 39 satisfaction with regard to whether those breaches in the roadway upstream of us were related to the landslip that 40 41 occurred on our property. The feedback we had was they were continuing it identify the source of the water. 42 Thev 43 were running tests, they were doing dye tests, they were taking lab tests of water, both South East Water and 44 45 council, to try to work out from where the water was 46 coming. 47

1 Did you consider identification of the source of Q. 2 the water to be the most significant issue that ought to 3 have been dealt with in that period? 4 No, not at all. Α. 5 6 Q. What was your view? 7 Α. Repeatedly communicated to council employees was we 8 felt the source of the water at this point was completely 9 What was relevant was water is coming out of irrelevant. 10 the head scarp and likely to be identified and tracked in a relatively narrow pathway back up to View Point Road in the 11 12 vicinity of the work where the dye was put into the borehole that led to the green dye coming out of the scarp. 13 14 So our point was, "Don't worry about where it's coming What you need to do is intercept it before it 15 from. emanates from the scarp because once gravity gets a hold of 16 it, as was evidenced between 5 and 14 January, it will just 17 continue to erode the scarp." And because water was 18 continuing to flow, as I said, for many weeks after 19 20 14 January we felt it was imperative that council or South 21 East Water undertake some urgent works to dig a trench or 22 put spears in View Point Road to seek to intercept the 23 water and, even if that were unsuccessful, it was critical 24 that they do that rather than identify the source of 25 the water. 26 27 Q. Thank you. In paragraph 43 you speak of discussions 28 with neighbours that made you aware of recent degradation 29 at the top of View Point Road. Did you see that 30 degradation with your own eyes? 31 Α. Yes. 32 33 Q. You saw that on visits to McCrae, notwithstanding that 34 you were not in the house? 35 Α. Correct. And, for clarification, we were granted access to a neighbour's house to use as our residence. 36 So 37 we were right opposite our place. So we were driving down 38 View Point Road to this day regularly. 39 What was the nature of the degradation of the road? 40 Q. 41 Α. I'd describe it as a depression that appeared to track 42 the line of where stormwater drainage crosses Prospect Hill Road at the top of View Point Road such that if you were to 43 come up View Point Road and turn left and drive over that 44 depression a car would sort of bounce a little bit. 45 46 47 Q. If you were driving up View Point Road and turning

left, was the depression on the left-hand side of the road? 1 2 Α. Yes, yes. 3 4 Q. Thank you. And so was it pothole-like? 5 Α. No. 6 7 Q. Was it like crocodile cracks? 8 There are a lot of crocodile cracks in that area. So Α. 9 I'm not sure whether the crocodile cracks were just 10 associated with this depression. I would call it like a shallow spoon drain perhaps 30 to 50 millimetres at its 11 deepest point, as if you had a big pipe and pressed it into 12 13 the bitumen, like a depression. 14 15 Q. Finally, Mr Borghesi, are you in dispute with the council at the moment in respect of the 2025 landslide? 16 17 Α. No, we are not. 18 19 Mr Borghesi, those are the Q. All right. Thank you. 20 questions that I had for you. It's likely that others will 21 wish to ask you questions. But, before I sit down, are 22 there any other matters that you wanted to bring to the 23 attention of the chair or you feel you haven't had the 24 opportunity to expand upon to the extent you would wish to? 25 No, I think I'm satisfied. Α. 26 27 MR COSTELLO: Thank you. No further questions. 28 29 CHAIRPERSON: Thanks, Mr Costello. Are there any 30 questions? 31 32 MS FOLEY: Madam Chair, I seek leave to ask some questions 33 of Mr Borghesi. I've had a discussion with my learned 34 friend Mr Costello and I understand that the area that I'm 35 proposing to traverse is of satisfaction to him. 36 37 CHAIRPERSON: Thanks, Ms Foley. You can proceed. 38 <EXAMINED BY MS FOLEY: 39 40 Mr Borghesi, my name is Kathleen Foley and I'm 41 MS FOLEY: acting for the shire in these proceedings. 42 I have a few questions for you. In your witness statement you describe 43 various works that you've undertaken at the property since 44 December 2020, and one item of work that you describe is 45 46 what you call the reinforcement wall, and I want to ask you 47 some questions about the reinforcement wall. In your

witness statement you state that the reinforcement wall was 1 2 installed in November 2022; do you recall that? 3 Yes. Α. 4 5 Q. I'd like you to think carefully about that date. Do 6 you stand by that evidence? May I just check? 7 Α. 8 Q. 9 Yes. Which date did you share with me? 10 Α. 11 It's in paragraph 29(f). You state that the 12 Q. reinforcement wall was installed in November 2022. 13 14 Α. No. that is incorrect. 15 Q. What is your recollection now of what date that wall 16 was constructed? 17 Α. The reinforcement wall was --18 19 20 Yes, the one you say was constructed in your witness Q. statement in November of 2022? 21 22 I'd have to check my witness statement, but the Α. 23 reinforcement wall was installed I believe in January 2024. 24 25 Could you check your witness statement just so we're Q. not at cross-purposes? I think you might have it there. 26 27 No? That's all right. You can take it from me it says 28 November 2022. So your evidence now is that wall was 29 constructed in January 2024? 30 Α. That is correct. 31 32 Q. All right. I'd like to take you to one document that bears upon this date. Operator, if we could go to 33 34 MSC.5039.0001.0259. Thank you. Mr Borghesi, you can see this is an email from you to Mr Simon Bulk; you can see 35 36 that? Yes, I can 37 Α. 38 Okay. And the date is 18 October 2023. And he is of 39 Q. Maw Civil; do you recall that company? 40 Α. Yes, I do. 41 42 And they constructed the reinforcement 43 Q. All right. 44 wall for you? 45 Α. Correct. 46 47 Q. And you'll see that this is an email from you to him

1 saying, "We may need to do the veggie patch job separate 2 from a much bigger job." And then you say, "We have a 3 wedding here in March." 4 Α. Correct. 5 6 Is that a wedding the following March, 2024? Q. 7 Α. Correct. 8 9 Q. So am I right that you had decided to proceed more quickly in relation to this particular wall because there 10 was a wedding planned for March? 11 That would be correct. 12 Α. 13 14 All right. Now, you state in your witness statement Q. 15 that the shire was not advised of this, and by that you meant the wall? 16 17 The reinforcement wall. Α. 18 19 To be clear, you didn't apply for a building Q. Yes. 20 permit? 21 Α. Correct. 22 23 And you didn't otherwise let the shire know that you Q. 24 were proposing to build this wall; correct? 25 Α. Correct. 26 27 Q. Despite the landslip event that had happened at your 28 property in 2022; that's right? 29 Α. Correct. 30 31 Q. All right. You didn't say in your witness statement in the relevant paragraph how high the reinforcement wall 32 33 was? 34 Α. Correct. 35 Q. Why was that? Why did you not state how high it was? 36 Because I didn't think it was relevant. 37 Α. 38 You had stated in an earlier paragraph how high the 39 Q. old retaining wall was. Why is it that in relation to this 40 wall you felt it wasn't relevant? 41 Because it was following the profile of the land and 42 Α. not increasing the height of soil retained. 43 44 45 I see. In evidence yesterday when Mr Costello asked Q. 46 you some questions about this wall you initially agreed or 47 said, rather, that it was - sorry, there were a number of

1 walls - that the reinforcement wall was the same height as 2 the earlier wall; do you recall saying that? 3 Α. Yes, correct. 4 And then later you agreed that in fact it was higher 5 Q. than that earlier wall; do you recall that? 6 7 Α. Not precisely in that - the way you described it. 8 9 All right. You'd accept that in the course of your Q. evidence you later said that it was just under two metres? 10 11 Α. Correct. 12 13 Q. This second wall. All right. Are you aware, 14 Mr Borghesi, that the relevant exemption for retaining walls from the Building Regulations 2018 states, "Any 15 retaining wall less than one metre in height that is not 16 associated with other building work or with protection of 17 adjoining property is exempted"? 18 19 Α. Yes. 20 21 So you accept that you knew that if this wall was one Q. 22 metre or higher you needed a building permit? 23 No, I don't accept that. Α. 24 25 All right. What's the reason for saying that you Q. didn't need a building permit for this wall, given that 26 27 your evidence yesterday is it's just under two metres in height? 28 29 Α. Because we weren't changing the height of the soil 30 that was being retained. 31 All right. The exemption doesn't refer to any kind of 32 Q. 33 exception of that nature, does it? 34 Α. I don't know. 35 36 Q. All right. I just read out to you what the exemption is, and you said you understood it. Those words don't 37 38 refer to anything of the kind you've just referred to in relation to soil profile; you agree with that? 39 I would agree with that. 40 Α. 41 All right. You could have called the council and 42 Q. confirmed whether a building permit was required for this 43 wall, but you didn't? 44 45 Correct. Α. 46 47 Q. You could have sought advice from a professional in

1 this area in relation to whether a building permit was 2 required or not, but you didn't? 3 Correct. Α. 4 5 Q. You just formed that view yourself? 6 Α. Yes, I did. 7 8 Q. Not based on the language of the exemption? 9 Α. No, based on the concept of soil retained. 10 11 Q. All right. But you'd accept the exemption is what governs the situation? 12 I don't know. I'd have to study the exemption. 13 Α. 14 15 Q. I see. In circumstances where there had been a landslip in 2022 it would have been prudent, don't you 16 agree, to have contacted the council to check whether or 17 not a building permit was required for this wall? 18 19 I'm not sure I agree with that. Α. 20 21 I want to ask you a few more questions about Q. I see. 22 the height. In evidence yesterday you said it was just 23 under two metres. You'll recall that this retaining wall 24 was built with sections of concrete sleepers? 25 Α. Correct. 26 27 Q. And at its highest point you'll recall there are 10 sleepers built on top of one another? 28 29 Α. Correct. 30 31 Q. And you recall that the concrete sleepers themselves had dimensions which included a height of 200 millimetres? 32 33 Α. Correct. 34 35 Q. And so on that maths it's a two metre high wall at its highest point? 36 37 Α. No, it's not. 38 Can you tell me what's wrong with my mathematics 39 Q. please? 40 Α. I can. 41 42 Q. 43 Go on. 44 The wall is on a slope. It's angled back probably Α. 45 So if you had it completely flat when five to 10 degrees. 46 you had 10 sleepers the height of the wall is zero. If 47 it's completely vertical, it would be two metres. If it's

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1 angled back, it's less than two metres. 2 3 All right. And is that something that the exemption Q. 4 speaks to, that you can take into account the angle? I'm not sure, but height is usually measured 5 Α. 6 vertically. 7 8 Q. All right. It was the kind of thing that you should be sure about if you were deciding not to apply for a 9 building permit, don't you agree? 10 I'm not sure. 11 Α. 12 This wall, when it was constructed, involved 13 Q. I see. 14 bored piers? 15 Correct. Α. 16 17 Q. Steel columns? 18 Α. Correct. 19 20 Q. Concrete sleepers? 21 Correct. Α. 22 23 Q. You had to bring in excavating equipment to build it? 24 Α. No. 25 26 All right. You didn't have on the quote an excavator Q. 27 that was involved in the project? 28 Α. There was no excavator on the project. 29 30 Q. All right. So was there machinery that was --31 Α. Yes. 32 33 Q. Yes. And there was machinery to drill into the ground 34 to put in the bored piers? Correct. 35 Α. 36 All right. So we had machinery drilling into the 37 Q. 38 ground. We had bored piers. We had steel columns. We had concrete sleepers. And no building permit was applied for? 39 40 Correct. Α. 41 CHAIRPERSON: Ms Foley, he's accepted numerous times that 42 43 he didn't seek a building permit. 44 45 MS FOLEY: Thank you, Chair. I'll move to a different 46 topic. Yes, if we could tender this email, please. Chair, 47 I seek leave to tender that email.

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1 2 CHAIRPERSON: Is there any objection? 3 4 MR COSTELLO: No, thank you, Chair. 5 6 CHAIRPERSON: The email from Mr Borghesi to Mr Bulk dated 18 October 2023 is exhibit MPSC1. 7 8 EXHIBIT #MPSC1 EMAIL FROM MR BORGHESI TO MR BULK DATED 9 **18 OCTOBER 2023** 10 11 MS FOLEY: 12 Thank you. Mr Borghesi, this inquiry has heard expert evidence from Mr Paul that the less we disturb the 13 14 landscape the less chance we might trigger landslides. Did 15 you watch Mr Paul's evidence? Most of it I did, yes. 16 Α. 17 All right. In the time that you've had your property 18 Q. 19 you have done a number of different items of work to it; 20 would you agree? 21 Yes. Α. 22 23 Q. A new courtyard and a new garage? 24 Α. Correct. 25 A new balcony and a courtyard on the other side of 26 Q. 27 the property? What do you mean by the other side? 28 Α. 29 30 Q. On the western side? 31 Α. Yes. 32 33 Q. Removing and trimming vegetation? 34 Yes. Trimming. Mostly trimming, yes. Α. 35 Installing retaining walls? 36 Q. 37 Α. Of the ones we just described, yes. 38 Removal of trees? 39 Q. 40 Α. No - oh, one tree, yes. 41 Well, also removal of trees in association with 42 Q. the earlier renovation? 43 44 Α. Correct. 45 46 Installing irrigation systems? Q. 47 Α. Correct.

1 2 Q. Planting vines? 3 Α. Yes. 4 5 In the course of any of the work that Q. All right. 6 you've done did you ever seek an expert report from a 7 geotechnical engineer as to the cumulative impacts of the 8 works on your property to better inform you in relation to any more work that you were proposing? 9 Α. No. 10 11 12 Q. In your statement in describing this further wall you stated that it was a geotechnically engineered wall. 13 Did 14 you seek a geotechnical report in relation to the 15 construction of that wall? Yes. 16 Α. 17 Q. Has that report been provided to the board? 18 19 Α. Yes. 20 21 Q. Not as an exhibit to your statement? 22 Through the witness statement? Α. 23 24 Q. Yes. 25 Α. No, but in prior evidence submitted to the board of 26 inquiry. 27 28 Q. Who authored that report, Mr Borghesi? 29 Α. CivilTest. 30 31 Q. It wasn't a report that was done for the purposes of 32 designing the wall? 33 Α. Not specifically. 34 All right. So something that was done afterwards? 35 Q. What was done afterwards? I don't understand the 36 Α. 37 question. 38 I withdraw that. You say in your statement that the 39 Q. wall was geotechnically engineered? 40 Α. Yes. 41 42 Am I right that you didn't mean you sought 43 Q. 44 geotechnical advice in relation to the construction of the 45 wall? 46 No, I would say we sought geotechnical advice in Α. relation to the construction of the wall as well as 47

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1 structural engineering advice. 2 3 Q. Before you built it or afterwards? 4 Α. Before. 5 6 All right. And you say that that's in one of the Q. 7 CivilTest reports? The geotechnical information that the structural 8 Α. 9 engineer used to design the wall before the wall was built has been tendered to the board of inquiry. 10 11 12 Q. All right. So is it your evidence that the design of 13 the wall was based on geotechnical advice? 14 Α. Yes. 15 I see. Mr Borghesi, I want to turn to a different 16 Q. topic and that is the 10-metre tree that was removed. 17 In evidence yesterday you gave evidence that you felt that the 18 19 removal of the tree was consistent with the conditions in 20 place for renovation works; do you recall that? 21 That was my belief, yes. Α. 22 23 And in the questions and answers that followed you Q. 24 identified the building permit that was issued in 2015? 25 Α. I don't recall that. 26 27 Q. All right. Is it the works that were completed in 28 early 2018 that you were talking about when you were 29 referring to the renovation works associated with that 30 tree? 31 Α. Yes. 32 33 Q. All right. And in looking at the transcript it didn't 34 seem clear that you had ever identified when the tree was 35 removed. Am I right that it was in 2021? 36 Α. I would say that is accurate. 37 38 Q. All right. Is it your evidence that the removal of the tree in 2021 was somehow authorised under the permit 39 associated with the works that were completed in 2018? 40 I would say I'm not sure. 41 Α. 42 All right. You never called the council and checked 43 Q. 44 that matter before the tree was removed? 45 No, I did not. Α. 46 47 MS FOLEY: All right. No further questions.

G BORGHESI (Ms Foley)

1 2 CHAIRPERSON: Thanks, Ms Foley. Are there any other 3 Mr Costello, do you have any other questions? No. 4 questions? 5 No, thank you, Madam Chair. 6 MR COSTELLO: 7 8 CHAIRPERSON: Mr Borghesi, that completes your evidence. Thank you for coming along to assist the inquiry and thank 9 you very much for your patience today in particular. 10 You can leave the witness box. 11 12 <THE WITNESS WITHDREW 13 14 15 MR COSTELLO: Madam Chair, that's the only witness for today. As I understand it, we will sit tomorrow. 16 17 CHAIRPERSON: Yes. 18 19 20 MR COSTELLO: And take the evidence of Ms Olsen. 21 22 CHAIRPERSON: Yes. And we would ordinarily start at 10, 23 and I can start at 10. But, if others would prefer to 24 start earlier because that means we might finish by 25 lunchtime, we can do that. I'm in the hands of counsel as to what time you prefer to start. 26 27 28 MR COSTELLO: I would certainly plump for an early start, but I will only do so if my learned friend on behalf of 29 30 South East Water is content to do so. 31 32 MS SIEMENSMA: Madam Chair, we've conveyed to the solicitors assisting that 10 am is convenient. Earlier was 33 34 a bit difficult. 35 CHAIRPERSON: 36 We'll start at 10 am. Thank you. We'11 37 start at 10. We'll adjourn until 10 am tomorrow. 38 AT 5.10 PM THE HEARING ADJOURNED UNTIL FRIDAY, 16 MAY 2025 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47

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