

STATEMENT

In the matter of:	Special Commission of Inquiry into LGBTIQ Hate Crimes
Place:	Tirana, Albania
Date:	1 September 2023

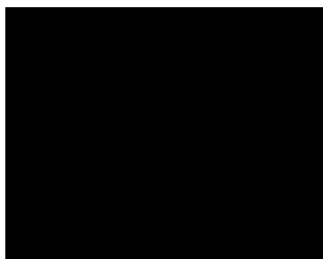
Name:	Siobhan McMahon	Tel. No:	
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STATES:

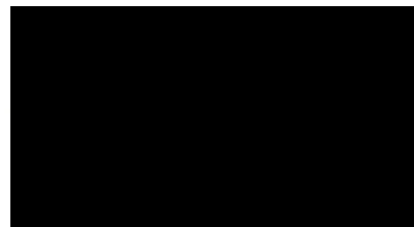
1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I would be prepared, if necessary, to give in court as a witness. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I will be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything that I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.
2. I am 54 years of age.
3. I make this statement in respect of the letter I received from the Special Commission of Inquiry into LGBTIQ hate crimes (**Inquiry**) dated 22 August 2023 (**Letter**). I understand from the Letter that certain sections of the submissions of Counsel Assisting the Inquiry, the Commissioner of NSW Police and Mr Michael Willing concern my involvement in the matters currently being examined by the Inquiry.
4. In this statement, I outline my recollection of the events leading up to former Chief Inspector Pamela Young's involvement in the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (**ABC**) Lateline program episode "A Third inquest ordered into cliff fall death of a young man" which aired on 13 April 2015 (**Lateline Interview**).

3477-7478-5062v5

Witness:



Signature:



[Neil Smith]
[Retired]

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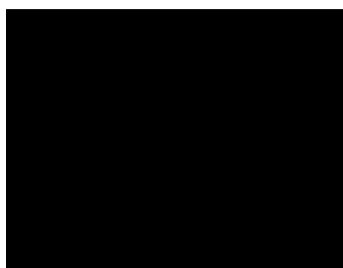
5. At the time of signing this statement, I have been shown a zip file of electronic documents marked with electronic document IDs in the format '**NPL.XXXX.XXXX.XXXX**'. Where I refer to a document in this statement, I refer to it by its electronic document ID.

ROLE AND EXPERIENCE

6. I am retired and currently travelling indefinitely overseas.
7. Prior to my retirement, I held the position of Senior Media Adviser at NSW Department of Communities and Justice from November 2021 to June 2022 and was the Media Manager at the National Heart Foundation of Australia from June 2018 to October 2021.
8. From March 2018 to June 2018, I was the Media Relations Officer at NSW Ambulance.
9. From August 2016 to September 2016, I was a Senior Media Adviser and from October 2016 to March 2018 I was the Media and Corporate Communications Manager at the NSW Department of Finance, Services and Innovation.
10. Prior to the above roles, I was employed by the New South Wales Police Force (**NSWPF**) from January 2011 to August 2016. During my employment with the NSWPF, I was the Media Liaison and Projects Officer. I also held the position of Media Manager at Fire & Rescue NSW on secondment from NSWPF from May 2016 to August 2016.
11. In my role as Media Liaison and Projects Officer with NSWPF, I was responsible for carrying out proactive and reactive media relations involving NSWPF incidents, operations, investigations, campaigns, announcements, events and policies. I was also deployed to the State Crime Command for 12 months from mid-November 2011. I was redeployed to State Crime Command for two days a week from late 2014 to around mid-2015. On both occasions

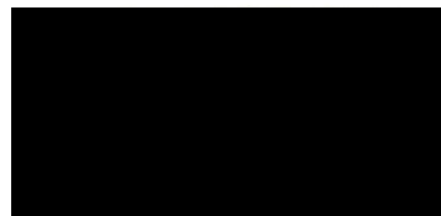
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that I was deployed to State Crime Command, I was responsible for providing media services to detectives in specialist squads, including Homicide, Drug, Child Abuse and Sex Crimes.

QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

12. I attained a Bachelor of Arts, Communication from Charles Sturt University in Print Journalism.
13. A copy of my current curriculum vitae is at **NPL.9000.0025.0001**.

INTERVIEW WITH ASHURST

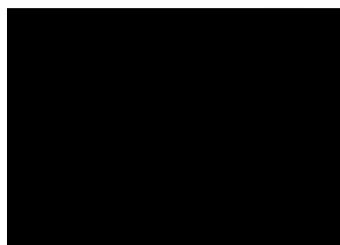
14. On or around 24 April 2015, I met with Sophie Dawson and Nick Perkins, lawyers from Ashurst Australia (**Ashurst**), as part of the NSWPF's engagement with Ashurst arising from the allegations of contempt of court following the Lateline Interview.
15. In making this statement, I have been provided with a record of interview prepared by Ashurst (**Record of Interview**). A copy of the Record of Interview is at **NPL.0138.0009.0024**.
16. For the purposes of this statement, I have reviewed the Record of Interview and confirm that the contents of the Record of Interview is accurate.

MEDIA STRATEGY

17. On or around 8 April 2015, I had a discussion with Georgina Wells (Media Supervisor in State Crime Command Unit) regarding the third coronial inquest into the death of Scott Johnson. At the time, Ms Wells and I were sharing the job of Media Liaison Officer at the State Crime Command. Ms Wells worked Monday to Wednesday and I worked Thursday to Friday. Ms Wells would usually provide me with a handover on Wednesday, either by email or phone. I recall the during our handover discussion on Wednesday, 8 April 2015, Ms Wells

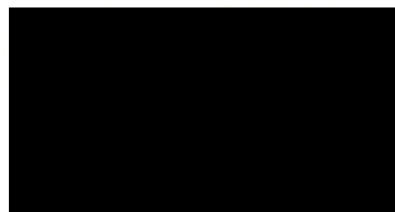
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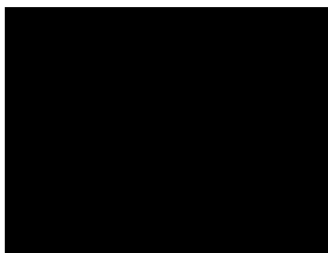
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told me that Pamela Young was going to conduct 'backgrounders' with Daniel Box from *The Australian* newspaper and Lorna Knowles from the ABC. She advised that a meeting with Daniel Box had been organised for Friday, 10 April 2015 at the State Crime Command office in Parramatta, NSW. Ms Wells requested that I attend the 'backgrounder' meeting with Daniel Box and Pamela Young as it was not her usual working day.

18. 'Backgrounders' were organised with journalists to provide them with information only and that information could not be attributed to a source. It's my understanding that this is a common practice across a number of organisations. In this instance, it was to provide the journalist with background information in relation to a third coronial inquest into the death of Scott Johnson. During my employment with the NSWPF, it was common practice that a person from the NSWPF media unit attend these 'backgrounders'.
19. On 10 April 2015, prior to the meeting with Daniel Box, I recall a discussion with Ms Young. She advised that she did not require me to attend the meeting with Daniel Box. I recall this conversation clearly because it is highly unusual for a Media Liaison Officer to be asked to not attend a backgrounder.
20. Following this conversation, on 10 April 2015 at 10.11 am, I sent an email to Blake Clifton (Manager, Media Unit), Strath Gordon, (Director of Public Affairs) and Ms Wells confirming that Ms Young had asked me not to attend the backgrounder meeting with Daniel Box and providing the reasons given by Ms Young for this request. A copy of that email is at **NPL.0138.0004.7178**.
21. I recall having telephone conversations with Mr Willing and Ms Young regarding the backgrounder with Daniel Box which are described in the Record of Interview.

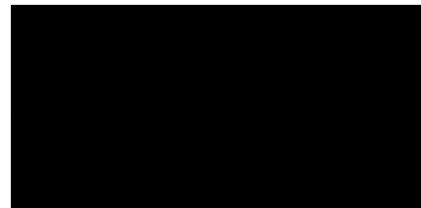
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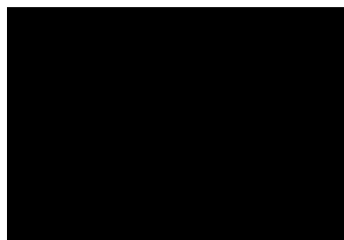
22. At no point in time, do I recall being involved in any formal 'media strategy' development for the purposes of the third inquest. During this time, I understood that the 'media strategy' was developed on days that Ms Wells worked at State Crime Command. I was briefed in relation to the 'media strategy', for the purposes of attending the 'backgrounder' with Pamela Young, but I was not involved in developing the 'media strategy'. I do not recall having any conversations with Mr Willing in relation to developing any 'media strategy'. I understand there was no formal 'media strategy' document, but this was not unusual. 'Media strategies' were commonly discussed over the phone and via email. In my experience, the only context in which formal 'media strategy' documents were prepared was for major public events (for example, New Year's Eve). A formal 'media strategy' document would be prepared by NSWPF and shared with other agencies involved with planning the event (for example, City of Sydney Council). Formal 'media strategy' documents were not usually prepared in other contexts.

LATELINE INTERVIEW

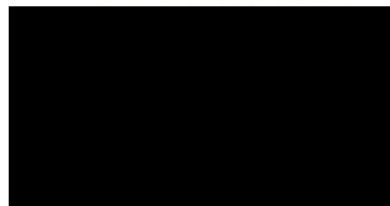
23. On or around 14 April 2015, I first became aware of the Lateline Interview. I recall feeling surprised and shocked at the content of Pamela Young's interview. I was also surprised, as I was not aware that any sit-down interview had been authorised by anyone in the NSWPF.
24. In my experience, several steps must occur internally before a high-profile sit-down interview between a journalist and a police officer. First, the Media Liaison Officer (**MLO**) who has carriage of the matter would discuss the appropriateness and risks of the interview with their superior within the NSWPF media unit. For interviews of a potentially controversial nature, this would be the Director of Public Affairs. The MLO would only proceed with organising the interview if their superior approved the interview. Typically, a practice question and answer session would then occur between the MLO and the person being interviewed, to ensure the

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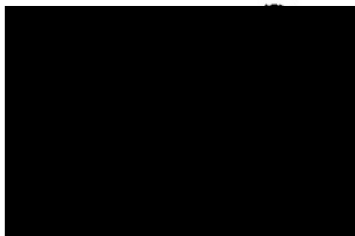
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interviewee was prepared. Finally, a Media Liaison Officer would be required to attend any sit-down interview. My understanding is that none of these steps were taken in respect of the Lateline Interview.

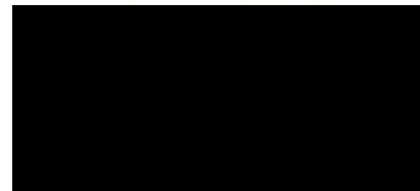
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