2022 Special Commission of Inquiry

into LGBTIQ hate crimes

Before: The Commissioner, The Honourable Justice John Sackar

At Level 2, 121 Macquarie Street, Sydney, New South Wales

On Friday, 30 June 2023 at 10.35am

(Day 71)

Mr Peter Gray SC Ms Meg O'Brien Mr William de Mars Ms Caitlin Healey-Nash Mr Tom Allchurch Mr Rhys Carvosso (Senior Counsel Assisting)
(Counsel Assisting)
(Counsel Assisting)
(A/Principal Solicitor)
(Senior Solicitor)
(Solicitor)

Also Present:

Mr Mark Tedeschi KC with Mr Anders Mykkeltvedt and Ms Amber Richards and Mr Patrick Hodgetts for the NSW Police

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1	THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Gray?
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	MR GRAY: Commissioner, today was set down to be the day on which Senior Counsel for the Commissioner of Police would make oral submissions related to the written submissions received by the Inquiry on Wednesday concerning Public Hearing 2. However, in the written submissions an issue is raised which, it seems to Counsel Assisting, needs to be dealt with first, before anything else happens.
11 12 13 14 15 16 17	The issue is that in the submissions on behalf of the Commissioner of Police and, indeed, in the submissions on behalf of Mr Willing, submissions are made to the effect that various topics are outside the Terms of Reference and that, therefore, it would be ultra vires for you, as Commissioner, to make findings or report on those matters.
18 19 20 21 22 23 24	The Inquiry, through its solicitor, has advised the two represented parties, the police and Mr Willing, that this morning you would hear any oral submissions that either of those parties want to make on that question concerning the Terms of Reference, what might be considered, in one sense, a jurisdictional question.
25 26 27 28 29 30	For the part of Mr Willing, it has been conveyed to the Inquiry that he, through his counsel and solicitor, is content to rest on what has been put in writing, but Senior Counsel for the police is here and no doubt has some oral submissions to make.
31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38	THE COMMISSIONER: Mr Tedeschi, leaving aside for one minute the belated nature of some of the issues that have arisen, I am of the view that I should deal with this issue by way of a considered judgment on the matter before the matter proceeds, because public expenditure is involved and it is incumbent upon me, clearly, to operate within the Terms of Reference.
39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47	Now, having said that, as you know, Mr Willing, or his representatives, don't wish to make any further submissions, but I didn't want to prevent you in any way, if you wished to make any further submissions this morning on the jurisdictional question. It is a matter entirely for you and your client: if you wish to rely upon the written submissions, that's perfectly acceptable from my point of view, but I did want to give both you and Mr Willing's representatives that opportunity.

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1 2 Now, if you need a moment to consider that or not, as 3 the case may be, then it is over to you. 4 What I would then do is, clearly, hear what Mr Gray 5 has to say, if anything at the moment, in response to what 6 7 you say, but I do think the matter should be dealt with 8 discretely because of its significance. 9 10 MR TEDESCHI: We understand your concerns, Commissioner, as to the significance of the issue. 11 In fact, in the 12 letter that we received from the Solicitor to the Inquiry. 13 there are, in fact, two significant issues. 14 THE COMMISSIONER: 15 Oh, yes, there are. No, please don't 16 think what I'm saying is in any sense disregarding the 17 second important issue that you raise, and that is a number 18 of persons - if I may say so without counting them, a very 19 large number of persons - that you say, as a matter of 20 fairness, both you and Mr Willing say, ought to be giving 21 evidence or ought to have given evidence. 22 I understand that and I do understand that's an 23 24 important issue. But I think the jurisdictional question. I have determined, in any event, I think should be dealt 25 26 with discretely. 27 28 I would then, in fairness to everyone concerned, 29 grapple with this guestion of who should or should not give evidence and when and why and so on. 30 31 32 MR TEDESCHI: Yes. 33 34 THE COMMISSIONER: So I don't for a moment wish you to understand that I would not hear you separately at an 35 36 appropriate point on that question and on the, if I may say 37 so, vast number of people that you say ought to be called. But I will deal with that separately. 38 39 40 MR TEDESCHI: That's the way that we understood today's 41 proceedings, that it is only on the first issue --42 43 THE COMMISSIONER: Absolutely. 44 45 MR TEDESCHI: -- that you wish to receive submissions. 46 THE COMMISSIONER: 47 Yes.

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2 MR TEDESCHI: Commissioner, you would have seen at 3 paragraphs 85 to 89 of our written submissions we advance 4 the reasons why we suggest that, in effect, Strike Force 5 Macnamir is not within the Terms of Reference.

7 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

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9 MR TEDESCHI: The only thing that we would wish to add 10 orally to what is in our written submissions is this: it was only when we saw the breadth of the submissions of 11 12 Counsel Assisting, who, for the first time, has really suggested what, in effect, amounts to three individual 13 14 areas in which it is suggested that the Inquiry could come 15 to the conclusion that there was an attempt by a team of 16 police officers to understate the incidence of gay hate 17 crimes, but also that those three areas could be 18 accumulated together to come to the conclusion that, in 19 effect, there was what I would loosely categorise as 20 a grand conspiracy on the part of a very large number of 21 police officers to do the same, as evidenced by those three 22 separate inquiries. So it's only when we became aware of the extent of Counsel Assisting's submissions that we 23 24 realised the full extent of what he was suggesting the 25 Inquiry could conclude.

You say, in effect, that this never 27 THE COMMISSIONER: 28 ever occurred to you before, as I understand it, and 29 I don't know that the term "grand conspiracy" is used, but I do understand what you're putting and you say that it 30 31 didn't dawn on you, or anyone else from your side, that 32 there was any coalescence, at the very least, between 33 Macnamir, Parrabell and Neiwand until you actually saw it 34 in black and white?

- MR TEDESCHI: It goes a little further than that in that on, I think, 6 December last year you, Commissioner, gave a judgment in relation to our application --
- 40 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MR TEDESCHI: -- on the Terms of Reference, and it was an
application specifically in relation to Strike Force
Parrabell and the academic team associated with that strike
force.

47 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes.

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1 2 MR TEDESCHI: Commissioner, you gave a judgment in which 3 we would suggest you very broadly interpreted the Terms of 4 Reference. So we felt bound by that and, of course, the 5 name of Mr Scott Johnson was included originally in the list of 88 matters that was to be considered by Strike 6 Force Parrabell. 7 8 9 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes. 10 MR TEDESCHI: So we understood the ruling that you gave on 11 6 December last year to incorporate, in a loose sense, the 12 13 Johnson matter. 14 THE COMMISSIONER: I'm not quite following that, but 15 anyway, I do understand - I think I understand what you are 16 17 saying. But as you recall, though, Mr Tedeschi, it was a matter that, for various reasons, was put to one side 18 19 because things were occurring in the public arena, and 20 perhaps in the private arena, concerning that matter, and 21 there is a fair bit of history in all of these things, as 22 often there is. But let me not interrupt you. You 23 complete what you want to say. 24 25 MR TEDESCHI: I suppose what I am attempting to explain to 26 you, Commissioner, is why it is only now that we have 27 brought this up. 28 29 THE COMMISSIONER: No, I understand why you say "now", and I do follow what you say. 30 31 32 That's the only reason for that explanation MR TEDESCHI: 33 to you. 34 THE COMMISSIONER: I understand. 35 I understand. And apart 36 from what you've just said in paragraphs 85 to 89, you're otherwise content for me - Mr Gray will say something in a 37 minute as to when this issue will be dealt with, but I do 38 39 think, in fairness to everyone concerned, importantly your 40 client and Mr Willing's, I should say something about it so 41 that you all know, one way or the other, having heard from Counsel Assisting, what my position is, and then that puts 42 43 you in the position of then making forensic decisions 44 before we spend any more time or, in my case, the public 45 purse on investigating matters. 46 47 MR TEDESCHI: Yes, thank you. And we would also ask you,

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1 Commissioner, to maybe set a date for the hearing of 2 submissions on the second point before we give our oral 3 submissions about --4 5 THE COMMISSIONER: Oh, no, I will certainly do that. Rest assured, I'm not going to expect you to - at the 6 moment, tentatively it's my view, but I can't see it being 7 8 fair that you should be forced to make your submissions 9 before we determine that issue of whether and, if so to 10 what extent, any of those persons nominated by you should be the subject of evidence. 11 12 Now, your side will appreciate, with any inquiry, 13 14 there are finite periods in which the Commission has to do I'm cognisant of that, as no doubt was your side 15 things. 16 when you suggested the relevance of the absence, as it 17 were, of all of these other people, and that's a matter 18 that I've got to take into account, clearly, in both the 19 public interest but in the interests of the administration 20 of justice in that broader sense. 21 22 So, no, I won't fix it today, but rest assured, to obviously work around people's availability, I will set -23 24 because Mr Willing's representatives may wish to be heard 25 on that point or they may be content, although, without in 26 any sense wishing to be provocative, there is a slight 27 tension between you and Mr Thangaraj on at least one 28 witness, arguably; there might be a matter of concern which needs to be addressed. But that's not my concern in one 29 30 sense. 31 32 So I will, or the staff will, be in touch with your 33 juniors and/or Mr Hodgetts and we will get a date for 34 a debate about that issue, because it's very important and 35 I accept the importance of it. 36 37 MR TEDESCHI: Thank you. 38 THE COMMISSIONER: Certainly. 39 All right --40 41 MR TEDESCHI: Could I say that we also join with Mr Thangaraj in his approach to this issue for argument 42 43 today. 44 45 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, absolutely. All right... thank you. 46 47

Mr Gray, is there anything you want to say for the moment before I adjourn? MR GRAY: No, Commissioner. I will give consideration to what has been put in the submissions on this jurisdictional point. I haven't myself had a chance to read the submissions fully yet because of other commitments this week, and so no, I don't wish to say anything today. THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Well, thank you all very much. Mr Tedeschi, and for those perhaps watching on line, Mr Willing's representatives, we will be in touch in the very near future as to the further progress of this question and the additional question that you have identified. All right. Thank you. I will now adjourn AT 10.48AM THE SPECIAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY WAS ADJOURNED ACCORDINGLY

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