



**QUEENSLAND HEALTH PAYROLL SYSTEM
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Name of witness | Ms Anna Maria Bligh |
| Date of birth | [REDACTED] |
| Address and contact details | Level 8, 179 North Quay, Brisbane Queensland 4000 (07) 3016 0345 |
| Occupation | Former Premier; non-executive director |
| Date taken | 15 May 2013 |

I, Anna Maria Bligh of c/- level 8, 179 North Quay, Brisbane in the State of Queensland, say as follows:

Background

1. Relevantly, I have held the following roles and offices:
 - (a) from 1995 to 2012, I was the Member for the electorate of South Brisbane in the Legislative Assembly of the Queensland Parliament;
 - (b) from July 2005 to September 2007 I was, among other roles, the Deputy Premier of Queensland;
 - (c) from February 2006 until September 2007, I was the Treasurer of Queensland;
 - (d) from September 2007 to March 2012 I was the Premier of Queensland;
 - (e) throughout my period as Premier, Deputy Premier and Treasurer I was a member of:
 - (i) Cabinet; and
 - (ii) the Cabinet Budget Review Committee (of which I had been a member since becoming the Leader of the House in 2001).
2. The Cabinet Budget Review Committee is a committee comprising four members, typically, the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer (if the Deputy Premier is not also the Treasurer), and an additional minister (or ministers on a rotating basis).

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Additional documents

3. The Department of Premier and Cabinet ("Department of the Premier and Cabinet") has undertaken a search for documents. I annexe hereto and mark as follows:
- (a) diary extract dated 27 January 2009, marked "AMB1.";
 - (b) "Premier's Briefing Note: Policy" dated 3 July 2009, with the subject "Meeting with IBM on 7 July 2009", and attachments thereto, collectively marked "AMB2.";
 - (c) diary extract dated 7 July 2009, marked "AMB3.";
 - (d) a diary appointment for the Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet dated 7 July 2009, marked "AMB4.";
 - (e) the two attachments to the diary appointment for the Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet dated 7 July 2009, one of which is the document referred to above and marked AMB2, and the other of which is a further briefing note dated 6 July 2009, marked "AMB5.";
 - (f) "Premier's Briefing Note: Policy" dated 25 July 2010, with the subject "Government Response to the Auditor-General's Report into the Queensland Health Continuity Project implementation and related ICT governance matters", and attachments thereto, collectively marked "AMB6.";
 - (g) "Premier's Briefing Note: Policy" dated 4 October 2010, with the subject "Auditor-General (AG) Report (the AG Report) on Queensland Health (QG) Payroll – progress on Queensland Government response" and attachments thereto, collectively marked "AMB7.";
 - (h) "Premier's Briefing Note: Policy" dated 15 July 2011, with the subject "Meeting Brief for meeting with IBM on 19 July 2011 and attachments thereto, collectively marked "AMB8.";
 - (i) diary extract dated 24 March 2010, marked "AMB9."

January 2009 CorpTech executive steering committee minutes

4. The Commission of Inquiry has provided:
- (a) minutes of Executive Steering Committee (Government Members) dated 29 January 2009¹ ("the steering committee minutes") and
 - (b) a handwritten note.²

¹ item number 187, pages 98 and following, Contract Management Bundle

² item number 187, page 101, Contract Management Bundle

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5. The Executive Steering Committee was a committee of senior executive departmental officers. I was not a member and did not attend meetings of that committee. It would have been highly unusual for a minister or the Premier to have been a member of such a committee.
6. The first paragraph of item 2 on the first page of the steering committee minutes³ records that it had been reported that I had met with Minister Robert Swarten, Minister for Public Works, and Mr Mal Grierson, Director-General, Public Works.
7. At 5 pm on 27 January 2009, my diary records, I met with Minister Swarten: see annexure AMB1.
8. I met with Minister Swarten and Mr Grierson and discussed the strategic direction of information technology across government.
9. Directors-General had limited meeting time with the Premier, so generally they came to such meetings with a list of at least three or four issues, about which they were seeking strategic direction. My discussions with Directors-General generally did not descend into operational matters.
10. At around this time, the strategic information technology issues under discussion included:
 - (a) Minister Swarten and his Director-General were considering how to get the best out of the shared services arrangement for the government and for government services (in July 2008, the government had transferred responsibility for information technology and back-of-house services through Shared Services from Treasury into the Department of Public Works); and
 - (b) debate as to:
 - (i) whether we should have a Queensland government Chief Information Officer; and
 - (ii) if so, to which Department that person should be attached.
11. While the steering committee minutes record that there had been some discussion about IBM at my meeting with Minister Swarten and Mr Grierson, I do not remember talking about IBM. I do not have any reason to doubt that IBM was discussed.
12. In late January 2009:
 - (a) I was three to four weeks away from calling the 2009 election, which was ultimately held on 21 March 2009.
 - (b) there was a global financial crisis;

³ item number 187, page 98, Contract Management Bundle

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- (c) Queensland was about three weeks away from losing our AAA rating (which occurred on 21 February 2009);
 - (d) there were newspaper front page headlines about mines closing and large scale job losses;
 - (e) the government had just established an employment taskforce to respond to the consequences of the global financial crisis, including the job losses;
 - (f) the executive government had a mid-year budget statement in early December 2008 in which we had lifted vehicle registration costs because our revenue had collapsed as a result of the global financial crisis.
13. In these circumstances, departmental requests for additional funds were likely to be refused.
14. The steering committee minutes⁴ record that at the 27 January 2009 meeting:
- (a) Mr Grierson attended as well as Minister Schwarten;
 - (b) the issue of IBM proceeding with delivery of the QH LATTICE interim solution only, as opposed to the whole of government program was discussed.
- If so, it is likely that Mr Grierson discussed the course of action he wished to adopt. Mr Grierson is unlikely to have presented the arrangement with IBM to me as a problem, without also proposing a solution and seeking direction in that regard.
15. The Commission of Inquiry has provided an internal Department of Public Works briefing note from Ms Barbara Perrott, Executive Director, CorpTech, to Mr Grierson of 21 January 2009. Ms Perrott recommended that IBM complete the Health Payroll implementation but not the whole-of-government program.⁶ If the IBM arrangements were discussed at our meeting, the discussion would have involved Mr Grierson and/or the Minister informing me of the Department's proposed solution.
16. No final decision, about the whole-of-government arrangements with IBM, could have been made in January 2009 because:
- (a) the decision had to be made by Cabinet Budget Review Committee;
 - (b) the briefing note of 3 July 2009, referred to below (and attached and marked AMB2), indicates that by July 2009 government was still considering its approach in relation to the arrangement with IBM;
 - (c) the Cabinet Budget Review Committee submission for the meeting of 21 September 2009 records that a discussion paper about the proposed alteration of the arrangement with IBM was created in June 2009 and circulated to relevant agencies; and

⁴ item number 187, pages 98 and following, Contract Management Bundle

⁶ Last paragraph on page 62, Contract Management Bundle

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- (d) the Cabinet Budget Review Committee did not make its decision until 21 September 2009.

February 2009 documents

17. The Commission of Inquiry has provided:
- (a) a copy of a document, "parliamentary briefing note", from the Department of Public Works, ref DPW00190/09, dated 2 February 2009;⁷ and
 - (b) a copy of a document, "parliamentary briefing note", from the Department of Public Works, ref DPW00331/09, dated 16 February 2009.⁸
18. I do not remember previously seeing either of those briefing notes. It is unlikely that I received those briefing notes, because departmental briefing notes for parliamentary purposes usually went to the responsible minister for the department, which, in that case, was Minister Schwarten.
19. If the Department of Public Works had an issue in respect of which it wished to provide a briefing note to the Premier, it would usually do so by way of a briefing note to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, not directly to the Office of the Premier or to the Premier personally.

July 2009 proposed IBM meeting

20. On 22 April 2013, Mr Jonathon Horton, counsel assisting the Commission of Inquiry, submitted:

"After that executive steering committee meeting in January 2009, a brief was sent to the then premier, Ms Bligh. A meeting occurred with Ms Bligh in about July 2009, and it would appear that the premier then made or confirmed the decision that IBM should not be engaged to undertake new work under the contract through any new statements of work."


21. I do not know which document is referred to by the submission "a brief was sent to the then premier, Ms Bligh". I am not aware of having received such a brief. If that submission refers to any of the Department of Public Works briefing notes of February or June 2009 then it is unlikely that I ever received any of them.
22. The Commission of Inquiry has provided:
- (a) an email of 15 June 2009⁹ from Mr Graham Marshall, Economic Policy, Department of Premier and Cabinet, to Ms Sue Wright, stating that I had accepted an invitation to meet with Bob Morton, General Manager – Qld, IBM, and seeking a brief;¹⁰ and

⁷ Item 190, page 115-116, volume 8, Contract Management bundle

⁸ Item 194, page 130-131, volume 8, Contract Management bundle

⁹ Item 246, page 105 and following, Contract Management bundle

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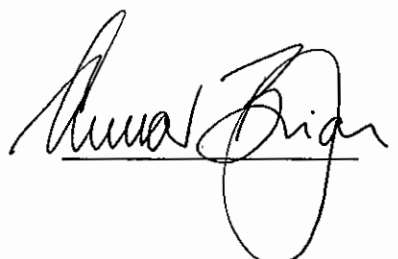


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- (b) a document dated 17 June 2009 that appears to be a Department of Public Works briefing note, numbered DPW01495/09, entitled "Premier's meeting with IBM," and attachments thereto, namely short biographical information for each of Mr Morton and another IBM executive, a schedule of meetings between IBM and minister Schwarten and others in the US in 2008, and a single page list of the Annual Queensland Government spend with IBM for the financial year 2007/08.¹¹
23. I do not believe:
- (a) that I saw the email of 15 June 2009, requesting a brief, or the Department of Public Works briefing note of 17 June 2009, previously – this is not unusual as these are communications between departments at an officer to officer level; or
- (b) that I attended the meeting, referred to in those documents, with Mr Morton or any other representative of IBM.
24. My practice was to review the diary for next day's each evening.
25. Often, throughout the day, scheduled meetings and appointments were altered, to meet changing circumstances or as more pressing issues arose.
26. My personal assistant was responsible for ensuring that each day's diary was updated to reflect the meetings and events that actually occurred.
27. For that reason, my diaries are generally an accurate reflection of the actual events of each day.
28. A copy of the extract from my diary for 7 July 2009 is the document annexed and marked AMB3. The diary does not record that I met with Mr Morton on that date.
29. Accordingly, the absence of any appointment in my diary of 7 July 2009, with IBM and/or Mr Morton, leads to the conclusion that I did not attend the meeting.
30. The Director-General of Department of the Premier and Cabinet also reviewed my diary for the day, on a daily basis. His practice was to identify any meetings which he could attend in my place, that is, meetings of lesser comparative importance, at which my presence was not necessary.
31. The Director-General's diary entry for 7 July 2009 shows that he took the meeting with IBM representatives on my behalf, which is annexed as AMB4.
32. As Premier, it was not unusual for me to meet with external stakeholders including senior business executives.
33. I kept an open door to business. I would describe such meetings as 'meet and greet'.

¹⁰ Item 246, page 105, Contract Management bundle

¹¹ Item 246, page 106 and following, Contract Management bundle

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34. When I was to meet with an external stakeholder, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet asked the relevant agency or agencies to prepare a brief.
35. Generally, I did not see the briefs provided by those agencies, because the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's role was to bring all of the briefs together and to summarise and distil them down into a document, preferably of one or two pages, depending on the nature of the meeting.
36. The briefing note attached to this statement and marked AMB2 appears to have been produced on 3 July 2009 in response to the Department of Public Works briefing note dated 17 June 2008¹² provided in contemplation of the proposed "meet and greet" with Mr Morton.
37. I do not believe I received any of the DPW note of 17 June 2008, the 3 July 2009 note (AMB2), or the 6 July 2009 note (AMB5).

July 2009 documents

38. The Commission of Inquiry has provided:
- (a) a copy of a document entitled "IBM as the Prime Contractor for the update of the Finance & Human Resource systems", apparently parliamentary briefing note for the purposes of the estimates committee hearings, from the Department of Public Works, ref No. 2.3, and dated 9 July 2009;¹³ and
 - (b) a copy of a document entitled "parliamentary briefing note", from the Department of Public Works, ref DPW02049/09, and dated 21 July 2009.¹⁴
39. These documents were not prepared for the Premier's consideration. I do not believe I have ever previously seen those documents.

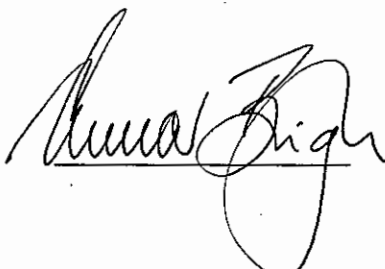
September 2009 Cabinet Budget Review Committee meeting

40. Senior Counsel assisting the Commission of Inquiry has asked me to state my knowledge as at the date of the Cabinet Budget Review Committee meeting of 21 September 2009. I was aware of the fact there had been an increase in cost compared with the amount initially advised, the fact that there had been delays in implementation, and of the contents of the submission.
41. The Cabinet Budget Review Committee:
- (a) dealt with budgetary issues that arose between budgets, where circumstances had changed;
 - (b) met fortnightly, sometimes weekly; and

¹² Item 246, page 106 and following, Contract Management bundle

¹³ Item 263, page 283 and following, volume 8, Contract Management bundle

¹⁴ Item 269, page 312, volume 8, Contract Management bundle

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- (c) had an agenda comprising submissions from government agencies.
42. In advance of Cabinet Budget Review Committee meetings, I read the agenda and submissions. I generally received further briefings from staff of my department and/or the Treasury. Such further briefings expanded upon or clarified the written submissions, but generally did not go into operational matters.
43. Any proposed change to the Shared Services Implementation was required to come to the Cabinet Budget Review Committee (as opposed to being a decision for the Director-General and the relevant minister) because it involved a change of approach from previous decisions of the Cabinet Budget Review Committee. It is not for an individual minister or director-general to overrule a previous Cabinet Budget Review Committee decision.
44. Further, ministers seeking to do things affecting other agencies generally took the issue to Cabinet Budget Review Committee or Cabinet to ensure that all consequences had been considered and there was broad support before implementation.
45. The submission to the 21 September 2009 Cabinet Budget Review Committee meeting refers to a discussion paper of June 2009, and to its circulation to various agencies. I do not have a copy of that discussion paper.
46. In September 2009 the government:
- (a) was still responding to the global financial crisis;
 - (b) was suffering pressure in the form of reduced revenue compared with forecasts; and
 - (c) had recently decided to sell some government assets, including in the areas of rail, forestry and ports;
47. In those circumstances, requests for substantial additional expenditure remained likely to be declined.
48. At the Cabinet Budget Review Committee meeting of 21 September 2009, the issues discussed included:
- (a) the necessity to revisit the Shared Services Initiative because:
 - (i) at the revised costs the government could not do everything that had originally been planned within the allocated budget; and
 - (ii) the economic circumstances prevented the government from continuing with that Shared Services Initiative in its then form at the higher costs;
 - (b) IBM had underestimated the scope and the costs, which is not an unusual thing for a very large organisation when it comes to procuring information technology;
 - (c) the health payroll was critical:

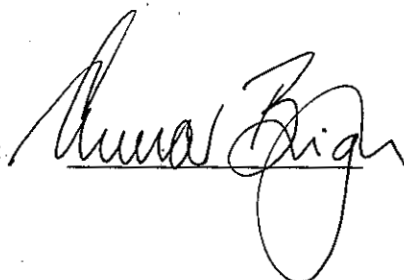
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- (i) the existing Queensland Health existing payroll system had ceased to be serviced in mid 2008; and
 - (ii) that system was at an increasingly high risk of collapsing, according to the technical advice, and needed to be replaced as quickly as it could be;
- (d) the Queensland Health payroll project was critical, and the proposal was to finalise it, and for the other parts of the program, to revisit the plans to make the approach more affordable;
- (e) IBM was a long way down the path of implementing the replacement, and the prospect of being able to quickly and effectively replace IBM, given the complexity of the task, seemed a very slight one, given how long it had taken to get from a decision to replace the system to having made progress in replacing it;
- (f) recruiting a different information technology contractor would not make the payroll replacement cheaper, and was certainly not going to make it faster; and
- (g) to the contrary, in all likelihood, the replacement would take longer, because the complexity would mean any new contractor would have to "climb the knowledge mountain" that IBM had already climbed.
49. Senior Counsel has asked whether I recall any suggestion, at the meeting, that the government could hold IBM to its original estimates. I do not. The Committee was considering the revised estimates at a time that IBM had undertaken almost two years of detailed work, including scoping work, with the relevant departments.
50. Senior Counsel has also asked whether there was any advice that the revised estimates were inaccurate for the size of the project. I do not believe so.
51. Further, there was not, so far as I am aware, any suggestion that IBM had lacked the technical expertise or competence to complete the health payroll system. Had such a suggestion been made, I would have been surprised, because IBM is one of the largest and most reputable information technology companies in the world.
52. The Cabinet Budget Review Committee took a practical decision, in that:
- (a) the government needed a health payroll system replaced urgently, and IBM was best placed to do that, because they already had all of the knowledge and it appeared they were well advanced in implementing the new system; and
 - (b) for the whole of government program, we did not have the same pressing urgency in other departments, because they were not in the same situation of having a payroll system at risk of collapse. We needed to prevent any further costs increases, given the economic circumstances. So for work beyond Queensland Health, we decided upon the revised approach recommended in the submission to the Cabinet Budget Review Committee.

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53. Senior Counsel assisting has asked me to state my knowledge about the human resources system implementation insofar as it related to the Education department, which was as follows:
- (a) I knew that the Education department had been involved in the Shared Services Initiative;
 - (b) senior executives of the Education department had expressed the view that that department needed a custom payroll system, not a 'one size fits all' system;
 - (c) the payroll implementation in the Education department had not been concluded by the time the Cabinet Budget Review Committee decided to reduce IBM's role from the whole-of-government program to implementing the Queensland Health payroll system only at that stage.

October 2009 briefing note

54. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet has sought, and I have given, my approval for the release of a parliamentary briefing note of 26 October 2009.
55. I have provided a copy of the briefing note to the Commission. I now annexe a copy, marked "AMB10."
56. I cannot specifically remember seeing this briefing note and I do not know whether it came to me at the time.

March 2010

57. On 24 March 2010 I met with an IBM technical consultant, Leslie Breaknell, and IBM account manager Mark Osbourne. IBM sought to promote the use of the IBM software called "IBM Jam".
58. IBM Jam is a platform for online brainstorming. Leslie Breaknell provided me with a demonstration of its capabilities. The government did not purchase the software.
59. The health payroll implementation was not discussed at the meeting of 24 March 2010.

June 2010

60. The Auditor-General decided to review the health payroll system implementation. The Auditor-General's report arising from that review was entitled "Auditor-General Report no 7 of 2010 Queensland Health Payroll and Rostering Systems Implementation."
61. I have reviewed the document annexed hereto and marked AMB6, the briefing note dated 25 July 2010. In that regard, I say:
- (a) That date appears to be erroneous. It seems more likely that it was drafted on 25 June 2010, because the Auditor-General tabled his report on 29 June 2010, and I issued a

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joint media release with the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health responding to the Auditor-General's report on 29 June 2010.

- (b) Attachment 4(a) to that note is entitled "Risks of moving to terminate IBM immediately". That attachment 4(a) is consistent with my recollection of the practical and commercial considerations under discussion at the time.
62. On 29 June 2010:
- (a) the Auditor-General's report was tabled in the parliament;
- (b) as had been recommended in the briefing note of 25 June 2010, a "notice to show cause" was issued to IBM; and
- (c) Deputy Premier Paul Lucas, Deputy Premier and Minister for Health, and I issued a joint statement committing to implementing the Auditor-General's recommendations.
63. The decision of the date of the release of tabling the report was a matter for the Auditor-General, which office is independent of government.
64. Senior Counsel assisting the Commission of Inquiry has asked me to address whether I recall any suggestion that the Auditor-General be prevented from issuing the report. I do not, and:
- (a) such a suggestion would have been highly inappropriate because it would have involved political intervention in an independent statutory office; and
- (b) the Auditor-General Act 2009 provides that the auditor-general is not subject to direction by any person about the way in which the auditor-general's powers in relation to audits are to be exercised or the priority to be given to audit matters.

July 2010 Cabinet Budget Review Committee meeting

65. On 6 July 2010, IBM provided its response to the show cause notice.
66. On 22 July 2010, the Cabinet Budget Review Committee considered a submission as to how to finalise the contractual relationship with IBM.
67. The submission had attachments including legal advice from an Assistant Crown Solicitor and from a leading law firm, as well as other materials.
68. The following matters informed my approach to the decision to be made at the meeting of 22 July 2010:
- (a) the legal advice indicated that we had a less than certain chance of succeeding in any action to sue IBM, and some legal advice indicated that IBM may have had grounds on which to counterclaim;

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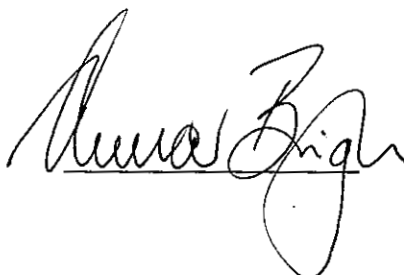


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- (b) I had also seen other relevant documents, including the Auditor-General's report tabled 29 June 2010, and the IBM response of 6 July 2010, to the notice to show cause, which supported the proposition that IBM may have grounds for a counterclaim;
- (c) if the only advice we had had was legal advice, and our only consideration a legal one, the Cabinet Budget Review Committee may have decided to commence legal proceedings notwithstanding concerns as to prospects of success, because I thought the public, and the affected Queensland Health employees, wanted there to be legal redress;
- (d) but it would not have been responsible for the Cabinet Budget Review Committee to take legal action without also considering the practical consequences of taking that legal action. The relevant advice included:
- (i) the risk assessment from KPMG, which is in the papers attached to the submission made to the Cabinet Budget Review Committee meeting; and
 - (ii) the advice contained in the submission itself, from the agency managing the project and dealing with IBM, the Department of Public Works.
- (e) Mallesons' discussion papers attached to the submission had advised government to consider whether or not the potential benefits of litigating outweighed the potential costs.
- (f) I considered that the practical advice indicated, among other things, that:
- (i) IBM had a number of staff, key senior staff in some cases, that were deeply embedded in the design and construction of the payroll system and, therefore, in fixing the system; and
 - (ii) the most likely consequence of the government deciding to take IBM to court was that whatever cooperation there was from IBM in performing the work to rectify the payroll system would be severely damaged, or even, potentially, evaporate.
- (g) my highest priority in relation to the payroll system was to get it fixed as soon as possible.
- (h) by then, the payroll system was starting to stabilise, but it was still a fragile system and was still causing a great deal of grief and pain.
- (i) I had been out and visited some payroll hubs and sat down with payroll staff, and with some nurse unit managers in hospitals, and said,

"Tell me where you think the system is breaking down. I'm trying to understand it."

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- (j) that did not make me an IT expert, but it gave me a layperson's understanding of the deep complexity of the payroll system;
- (k) I considered that damaging the working relationship between the key IBM technical people, working with departmental staff, to fix the system, or taking action that could see the IBM people leave the system, would delay the rectification process, potentially by months; and
- (l) I felt it was unthinkable to knowingly take an action that would put rectification at risk or at least cause further delay, and further pain for Queensland Health employees.

Subsequent events

- 69. On 26 August 2010, the Cabinet Budget Review Committee received a further submission¹⁵ and further advice in relation to the finalisation of the arrangements with IBM.
- 70. I have received a copy of a briefing note dated 4 October 2010, which is annexure AMB7 to this statement. I had asked for and received verbal and written updates as to the implementation of the Auditor-General's recommendations.
- 71. On 2 June 2011 the Cabinet Budget Review Committee reviewed¹⁶ the government's response to the Health Payroll implementation.
- 72. On 19 July 2011 I met with Mr Andrew Stevens, Managing Director, IBM. The subject of the meeting was as is set out in the briefing note that refers to this meeting, annexure AMB8.

Declaration

This written statement by me dated May 2013 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 13 is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed at _____ (place) this _____ th day of May, 2013.

Witnessed (sign):

Print Name of witness:

Date:

¹⁵ <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/tableOffice/TabledPapers/2012/5412T1426B.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/tableOffice/TabledPapers/2012/5412T1426A.pdf>

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**QUEENSLAND HEALTH PAYROLL SYSTEM
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

Annexures to Statement of Witness

Items to be annexed to the statement of the Hon Anna Maria Bligh taken 15 May 2013:

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