



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND
ADMINISTRATION**

(Reference: [Inquiry into the CIT CEO recruitment process](#))

Members:

**MR J MILLIGAN (Chair)
MS F CARRICK (Deputy Chair)
MS C TOUGH
MS J CLAY**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

WEDNESDAY, 1 APRIL 2026

This evidence was originally heard by the committee during an in-camera hearing on 1 April 2026. After consultation with the witness who provided evidence at the hearing, the Committee resolved on 14 April 2026 to make this transcript publicly available. For further information, please contact the Committee Secretary.

**Secretary to the committee:
Ms S Milne (Ph: 6205 0435)**

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

WITNESSES

O'NEILL, DR MARGOT, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Institute of
Technology.....**27**

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met in camera* at 11.28 am.

O'NEILL, DR MARGOT, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Institute of Technology

THE CHAIR: Good morning and welcome to the private meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Administration for the Inquiry into the CIT CEO Recruitment Process. The committee today will hear from Dr Margot McNeill, Chief Executive Officer of the Canberra Institute of Technology.

The committee wishes to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land which we are meeting on, the Ngunnawal people. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of the city and this region. We would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be attending today's event.

Dr McNeill, if taking a question on notice it would be useful if you could use the words along the lines of, "I will take that question on notice."

This hearing is a legal proceeding of the Assembly and has the same standing as proceedings of the Assembly itself. Please note, as a witness you are protected by parliamentary privilege and bound by its obligations, and you must tell the truth. Obviously, giving false or misleading information will be treated as a serious matter and may be considered as contempt of the Assembly.

At your request, this hearing is being held in camera. I must inform you that it is within the power of the Assembly or the committee to order the publication of evidence taken here today. As you know, the committee intends to publish as much of the evidence as possible, but we will only do so after giving you notice and the opportunity to respond and raise any objections you might have, as well as the reasons for those objections. The reasons will be taken into consideration before any publication occurs.

Today we will run down the table here with questions. Mr Emerson did not come along, so I can give each member 10 minutes. They can ask any substantive question that they like, as long as it is within the lines of the terms of reference only.

Dr McNeill: Okay.

THE CHAIR: If there is time left within that 10 minutes, we can do supplementary questions, but otherwise we will go to the next member to ask questions. I would like to pass my substantive across to Mr Parton to begin with.

MR PARTON: Can I just start by saying, irrespective of the fact that time is short, from a human-to-human perspective, I want to put on the table that no-one from my party and no-one from this side of the room gets any joy out of this process. And I want to say that I understand that it has been a very tough time for you, and we all understand that, and I am sorry that that is the case. But we, irrespective of that, believe that it is our duty to get some answers to these questions, and I am going to go with the first one.

** This evidence was originally heard in camera. The Committee resolved on 14 April 2026 to make this transcript publicly available.*

Dr McNeill, according to the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission documents, you were notified on 15 October 2024 by TAFE New South Wales that they had received multiple complaints alleging that you engaged in serious misconduct and they would be undertaking an investigation. From November 2024, you were placed on special leave and from that time did not perform any duties at all, and you subsequently resigned on 26 May 2025. Can I ask, Dr McNeill, on what date did you submit your application for the CEO of CIT position?

Dr McNeill: Am I able to make some opening statements before I answer that question?

MR PARTON: I am with the chair on this.

THE CHAIR: Well, we are limited to a short period of time, but I am willing to give you an opportunity to give some opening statements, and we can add that extra time to the end, if that is all right with you, to continue to ask questions.

Dr McNeill: Yes, okay, certainly. Thank you Chair and members of the committee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you and to assist the committee in its inquiry into the recruitment process relating to my appointment as Chief Executive Officer of CIT. I acknowledge the importance of this inquiry and the role of the Assembly in ensuring transparency, accountability and public confidence in government processes.

I have spent 40 years working in education, and throughout my career I have acted with integrity, professional conduct and a strong focus on student outcomes. That is the standard I brought to the recruitment process for this role. At all times, I sought to act in accordance with my obligations and the directions provided to me. In participating in the recruitment process, I acted honestly and with integrity in accordance with the information available to me at the time and the directions I had been given.

This included complying with express confidentiality directions which I had been advised on multiple occasions, both verbally and in writing, did not permit me to disclose the existence or details of an internal process that was underway, including any recruitment process. Within those constraints, I participated fully in the recruitment process. I engaged openly with the selection process and provided information as required. I understand that the board undertook its own due diligence, including reference checks with relevant senior executives. I note that I was only permitted to disclose the existence of that process following my appointment, and I did so confidentially and in accordance with the directions provided to me.

Since commencing in the role at CIT, my focus has been on leading CIT with stability and delivering for staff, students and the broader community. I am conscious that there are legal proceedings currently before the court, and I will be careful not to comment on matters which are subject to challenge in those proceedings. However, I am committed to assisting the committee in relation to the recruitment process to the extent that I am able. Thank you, and I am happy to take questions.

MR PARTON: Dr McNeill, can I ask: on what date did you submit your application for the CEO of CIT position?

Dr McNeill: I know that I first spoke with the recruiter—her name was Helen—in the January. But I will have to check the exact date I have that I went through the recruitment process—during the initial, in February. I would have to check the exact date.

MR PARTON: Will you take that on notice or come back to us today—

Dr McNeill: I will take that on notice.

THE CHAIR: during the hearing. It is up to you. If you can get that information during the hearing.

Dr McNeill: Yes, sorry, I will have to—

THE CHAIR: Okay. Just take that on notice.

MR PARTON: Dr McNeill, on what date did you seek legal advice, or did you receive legal advice, that said that you cannot disclose the ongoing and current investigation that was being undertaken by TAFE New South Wales in the context of the CIT recruitment process?

Dr McNeill: Yes, certainly, Mr Parton. The initial meeting happened on 15 October. I was reminded repeatedly during that meeting that I was not allowed to disclose the existence of, or any of the aspects of, the investigation that was being initiated by TAFE New South Wales.

When I started applying for roles—because there is a lot of detail—one of the conversations after that meeting was that I might consider looking for other roles while my career was still at a high. So I took that advice on face value, and I started looking for roles. I had the initial conversation with Helen, and I was interested in other roles as well at the time; that was in the January.

I had a conversation with the new managing director of TAFE New South Wales, Chloe Read, on 31 January, and that was a verbal disclosure, where I was talking a lot of things through with her. I said to her then, “Would I be able to disclose this?” and did I have permission to disclose this if I was going to be going through recruitment processes, because I knew that I had a couple of conversations about different roles, including the CIT role. From memory, I had not actually submitted my application yet, but I had had the initial conversation with Helen. So that was the first time.

In terms of the recruitment activities, I had another conversation with Chloe Read—I think, from memory, it might have been 7 May—about, again, whether I was able to disclose any details of the investigation, and, again, she said no very firmly: I was not able to disclose.

MR PARTON: Dr McNeill, you have mentioned three occasions that you were verbally given an instruction that you were not able to disclose the ongoing and current investigation. At any point, were you given instruction in writing?

Dr McNeill: I definitely was in the initial notification about the investigation. I will just

check with counsel about whether—I think that was on 6 February.

So, on 6 February there was another written statement about that.

MR PARTON: Sorry, on 6 February there was a witness statement?

Dr McNeill: No, a written statement that—

MR PARTON: A written statement, okay. I am going to seek guidance from the chair of the committee as to whether I can request that that legal advice be tabled.

Dr McNeill: I will have to check the date. I will check the date specifically, so I might need to take that on notice, but I will listen to my counsel.

THE CHAIR: I think we would have to check, also, legally, because I am not sure if that is in confidence information between you and your lawyer and whether that can be tabled or not.

Dr McNeill: So is it best if I just take that question on notice?

MR PARTON: Please.

Dr McNeill: Yes, all right.

MR PARTON: Dr McNeill, if you had to give a brief summary of what the findings were against you by TAFE New South Wales, how would you summarise it?

Dr McNeill: Thank you, Mr Parton. I think I will need to take that on notice, because the question, from how I understand it, relates to matters that are outside the recruitment process, and I am very conscious that I need to check if the information requested is privileged or not, because I do not want to prejudice the legal challenge that is currently underway in New South Wales.

MR PARTON: I understand. Along those lines, and, again, seeking advice from the chair, I am wondering if I can ask that you table the findings from TAFE New South Wales. I am going to go to the chair first.

THE CHAIR: As I understand, from what information I have had, it is not the area for New South Wales to disclose that. I think it is at the discretion of Dr McNeill, and I think the advice that has come through is that if she wants to disclose, she can. I do not think that is anything preventing you from doing that.

MR PARTON: All right, okay. I will push on; I know time is short. Dr McNeill, what is your total remuneration package per year at CIT, and are you able to break it down to annual salary, employer superannuation contributions, motor vehicle allowance—or advise that you have the use of a government-leased motor vehicle—parking allowance and any other allowances or benefits that are paid to you?

Dr McNeill: Sorry, Mr Parton, I will definitely have to take those details on notice, just to make sure that I have the correct information.

MR PARTON: All right. Dr McNeill, are you the subject or a witness to any other investigation by any other body in relation to your employment at TAFE New South Wales?

Dr McNeill: No.

MR PARTON: Documents from the Industrial Relations Commission New South Wales show that you lodged an application for unfair dismissal against TAFE New South Wales on 14 January this year. A hearing was held last month, with the decision handed down on 13 March. The documents also show that you provided a witness statement to the IRC on 24 February this year. Did you take leave from your position as CEO of CIT when you were actively participating in the action against TAFE New South Wales over the period January to March of this year? If so, what type of leave was it?

Dr McNeill: I will just check because, as far as I understand it, that seems to be outside of the recruitment process. But I will just check with my counsel.

I will take the question on notice. Thank you.

MR PARTON: Can I ask: in regard to the actual recruitment process, did any member of the selection panel or the board ask you directly whether there were any current complaints, investigations, disciplinary matters or circumstances that could affect your suitability for appointment? If so, how did you answer?

Dr McNeill: From memory, when I was going through the recruitment process, as you can imagine, there was a round of interviews with a range of different questions. From memory, there was a question around something like dealing with contentious issues, and because I had been in a senior public service role in New South Wales for a few years, I was able to talk about things like going into budget estimates—that kind of aspect. I also spoke about the challenge of leading groups of people, and I was talking about those things, but there was not a question relating to anything that was specific. It was more about the contentious-issue-type comments, from memory.

MR PARTON: I am going to play nice with the Chair, and I am going to dip out. Thank you for being forthcoming and gracious with your responses. I appreciate it.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Parton. Ms Carrick?

MS CARRICK: Dr McNeill, in correspondence between the CIT and the minister, it states that TAFE New South Wales indicated to the chair of the board that they were not able to comment on whether or not they were undertaking confidential workplace investigations, but they advised that they had written that day to you confirming that you are able to disclose any relevant facts or circumstances connected with your employment with TAFE New South Wales. So are you able to table the findings of the inquiry?

Dr McNeill: Sorry, Ms Carrick—am I able to table?

MS CARRICK: Or will you table the findings of the inquiry? Because my understanding is that, while New South Wales will not disclose the findings, they have said that you can disclose the findings.

Dr McNeill: Again, I will need to take that question on notice, partly because the question does relate to matters outside of the recruitment process, and I need to check that that information is not privileged and that it will not prejudice the legal challenges that are currently underway with the Supreme Court of New South Wales.

MS CARRICK: Okay. But the findings, I would think, would be directly relevant to the decisions made for employment by the board, so I cannot see how they are outside of the recruitment process.

Dr McNeill: Can I ask about the date that you are talking about? Because when I accepted the role in CIT, there were no findings.

MS CARRICK: That is true—but it is tabling it now. I have seen this in a couple of different spots; this is 17 June 2025, when the chair of the CIT writes to the minister regarding the Integrity Commission—a letter from the Integrity Commission—and in that. That is 17 June 2025, so that is a while ago. It says that you are able to provide or disclose the information yourself.

Dr McNeill: That was the information about the investigation. At that stage there were no findings.

MS CARRICK: But there are now, so can you provide them now that the findings are available?

Dr McNeill: Well, again, that is really the substance of the Supreme Court challenge that is underway in New South Wales at the moment, and I am very conscious—

MS CARRICK: I thought we were pre—that we have not got to that stage yet. So given that we do not have the Supreme Court challenge dates in place, we do not have anything to challenge. I am not sure that I understand the language, maybe.

THE CHAIR: Yes; the advice that we have got here—under our definition of continuing resolution 10—is that this is not an active civil matter just at the moment, and there has been no date set forward, and this matter is only listed for directions on 15 April, I think. There has been no further date set forward which, under the advice that we have received, does not activate the sub judice matter that you are referring to here. So we believe that you are able to table that information, and as part of the terms of reference, they do refer to “any other” matter as well, and we believe that this is information that is relevant to the recruitment process for the CIT CEO role.

Dr McNeill: Well, I will have to take that on notice. I do apologise, but I am very conscious that I was already in the role when those findings were released, so I would prefer to take that on notice just to make sure that it will not prejudice any of the ongoing legal activity I have going with the Supreme Court of New South Wales.

MS CARRICK: Okay. Dr McNeill, were you stood down on full pay from your duties

from October 16, 2024?

Dr McNeill: No, I certainly was not. Much of my work in the last few years before this was around what is now being called “tertiary harmonisation”, and it is, really, looking at trying to make pathways much more streamlined for learners when they want to move from a TAFE to a university or from a university to a TAFE. There is all sorts of complexity in that space, because it is two regulators and all sorts of different language, which is very opaque, if anyone has tried to navigate those processes. So, when we had the initial discussion with the managing director and the chief people officer, he did talk about my experience and wanting me to work on this. It is, effectively, establishing what a plan would be around establishing a dual-sector university in New South Wales.

MS CARRICK: This is the special project that is referred to?

Dr McNeill: Yes.

MS CARRICK: So you worked on that special project up until when you resigned?

Dr McNeill: Yes, on and off; I had some personal leave. But, again—I will come back to—I do not think that is really in the scope of the recruitment activities.

MS CARRICK: Well, it is around disclosure on the job application. On the job application it says that you were the chief quality—what was it? What was the position? I will see if I can see it.

Dr McNeill: Chief product and quality officer.

MS CARRICK: Yes. So, on your application it says that that was your position—

Dr McNeill: Yes.

MS CARRICK: to current, when you applied. But, in fact, that was not your position at that time, because you were doing a different job.

Dr McNeill: Well, I was allocated to work on the special projects, but I was still in that substantive role; I just had the special projects to work on.

MS CARRICK: But the special projects were not mentioned on the application.

Dr McNeill: No. I had spoken in the application around working on tertiary harmonisation and the qualifications reform work.

MS CARRICK: Okay, so is that a bit of an oversight that the job application had what you are saying is your substantive job, even though you had been moved to special projects and that was not in your most recent position?

Dr McNeill: Well, it was still my current position, so—

MS CARRICK: Okay. In the application it does talk about having been under investigation from the APS, but you said no. But the intent of the question was, “Have

you been under investigation?” While it was not the APS—it was New South Wales—did you disclose to the recruitment firm that you were indeed under investigation?

Dr McNeill: No; I had been expressly directed not to disclose the existence of the investigation or any of the process involved, so I answered that question on the application form honestly.

MS CARRICK: Ms Lundy states in October 2025 that she discussed a further anonymous complaint with you, and you advised her that the information provided in the anonymous complaint was false. Did you advise Ms Lundy that the complaint was false?

Dr McNeill: From memory, I spoke with her, and, again, this was outside the recruitment process. I spoke with her about—can I just check the date?

MS CARRICK: Yes, it is October 2025.

Dr McNeill: Yes, okay. From memory, the conversation was about what was in that anonymous complaint, and I was saying that there were aspects of it that were false because it seemed that it had been—well, at that stage—from what she spoke about, an overstatement of any of the aspects that I understood to be part of the investigation.

MS CARRICK: In retrospect, do you believe the board had sufficient information to make an informed decision?

Dr McNeill: I think they did, because I applied for the role; it was a merit-based selection process; I was honest in my dealings with them. I was selected on the evidence of the experience I had from 40 years in the education sector and the experience I had in environments like working in dual-sector providers, which is not that common—most people, if they work in universities, they stay in universities, or if they work in TAFEs, they stay in TAFEs—and because I like dynamic environments. And I really am so committed to the vocational sector for all sorts of fabulous reasons. We have such a diverse group of students. We are preparing them to meet the most critical skills shortage areas, and yet we have a highly constrained regulatory environment, and we need to build-in things like AI tools and experiences for everyone.

MS CARRICK: Thank you, yes.

MS CLAY: Yes, thank you.

Dr McNeill: That is why I care about it.

MS CLAY: Thank you, Dr McNeill. I will continue with Ms Carrick’s line. The 17 October anonymous complaint—we do have a letter from Kate Lundy to the minister. Kate Lundy is quite clear and says that she discussed the matter with you, and you said the allegations were false. You have given us a different recollection of that conversation. You have said that your recollection with Kate Lundy is that you thought some of the allegations were false. What was your recollection of that? There was obviously a conversation between you and Kate Lundy before she wrote a letter to the minister. What do you remember of that conversation with Kate Lundy?

Dr McNeill: I remember her talking about the anonymous complaint. And the substance of it just seemed to be—I do not know whether it is appropriate to use words like “exaggerated”, but that is how I felt it had been positioned. I will have to take the details on notice, because I do go back to my statement that I am very conscious that I do not want to jeopardise the Supreme Court proceedings that have been filed in New South Wales. So I will take the details on notice.

MS CLAY: Sure. And in that conversation, you left Kate Lundy with the impression that there was no matter on foot at all?

Dr McNeill: The matter was still on foot. The investigation was still on foot.

MS CLAY: Yes. Did Kate Lundy know that? Did you tell Kate Lundy that the matter was definitely on foot but that that anonymous complaint, you thought, was not a good reflection of it?

Dr McNeill: Well, it was—

MS CLAY: Or did you give her the impression that there was not an investigation at all?

Dr McNeill: She knew that there was an investigation at that stage.

MS CLAY: Okay. That sounds like a pretty significant conversation, I would imagine, between you and your chair of the board. Did you take a note of that conversation or was there any kind of email record between you and Kate Lundy about this conversation?

Dr McNeill: I will have to go back and have a look through my notes. I am not able to—

MS CLAY: Yes, that is okay. Can you take on notice whether you have any written record of that conversation?

Dr McNeill: And it was the date of?

MS CLAY: The letter that Kate sent was 17 October. So I would imagine your conversation with Kate, leading up to that letter, would have been a couple of days before that—something like that.

Dr McNeill: Sure.

MS CLAY: Did you talk to the rest of the board? Did you have a conversation like that with the whole board or was it just with Kate?

Dr McNeill: I will have to take that on notice. From memory it was Kate, but I will take it on notice just to make sure—

MS CLAY: Yes. And Kate sent another letter to the minister on 19 December. Have

you seen that letter?

Dr McNeill: Not from my memory.

MS CLAY: Right. That letter from Kate to the minister said:

The TAFE New South Wales investigation has returned a finding of misconduct against Dr McNeill.

How was it that Kate Lundy was able to disclose that to the minister? Had the rules about disclosure of this changed by that stage? Is the matter now public?

Dr McNeill: I will have to go back to take that on notice as well, because it is outside of the recruitment, which I thought was the terms of reference for the committee.

MS CLAY: Sure. I think the chair has already explained to you that it is not up to a witness to determine the scope of the inquiry, and our terms of reference are quite broad, and they include any other relevant matter. I believe my colleagues would find this quite a relevant matter, so I think you saying that this is beyond scope is not a valid reason not to answer the question. Am I correct here?

THE CHAIR: Yes, that is absolutely right.

Dr McNeill: All right. I will certainly take that on notice and come back to the committee.

MS CLAY: Yes. What I would love, too, is for you to check whether there are any written records of this second quite significant conversation you had with Kate Lundy that led to the 19 December letter from her to the minister in which she was able to tell the minister about a finding of misconduct.

We have got some other records here. Was there any point between September and December at which Kate Lundy directly asked you if there was a finding of misconduct against you and you directly told Kate Lundy there was no finding?

Dr McNeill: Again, I will go back and look through my notes, but I do not recall a direct question.

MS CLAY: So you think Kate Lundy did not ask you? Knowing that there was an investigation on foot, you think Kate never revisited the topic of “are there findings?”

Dr McNeill: I will go back and look through my notes and get back to you with the details from my notes.

MS CLAY: Yes; that would be great. I have down in a note here—I think the date of the findings are 16 September. Because we do not have full records, my dates could be wrong. Are you able to confirm on notice the date of the findings of misconduct against you?

And then I wonder if, on notice, you could confirm whether you have a recollection or

a written record of any conversation you had with Kate Lundy before or after that about findings of misconduct. Because she has written to the minister a number of times about this issue, and I am interested as to where her information has come from, particularly given your very clear, consistent information that you were never able to discuss it. I am just not sure where the information has come from.

Dr McNeill: Certainly, I will go back to my notes and provide the committee—

MS CLAY: Yes, thank you. Can you tell me are you subject to a fit and proper person requirement for your position?

Dr McNeill: Yes.

MS CLAY: Whose fit and proper person requirements are you subject to?

Dr McNeill: The ASQA fit and proper person requirements.

MS CLAY: ASQA—excellent. And what are the requirements to meet a fit and proper ASQA determination?

Dr McNeill: I will have to go back for the exact details. I have filled out several of these over my career, particularly given that I have been in senior compliance roles.

MS CLAY: Is there anything in an ASQA fit and proper person test that would ask you to make a statement about whether the public would have any reason to lack confidence in your suitability to be a person in a role like this? Is that the kind of declaration that they require?

Dr McNeill: Yes.

MS CLAY: Is this an unbroken declaration that you have had to fill in for all of your roles, or at what point did you fill this in?

Dr McNeill: I submitted a new fit and proper person declaration after the final conversations with TAFE New South Wales. It would have been earlier this year, and that included the details of the findings in there.

MS CLAY: So it is an ongoing licensing requirement that you do annually?

Dr McNeill: Yes; any senior person needs to have a fit and proper person document.

MS CLAY: Annually or when your role changes? When do you fill in this form?

Dr McNeill: Usually, there would be an annual process, but if there is something that requires it being updated, then.

MS CLAY: Can you tell me: at the time at which you applied for the job with CIT, did you have an ASQA fit and proper person requirement applying to you at that stage?

Dr McNeill: I had to fill one in when I started, but there were no findings against me at

that stage.

MS CLAY: Sure. You were aware that there was an investigation at that point though?

Dr McNeill: I was, but the investigation was underway, so I could only answer truthfully the requirements at the time, and there were not any findings against me at that stage.

MS CLAY: And do you believe ASQA would wish, as the regulator, to have reports of that nature given to them?

Dr McNeill: There are specific questions that you need to answer, so I answered the questions truthfully.

MS CLAY: Could you take on notice and provide to us your ASQA forms that you have completed, complete with what the requirements are from ASQA, probably from the start of this period—through, say, 2024 to now—and any ASQA requirements that you have completed?

THE CHAIR: Do you have copies of them?

Dr McNeill: I do not. I would only be able to get the ones from CIT. I would not have any of the previous ones.

MS CLAY: And who has the previous ones? Do they belong to the employer?

Dr McNeill: I think so. I will have to take that on notice—

THE CHAIR: But even if you could check to see if you have them or not, that would be great.

Dr McNeill: I have only ever filled it in as part of my employment. I can find out.

MS CLAY: I am just about at the end of my time, but I am curious on this: if I had to fill in a form for a job, or a licence, or a requirement, and I could not honestly fill in the form, what I would personally do is say, “I might circle back to this in a few months, at a future point in time, when I can provide information.” Did it occur to you, as you were going through this process—and according to you, you were answering questions honestly because you had been directed not to provide information—that maybe it was not a good time to be applying for jobs and filling in these forms?

Dr McNeill: As I said, I answered the questions honestly, and I still defend my position. I filled in all of the application processes as honestly and transparently as I could at the time.

THE CHAIR: Ms Tough?

MS TOUGH: Thank you, chair and thank you for coming in, Dr McNeill. I am just going to pick up a few things that other colleagues have mentioned. Apologies if I missed this earlier, but, from my reading of the New South Wales Industrial Relations

Commission documents, it appears you were on special leave from November 2024 without duties until your resignation, but the recruitment documents say you were on a special project. Were you on leave or a special project during the CIT recruitment process?

Dr McNeill: A mixture.

MS TOUGH: A mixture?

Dr McNeill: A mixture.

MS TOUGH: Can you give a breakdown of when was leave and when was special project?

Dr McNeill: I will have to take that on notice to get specific details about—

MS TOUGH: Yes, okay. If you could come back with dates of the leave, and what kind of leave that was, and then the dates you were working on the special project, that would be really helpful. Thank you.

I wanted to also check, building on from my colleague Ms Clay asking you about discussions with Ms Lundy around October 2025 and providing information to Ms Lundy that the anonymous complaint was false, which appears to have given Ms Lundy the idea that there was nothing happening—that there was nothing going on at that time. Then, in December, Ms Lundy wrote to the minister to say that she had been advised that there was an investigation that has returned the finding of misconduct at TAFE New South Wales.

Were you the one to disclose that to Ms Lundy? In what form did you disclose that? And what other disclosures and updates have you given the board since that time?

So, Ms Lundy on Monday mentioned that she has had some disclosures from you over the last few months about different aspects. I am interested: were they verbal disclosures or discussions to Ms Lundy, or Ms Lundy and the board; were they written; or were they through legal representatives?

Dr McNeill: I will have to go back for some specific details, but that December conversation was literally a conversation. I can give some more detail but, yes, it was a verbal conversation.

MS TOUGH: And you disclosed the finding had been made. Did you disclose to Ms Lundy at the time what the findings were, in that conversation?

Dr McNeill: I will have to go back to my notes, specifically.

MS TOUGH: Thank you. Then, any discussions with the board and updates to the board since December: have they been verbal or written, or a mixture?

Dr McNeill: Mostly verbal, but I can then go back and have a check.

MS TOUGH: Thank you. If there are any written ones, is that something you will be able to table with us, or just provide what they were?

Dr McNeill: Yes. Well, I will look back. I am thinking mostly of verbal ones, but I will have a look back.

MS TOUGH: Thank you. During the recruitment process with CIT—both the whole process and the interviews specifically—were you ever asked whether there were any other matters the board should be aware of? So, not necessarily “was there an investigation under any kind of code of conduct,” just whether you were ever asked if there were any matters that they should be aware of that would relate to your ability to do the role and engage with the broader skills sector? And, if so, what was your answer?

Dr McNeill: I cannot recall whether there were any questions like that as part of the recruitment process, but I will look back and see if I can find some of the documents that I was preparing at the time.

MS TOUGH: Thank you. We are aware of the current matter with the New South Wales Supreme Court that is listed for directions later this month. Are there any other legal matters afoot? And would they impact your ability to do your job as a CIT CEO, in maintaining relationship with stakeholders in the sector?

Dr McNeill: No. There are no other legal actions afoot. And I am strongly committed to CIT. I do feel very proud of the success that we have had. We have had wonderful lift in enrolments and some of the indicators of staff engagement. There have been really good, positive things that we have been working on, and I am really committed to continuing that.

MS TOUGH: Thank you. And can I confirm from earlier that you are taking on notice and looking to provide us with a copy of the files from the New South Wales TAFE investigation from last year?

Dr McNeill: I will have to check with my legal—I will take that on notice, yes, and check whether that is okay. I am very conscious that I really want to protect my rights in the Supreme Court, and I do not want to do anything that prejudices that process.

THE CHAIR: And we understand that. We understand the position that you are coming from. But, I think, in this case we just need to take into account what this parliament and this committee has the ability to do, and also the status of your hearings in New South Wales, and we will have to see what applies and what takes precedence. So, whichever way that falls, if you are required to provide that information, then we will let you know.

Dr McNeill: Yes, okay. And I really do appreciate the difficulties of the two jurisdictions.

THE CHAIR: Sure. Continue.

MS TOUGH: Thank you. This is another one following up from Mr Parton’s question. When you go back and check if you were on any leave during your participation in the

Industrial Relations Commission process, can you provide the dates?

Dr McNeill: Yes.

MS TOUGH: If you were on any leave, the dates you were on leave and the type of leave; all those particular dates, like—

Dr McNeill: It was a very short online hearing—like, less than two hours—but I will definitely provide the dates.

MS TOUGH: Also, in that time, for any meetings you may have had with legal representatives, or any other meetings you had to attend in the lead-up to that hearing or post that hearing: whether you were on leave for those appointments and meetings as well.

Dr McNeill: Sure.

MS TOUGH: Thank you. I think you have taken everything else on notice, that I had to ask. But, yes, I am just very interested in and around what happened in October 2025 with discussions with Ms Lundy; that she had the impression to tell the minister that she had discussed this with you and she had advised that the information provided in the anonymous complaint was false; and then she provides no further information to the minister that there were proceedings that had happened, or findings that had happened. It is not until December that she then disclosed to the minister. So, I am interested in what those conversations were, that she got the impression that there was nothing to tell the minister and then, two months later, told the minister that, actually, something had happened. Thank you.

MS CARRICK: I am interested in the referees' reports. They are all redacted, so we cannot see who they are from. So, would you please give us on notice who your referees were and their relationship to you? I am interested to know whether Chloe Read was a reference, your immediate supervisor, I assume, as managing director. You have mentioned that you had spoken to her. So: who your referees were, what their relationship was to you, and, also, I am curious to know whether the recruitment firm—Helen Innes, who did the referee checks—was aware of the fact that you were no longer the chief product and quality officer when she did the referee checks. Did she know that you were had been on special projects since—I think it was—October 2024?

Dr McNeill: I will just check with my legal counsel for a moment. So, I can confirm that Chloe Read, the incoming managing director of TAFE New South Wales, was definitely one of the referees. And another one of the TAFE New South Wales referees was Julie Tickle, who is the Chief People Officer. So, there are two references from those two people.

MS CARRICK: Would you be able to provide us the referees' reports unredacted so we can just see who—

Dr McNeill: I do not think I have them. I think they are a CIT document, sorry, Ms Carrick.

MS CARRICK: Yes, okay.

MS CLAY: Dr McNeill, did you see the letters from Kate Lundy to the minister?

Dr McNeill: I do not think I did. I can go back and check but—

MS CLAY: Can you? I imagine sometimes a chair does write to a minister without copying anyone in, but a CEO often does see that correspondence. I do not know where it would live on file. Can you confirm whether you saw that; whether you were involved in the preparation of that? And can you also confirm for me where those letters are kept? Kate must store them somewhere. Are they just in—like, are they in a—

Dr McNeill: I do not know. I will take that question on notice and try and find out, but yes.

MS CLAY: And when you take that on notice, can you also tell me what the usual practice is; whether it is common for chairs to write directly to the minister, or whether that usually comes through the CEO? I have worked with a number of boards and usually that kind of material would go through the CEO. You know, it would be prepared for a signature by the chair—but somebody prepares it. It is not usually the chair doing it themselves.

Dr McNeill: Well, I do not know whether it is usual practice. I can certainly go back and have a look at what has happened in CIT.

MS CLAY: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ten seconds if you have got a question you want to put on notice, or are you are happy to—?

MR PARTON: It is a very straight-to-the-point question. Dr McNeill, notwithstanding the legal non-disclosure advice—which we have not seen—how can you possibly say that you were completely honest and open during the recruitment process, when you were well-aware of a high-level investigation of your conduct in a work capacity, by your previous employer?

I do not understand how you can characterise your involvement in the recruitment process as being completely honest. You must have felt conflicted.

Dr McNeill: I would like to state that I was completely honest in the processes. All of the questions I was asked, I was honest about, and I answered everything to the best of my ability.

MS CARRICK: Was there a level of omission?

Dr McNeill: I was prohibited from disclosing any of the information. It was still an investigation.

THE CHAIR: We will end it here. Obviously, on behalf of the committee and our visiting member, we like to thank you greatly for your attendance today. Now, there

have been quite a few questions taken on notice. You will receive an uncorrected proof from Hansard, and our committee secretary will send you a list of those questions that were taken on notice. You will have five business days to respond to those questions taken on notice, from when you receive the uncorrected proof.

I just wanted to make a quick point that, under standing order 239 in the parliament here, we do have the power to call for a person and call for papers or records. And so, yes, you are taking questions on notice. It would be great for you to provide answers to those questions taken on notice. If the committee believes that you have not provided an answer and we believe that you do need to provide an answer, and we give our reasons as to why, we would get in touch under that standing order to ask that you provide that document. This is just to make you aware, that is all.

But once again, thank you very much for attending today. We really do appreciate that. We also want to thank Hansard for their fine work today as well, and our committee secretariat.

This meeting is now adjourned. Have a good afternoon.

The committee adjourned at 12.19 pm