



Special Commission of Inquiry into LGBTIQ hate crimes

Statement of Joanne Garbutt

22 May 2023

This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I would be prepared, if necessary, to give to the Special Commission of Inquiry into LGBTIQ hate crimes as a witness. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

1. My name is Joanne Elizabeth Garbutt. I was born on [REDACTED] My address is known to the Special Commission of Inquiry.
2. I am on the disability support pension.

My whereabouts in the 1980s

3. I first met Leslie John Harrison – who often used the alias “Radar” and who I call “Les” – in Wollongong, NSW when I was around 14 and I think he was around 15 or 16. This meeting would have been in about 1979. After that I travelled up north for some time.
4. By 1982 I was living in Gladstone QLD. I remember this because whilst I was living there I was electrocuted. I was 17 at the time and the accident occurred over the Easter long weekend.
5. I am unsure how long I lived in Gladstone. I don’t have a clear memory of where I was living or where I travelled in the period between around 1982 and 1987.
6. My recollection is that in February 1986 I was living in Coffs Harbour, NSW, opposite the train station and the Mutton Bird Island Nature Reserve. To the best of my recollection, I was not in contact with Les at this time because I was seeing someone called Tom Borec. I lived in Coffs Harbour prior to moving to Wollongong. I can’t remember if I ever travelled to or stayed in Wollongong during 1986.
7. My recollection is that I came down to Wollongong in early 1987. When I was in Wollongong I reconnected with Les, and I fell pregnant with our son very soon after that.
8. I lived in Lode Lane, Bellambi NSW while I was pregnant. I attempted to live with Les at that address, but he was seeing other women at the time.

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9. I also remember staying at my parents' farm in Bombala while I was pregnant. I know this because there are photos of me pregnant whilst at the farm.
10. I recall my brother living at [REDACTED] around the time that I was pregnant.
11. My son, Scott James Garbett, was born on [REDACTED] in Wollongong Hospital.
12. Apart from at the address in Bellambi, I do not recall staying with Les overnight. I remember visiting Les at [REDACTED] NSW but I do not recall staying overnight.
13. My relationship with Les ended and after I left Lode Lane, Bellambi. I moved to a self-contained unit at Bellambi with the help of emergency services.

Leslie John Harrison (a. k. a. 'Radar')

14. I do not remember what Les did for work. I do not know whether Les worked as a bouncer at Pip's Nightclub.
15. Les was often in trouble with the police, he drank often, and he would get into fights.
16. I do not recall Les having any involvement in 'poofter bashing' or 'rolling' gay men. I was aware at the time that that sort of thing happened, but I do not recall knowing anyone who was involved. I don't recall Les ever talking to me about that sort of thing.
17. I recall visiting the Coniston Hotel with Les from time to time. I can't remember when I went to the Coniston Hotel with Les.
18. I do not have any recollection of an occasion in February 1986 when Les was taken to Wollongong Police Station to be interviewed about where he had been on a particular night a few days earlier.
19. I do not have any recollection of the police speaking to my mother in about February 1986 about where I was on a particular night in February 1986.
20. I do not have any recollection of the police in Wollongong speaking to me about where Les was on a particular night in February 1986. My recollection is that in February 1986, I was living in Coffs Harbour.
21. I did not know that a man was found injured in February 1986 just off Crown Lane, Wollongong, near Pip's Nightclub, until some months afterwards. At the time it happened I lived up north. Les never mentioned it to me.

Other people in Wollongong in around 1986-87

22. I do not recall anyone by the name of 'Steve Farrawell'.
23. I do not recall anyone by the name of 'Mark Scerri'.

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24. I knew of a man by the name of 'Tony Stagni' who people called "Pegleg". I don't recall having anything to do with Tony and I don't remember anything more about him, other than his nickname.

25. Due to medications that I'm on, I don't have a good memory of the past.

Signature:



Name:

JOANNE GARBUTT

Date:

22nd May 2023.