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 Tuesday, 4 July 2023 at 10.22am

(Day 72)

Mr James Emmett Ms Rebecca McEwen Mr Enzo Camporeale Ms Kate Lockery Ms Aleksandra Jez Ms Penelope Smith Mr Michael Tanazefti (Senior Counsel Assisting)
(Counsel Assisting)
(Director Legal)
(Principal Solicitor)
(Solicitor)
(Solicitor)
(Solicitor)

Also Present:

Mr Anders Mykkeltvedt with Mr Mathew Short for the NSW Police

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THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Emmett? 1 2 3 May it please the Commission, I appear with my MR EMMETT: 4 learned friend Ms McEwen to assist the Commission. 5 THE COMMISSIONER: 6 Thank you. 7 8 MR MYKKELTVEDT: Commissioner, I appear with Mr Short on 9 behalf of the Commissioner of Police. 10 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr Mykkeltvedt. 11 12 13 MR EMMETT: Commissioner, today and the next two days will 14 comprise a public hearing in which the Commission will receive further evidence about the investigative practices 15 16 of the NSW Police Force over the period covered by the 17 Commission's Terms of Reference and about changes to those 18 practices and procedures that have occurred since that 19 time. 20 21 The changes and the current position are relevant to 22 whether you should make any recommendations and, if so, in They may also be relevant when you come to ask 23 what terms. 24 yourself whether you are satisfied that particular matters have been or will be sufficiently and appropriately dealt 25 26 with by another inquiry or investigation. 27 28 There are three broad topics about which you will 29 receive evidence during this hearing. The first is police investigative practices and processes, including the 30 31 handling and storage of exhibits. 32 33 The second is the training of Homicide detectives, 34 including in relation to suspected bias crimes and in 35 dealing with the LGBTIQ community and the approach of the 36 Force to unsolved homicides, especially by the Unsolved 37 Homicide Team since its inception in 2004. 38 I pause parenthetically here to observe I use "LGBTIQ 39 community" as it is the expression used in the Terms of 40 41 Reference, to refer to the communities that may be described as the LGBTIQA+ communities or, to some people, 42 43 the queer community. In doing so, I seek to respect and 44 celebrate and not to ignore the diversity of those 45 communities. 46 47 In a related hearing in due course, it is anticipated

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1 that you will receive further evidence about developments 2 in forensic science, including DNA technology and the 3 relevance of those developments to unsolved homicides or 4 cold case investigations. 5 You will also receive, in due course, written 6 7 submissions about these matters, and you may also receive 8 oral closing submissions. I will say something further 9 about the submissions you will receive shortly. 10 11 The first three witnesses in this hearing will give 12 evidence about different aspects of the investigative 13 processes, in particular in relation to the handling and storing of exhibits and in relation to the conduct of the 14 investigations into some of the deaths into which this 15 16 Commission is inquiring. 17 18 You will hear first from Assistant Commissioner 19 Rashelle Conrov. Her role includes what the Police Force 20 describes as the "Corporate Owner of Exhibits", which means 21 she is the commander with overall responsibility for 22 exhibit management within the NSW Police Force. 23 24 Assistant Commissioner Conroy is the commander of the Forensic Evidence & Technical Services Command. 25 You will see that, Commissioner, sometimes referred to as the FE&TS 26 27 Command. You'll hear evidence from Assistant Commissioner 28 Conroy about the scope and function of that command. 29 She'll provide an overview of the exhibit management process within the NSW Police Force, which she will do in 30 31 part by reference, we anticipate, to what she describes as 32 the exhibit management life cycle. 33 34 This life cycle comprises identification of exhibits at a crime or incident scene; collection of exhibits; 35 36 third, recording of exhibits; fourth, where appropriate, 37 testing exhibits, such as subjecting them to forensic analysis; fifth, the storage of exhibits; and, sixth, the 38 39 disposal of exhibits. 40 41 To the extent she is able to do so, she will give evidence as to the police practices and procedures in 42 43 relation to each of these stages during the period covered 44 by this Commission, that is, 1970 to 2010. She will also 45 give evidence about improvements and developments since 46 that time and, as a consequence, explain the current 47 practices and procedures.

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1 2 Assistant Commissioner Conroy will give evidence about 3 the electronic system that was introduced in 2011 known as 4 EFIMS - E-F-I-M-S - that is, the Exhibits Forensics Information and Miscellaneous Property system. 5 6 7 The Assistant Commissioner will explain the 8 implementation of that system and the ways in which it has 9 improved the exhibit management processes within the Force. 10 11 You will receive some evidence in the public hearing about the storage facilities for exhibits, although you 12 will appreciate that information about current storage 13 facilities is sensitive and some of that will not be 14 canvassed in a public hearing. 15 16 17 As you will recall, you have received evidence and 18 submissions in previous public hearings about particular 19 exhibits that have been retained, that have not been 20 retained, or have been lost or destroyed, and other 21 submissions and exhibits where it's not possible to say 22 whether exhibits exist. 23 In relation to the deaths into which you are 24 25 inquiring, there is a significant number of cases in which exhibits that might be relevant to the deaths cannot be 26 27 located or have been destroyed or steps have been taken 28 such that their forensic value has been diminished. 29 Assistant Commissioner Conroy will give some evidence 30 about those matters and about what can or cannot be said as 31 32 to the police conduct in relation to the loss, destruction 33 or impairment of those exhibits. 34 35 One matter relevant to the disposal of exhibits which 36 I will mention now, and to which you may need to return, is the operation of the State Records Act. You will hear 37 evidence about material being dealt with in accordance with 38 Part 17 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and 39 40 Responsibilities) Act. 41 The material provided by the NSW Police Force to date 42 has not addressed the operation of the State Records Act 43 44 although that was one of the matters that the Police Force 45 was asked to address in correspondence from this Inquiry in 46 advance of this hearing. 47

1 It may be that the Commissioner of Police contends 2 that there are no relevant provisions of the State Records 3 Act. We anticipate it will be our submission that 4 exhibits, at least once they are tagged or placed in a bag 5 or box and labelled, should be understood as being a source of information compiled by whatever means and would 6 therefore be a record within the definition of the State 7 8 Records Act. 9 10 If so, they would appear to be "State records" as defined and would therefore be subject to the State Records 11 Act unless they fall within one of the exceptions or unless 12 they are the subject of other statutory provisions. 13 14 In relation to paper records, it seems even clearer, 15 16 we say, that those are documents and, therefore, State 17 records. 18 19 It will be relevant to consider, in this regard, that 20 section 21(7) of the State Records Act provides that an Act 21 enacted after that section, which would include the Law 22 Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act, is not to be interpreted as prevailing over, or otherwise affecting the 23 operation of section 21, except insofar as the Act 24 expressly provides for that Act to have effect despite that 25 section. 26 27 28 Certain provisions of the Law Enforcement (Powers and 29 Responsibilities) Act are exempted from the operation of section 21 of the State Records Act, but on our review, 30 31 that does not include Part 17. At this stage, your Honour 32 has not received legal argument at any length, indeed, none 33 at all, from the Commissioner of Police. It would be 34 premature to make any judgment but I identify it as a matter that your Honour may need to consider. 35 36 37 We will explore this to the extent practicable with Assistant Commissioner Conroy, but given she was silent 38 about it in her statements, it may be that she is not able 39 to assist the Commission in relation to this issue at this 40 41 time. 42 43 The next witness you will hear from will be 44 Superintendent Roger Best. Superintendent Best is 45 a Commissioner in the Crime Scene Services Branch. The 46 Crime Scene Services Branch conducts and assists in examination of exhibits, both crime scene examinations and 47

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1 laboratory examinations.

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Where laboratory examinations are involved, the Crime Scene Services Branch works with, and has various arrangements with, the Forensic Analytical Science Service, often known as FASS, which is part of a division of the NSW Health Administration Corporation.

9 The Crime Scene Services Branch, under various names 10 and structures, has a history going back to 1938, when it was established in its original form as the Scientific 11 12 Investigation Bureau. Since 1995, the Branch, known then 13 as the Crime Scene Operations Branch, sat within the 14 command known as the Forensic Services Group, which is the group which was renamed in 2017 as the FE&TS Command, the 15 16 command I referred to a moment ago.

18 Superintendent Best will give evidence about the 19 laboratories operated by the Crime Scene Services Branch 20 throughout the State and the training and investigation of 21 forensic investigators and crime scene officers. Forensic 22 investigators and crime scene officers fulfil the same role 23 or a similar role, but the former are sworn officers, and 24 the latter are civilian employees.

Mr Best will explain the policies and procedures that have applied during the relevant periods in relation to exhibits and their forensic testing. This will include evidence as to the decision to undertake forensic examination of particular exhibits and the management of those exhibits.

33 It will come as no surprise to learn that DNA testing 34 was a significant improvement in the forensic capability of 35 the NSW Police Force. We anticipate that the Commission 36 will receive evidence that DNA was first used as part of 37 a criminal investigation in the UK in 1986. We anticipate that the Inquiry will receive evidence, possibly from 38 somebody within the FASS, indicating that in 1989 or 39 40 earlier, there were New South Wales cases where DNA testing 41 took place, albeit by sending the samples overseas.

According to the evidence it is anticipated the
Inquiry will receive from the FASS, that service's Forensic
Biology and DNA Unit began testing DNA in New South Wales
in 1989 or 1990. DNA testing was formally introduced as
a service available to the NSW Police Force in New South

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Wales in February 1992, and the technology and efficacy has 1 2 developed significantly over the years since then. 3 4 Superintendent Best will give evidence about the Crime 5 Scene Services Branch's testing procedures, the prioritisation of testing and the return of exhibits once 6 7 testing is complete. Superintendent Best will also explain 8 the various arrangements between the Crime Scene Services 9 Branch and the Forensic Analytical Science Service - that 10 is, the FASS. 11 Can I make some general observations about exhibits 12 that have not been able to be located. You have received 13 evidence and submissions about that, as I have indicated, 14 in relation to a number of particular deaths that are the 15 16 subject of this Commission. We anticipate that the 17 evidence that you will receive at this hearing will assist 18 you in your function of making recommendations, 19 particularly arising out of that evidence that you are 20 receiving in connection with individual deaths, where it 21 appears that exhibits were lost, destroyed or have become 22 otherwise unavailable. 23 24 In public hearings and written submissions dealing with individual deaths, you have received a number of 25 submissions identifying exhibits that have not been 26 available and articulating their potential significance. 27 28 In our written submissions in this matter, we will 29 endeavour to summarise this including by cross-reference to the evidence and submissions received in relation to those 30 31 deaths. 32 33 It is neither necessary nor feasible to canvass all 34 lost exhibits or their significance in this public hearing. It is a matter about which you have received, and will 35 36 continue to receive. extensive submissions in the context of each death, including submissions from the NSW Police 37 Force about those matters. 38 39 40 In this respect, this public hearing and submissions 41 in connection with this public hearing should be understood to supplement, not to replace, the evidence and submissions 42 you are receiving in relation to each death into which you 43 44 have been inquiring. 45 46 One matter we will explore with the witnesses is what conclusions can be drawn, if any, as to whether the 47

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prevalence of lost exhibits in the cases before the 1 2 Commission is indicative of the prevalence of lost exhibits 3 in other unsolved homicides of a similar age. 4 5 You may need to ask yourself whether the loss or degradation of exhibits might have been affected by any 6 7 conscious or unconscious bias, and if the loss or 8 degradation of exhibits has not been affected by those 9 factors and the prevalence of loss or degradation is, 10 rather, indicative of unsolved homicides of a similar age, that may warrant recommendations about the auditing of 11 exhibits across all cold cases. 12 13 14 The next witness from whom you will hear will be Detective Inspector Warren is 15 Detective Inspector Warren. 16 an experienced Homicide detective. He will give evidence 17 about some of the cases in which potentially important exhibits are apparently no longer available and evidence 18 about particular matters of concern that have been 19 20 identified in relation to some of the police 21 investigations. 22 We also anticipate that Mr Warren will give evidence 23 24 about the difficulties that the Police Force can face when seeking to obtain all evidence and documents held by the 25 26 NSW Police Force in relation to a given death or a given 27 suspected homicide. 28 29 As with exhibits that have been lost or destroyed, you have already received submissions in relation to many of 30 31 the deaths into which you are inquiring setting out matters 32 of concern or investigative steps that it was submitted 33 should have been taken but were not taken, in particular 34 police investigations. The Commissioner of Police has responded to those submissions in many cases, or will, in 35 36 due course, respond to those submissions. 37 Again, the evidence and submissions in this public 38 hearing are intended to supplement, not to substitute, the 39 40 extensive material you are receiving specifically in 41 connection with each death. 42 43 Mr Warren has given a statement in response to 44 a request from the Commission for evidence in relation to 45 some of the specific acts or omissions that have been 46 identified which might be described as apparent investigative oversights or deficiencies. We will explore 47

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that statement with Detective Inspector Warren, including
 whether Detective Inspector Warren is able to provide
 further assistance to the Commission about those apparent
 oversights or deficiencies, beyond what he has said in his
 statement.

7 It will not be feasible, nor would it be a sensible 8 use of hearing time, to explore all of the matters of 9 concern that have been identified by Counsel Assisting in 10 relation to all of the deaths under consideration.

You have received, or will receive, the evidence and submissions put forward by Counsel Assisting in relation to each of those matters. You also have received, or will receive, submissions from the NSW Police Force in response.

We understand that Detective Inspector Warren is an
appropriate witness to give you evidence at this hearing
also in relation to the difficulties faced by the
NSW Police Force in gathering all of the exhibits and
records that may be relevant to a particular homicide or
suspected homicide.

This is a matter that has arisen before this Commission recently in the context of concerns as to the late production of substantial volumes of material in response to summonses issued by the Commission. It is also an important matter when considering the ability of the Unsolved Homicide Team to review and investigate cold cases.

It arises for your consideration in connection with your consideration of Paragraph F of your Terms of Reference - that is, asking yourself whether you are satisfied that a particular matter has been, or will be, sufficiently and appropriately dealt with by another inquiry or investigation.

The next witness from whom you will hear is Detective Superintendent Daniel Doherty. Detective Superintendent Doherty will give evidence about the second of the three broad topics that will be covered in this public hearing that is, education and training of Homicide detectives.

45 Detective Superintendent Doherty will explain the 46 history of the Homicide Squad over the relevant period, 47 including structural changes within the Force and

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1 improvements over the years in how investigations have been 2 conducted into suspicious deaths. He will give evidence 3 about the roles and responsibilities of the Homicide Squad 4 and its relationship with the relevant police area command. 5 Detective Superintendent Doherty will give some 6 7 evidence about the Unsolved Homicide Team, which is part of 8 the Homicide Squad, although it is anticipated you will 9 hear in greater detail about that from the fifth witness, Detective Chief Inspector David Laidlaw. 10 11 12 Detective Superintendent Doherty will give evidence about the relationship between the Homicide Squad and the 13 14 Missing Persons Registry and previous incarnations, the Missing Friends Bureau, the Missing Persons Section, or the 15 16 Missing Persons Unit. 17 18 You will hear from Superintendent Doherty about the 19 qualifications and experience of Homicide Squad officers, 20 including the required training and some aspects of the 21 optional training. You will also receive evidence about 22 specific training that detectives receive in relation to hate crimes and in dealing with members of the LGBTIQ 23 24 community. 25 You received some evidence about this from Assistant 26 Commissioner Crandell and from Sergeant Kirgiz 27 28 last December, and we anticipate that Detective Superintendent Doherty may be able to supplement that 29 evidence. 30 31 32 We will explore what I'm about to say with Mr Doherty 33 but we anticipate making a submission that investigators 34 are greatly assisted by an attitude of professional curiosity, as it is sometimes put, and by taking care to 35 36 avoid blinkered or tunnel vision, including after 37 a tentative case theory might start to form about a particular homicide. 38 39 40 Important lines of inquiry may be foreclosed or 41 overlooked due to conscious or unconscious bias, untested assumptions, lack of objectivity or rigid thinking, and the 42 43 techniques or approaches to avoid or minimise that are one 44 matter we will explore with Mr Doherty. 45 46 We anticipate making a submission that cultural awareness in relation to the LGBTIQ community and other 47

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diverse or minority communities, as well as reflecting the
 values of our society, has concrete benefits in terms of
 policing.

First, a climate of trust and confidence between police and a given community will tend to facilitate the flow of information towards police from members of that community.

- 10 Second, related to this, knowledge about a community 11 may assist investigators to make more informed judgments 12 about what might be fruitful lines of inquiry in an 13 investigation involving members of that community.
- Third, the broadening of horizons may facilitate what
   I described earlier as "professional curiosity" and broader
   modes of thinking by investigators.

19 Fourth, and while this is certainly not universal, in 20 some individuals, there may be an impulse or a tendency to 21 work harder and be more thorough when dealing with 22 a sympathetic victim. The converse is a risk that conscious or unconscious bias could lead an investigator to 23 24 be less careful or less professionally curious or more 25 indifferent to a victim whom the investigator thinks of as Again, we will explore with Mr Doherty the 26 unsympathetic. mechanisms and strategies available to avoid or minimise 27 28 the risk of that.

30 Detective Superintendent Doherty may be able to assist 31 you, Commissioner, based on his experience, about how the 32 training and education of Homicide detectives might tend to 33 promote the desired qualities I have described above and 34 avoid modes of thinking that can contribute to the 35 investigative oversights or deficiencies.

37 The last police witness you will hear from in this hearing is Detective Chief Inspector David Laidlaw of the 38 Unsolved Homicide Team. Mr Laidlaw has been a member of 39 the Police Force since 1977. He has been a detective for 40 41 38 years and a Homicide detective for 22 years. He will give evidence about the way unsolved homicides were managed 42 prior to the establishment of the Unsolved Homicide Team in 43 44 2004. It appears that, before that time, there was not 45 a systematic process or procedure in place for the 46 management or review of unsolved homicide cases. 47

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1 Mr Laidlaw will give evidence about the establishment of the Unsolved Homicide Team in 2004 and its structure 2 3 over the years since then. 4 5 Mr Laidlaw will explain that in the first four to five years, the team reviewed unsolved homicides. They started 6 7 with 366, although that expanded to around 400 by 2008. In 8 2009, dedicated investigative teams were established within the Unsolved Homicide Teams. 9 Those teams conducted 10 investigations into unsolved homicides and have done so 11 since that time. 12 13 Mr Laidlaw will give evidence about the procedures that have applied to screening or triage of unsolved 14 homicides over the years and the process by which cases are 15 16 reviewed and considered for reinvestigation. 17 You will also hear from Detective Chief Inspector 18 19 Laidlaw about how unsolved homicides are categorised and 20 prioritised by the Unsolved Homicide Team, both in the past 21 and at present. 22 Mr Laidlaw may also be able to assist you in relation 23 to the process by which exhibits are identified. recorded 24 and stored for unsolved homicides and the process by which 25 relevant documentary records are identified and gathered to 26 27 the extent that this has not already been covered by the 28 evidence of Assistant Commissioner Conroy and Detective 29 Inspector Warren. 30 Some of the particular deaths under consideration by 31 32 this Commission have been the subject of screening, triage 33 or review. You have received evidence and submissions about those matters in public hearings dealing specifically 34 35 with those cases. We will explore some of those screening, 36 triage or review documents with Detective Chief Inspector 37 Laidlaw. 38 On their face, it appears that some of those documents 39 40 may include potentially significant oversights or errors. 41 Again, it will not be feasible to explore all of them with Detective Chief Inspector Laidlaw, but we will endeavour to 42 43 explore some of the indicative examples. Again, you have 44 received, or will receive, written submissions in relation 45 to each particular death canvassing those matters, and 46 either have received, or will receive, further submissions from the Commissioner of Police in response in relation to 47

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1 those individual deaths.

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In considering the triage or review documents, it will be important to bear in mind, and Detective Chief Inspector Laidlaw may be able to assist you with this, the purpose of those screening, triage or review documents. It may be that the purpose of a triage or screening document is to be high volume rather than thorough.

10 If the objective is to screen, triage or review a high 11 volume of cases in a reasonably short period of time, then, 12 of course, some errors or oversights are to be expected. 13 If it takes significantly longer to complete individual 14 triages or reviews, then you may take a different view 15 about how many errors or oversights might reasonably be 16 expected.

18 In relation to the deaths you are examining, it will 19 be appropriate for you to consider whether the process of 20 screening and reviewing unsolved homicides is currently 21 achieving either the objective of getting through a high 22 volume of cases in a reasonable period of time or the 23 competing objective of providing a comprehensive and 24 thorough review of cases when they are examined. We will provide a more detailed analysis of the screening, triage 25 26 and review documents as part of our written submissions, 27 and you should, of course, ensure the Commissioner of 28 Police has an appropriate opportunity to respond to that.

On a number of occasions in dealing with particular 30 31 deaths, the written submissions from the Commissioner of 32 Police have contended that there is no utility, or limited utility, in asking whether the quality of the police 33 34 investigations fell short of the standard of the day - that is, in the past - or in asking whether those 35 36 investigations, the quality of those investigations, would fall short of today's standards. 37

It will be our submission that it will be open to you
to take the view there is utility in considering those
matters and they are matters covered by your Terms of
Reference and your function of reporting and making
recommendations.

The Terms of Reference require you, in Paragraph C, to have regard to the findings of any previous inquiries and reports. Paragraph F of your Terms of Reference also

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1 require you to ask yourself whether any particular matter has been sufficiently dealt with, or will be sufficiently 2 3 dealt with, by another inquiry or investigation or by 4 a criminal or civil proceeding. 5 As part of your report, you will need to consider what 6 findings you can or should make as to the quality of police 7 8 investigations, the retention of exhibits and police 9 record-keeping during the relevant period in respect of 10 deaths which are suspected hate crimes, where the victim is a member of the LGBTIQ community and the death has been the 11 subject of a previous investigation by the NSW Police 12 Force. 13 14 The evidence as to the steps taken by the NSW Police 15 16 Force since that time to improve police practices, exhibit retention and record-keeping may inform what 17 18 findings may be appropriate as to the extent to which the 19 Force has addressed past matters and avoided or reduced the 20 likelihood of investigative oversights or deficiencies in 21 the future. 22 That may, in turn, inform the recommendations you 23 might make arising out of each of the matters addressed in 24 25 your report. 26 27 As an experienced judicial officer, you are well 28 placed to make your own judgment about the standard the 29 community expects of the Police Force and the standard the community expected, or should have expected, of the Police 30 Force at the time of the deaths and investigations into 31 32 which you are inquiring. 33 34 Having been invited to provide a statement or 35 statements addressing the particular matters of concern 36 I referred to earlier in this opening - that is, matters of concern that were raised in a letter of 26 May 2023, about 37 which you will receive further evidence shortly - the 38 Commissioner of Police has provided a statement from 39 40 Assistant Commissioner Conroy and Detective Inspector 41 Warren. 42 43 One of the purposes of receiving that evidence is to 44 hear what evidence, if any, the Commissioner of Police 45 seeks to place before you to assist you in making the 46 judgment which you, as an experienced judicial officer, are 47 in a position to make.

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1 2 In relation to many failures, deficiencies or 3 oversights - and I stress, when I say "failures, deficiencies or oversights", in relation to many matters 4 5 which appear to be failures, deficiencies or oversights or which you find, in due course, to be failures, deficiencies 6 7 or oversights - it may ultimately be impossible to tell 8 whether they were reflective of police practices of the day 9 in all matters at that time or whether such deficiencies or 10 oversights were more prevalent in cases where the victim 11 was a member of an LGBTIQ community.

13 It may not be possible to conclude that any particular 14 oversight or deficiency was the result of conscious or unconscious bias against members of the LGBTIQ community. 15 16 Nevertheless, given what we now know about the widespread 17 bias, not just within the Police Force but in the wider 18 community in the 1970s and 1980s, you may take the view 19 that there is a likelihood that some of the deficiencies 20 and oversights that you may find were affected by conscious 21 or unconscious bias. It is to be hoped that the likelihood 22 of bias reduced over the 1990s and the 2000s, but you may find you cannot exclude the possibility of conscious or 23 24 unconscious bias being a factor in some pockets of the 25 Force during this time.

The possibility that conscious or unconscious bias may have been a factor throughout the whole period examined by this Commission - that is, 1970 to 2010 - you may also consider to be consistent with other evidence you receive from non-police witnesses about the relationship between the LGBTIQ communities and the NSW Police Force over that period.

That may, in turn, inform what recommendations you 35 36 might be minded to make to ensure ongoing community 37 confidence that the NSW Police Force is free from bias, including towards members of the LGBTIQ community, and to 38 ensure that the NSW Police Force is meeting community 39 40 expectations in terms of the care and competence with which 41 it investigates homicides and the quality of its records as 42 to missing persons and unsolved homicides.

44 Both of those matters may also appropriately be the 45 subject of recommendations by you, Commissioner.

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Unless there are any questions, Commissioner,

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1 I propose to call Assistant Commissioner Rashelle Conroy. 2 3 THE COMMISSIONER: Before you do that, I should make 4 a disclosure. On 1 January this year, I was appointed, at 5 the recommendation of the Chief Justice, to the State Records Authority. I have attended two board meetings of 6 7 that Authority. 8 9 The State Records Authority, in part, is engaged from 10 time to time with the State Records Act and matters arising It seemed to me last week, when I gave 11 thereunder. 12 consideration to issues that might or might not arise 13 before me, that it would be inappropriate for me to remain on the board of the State Records Authority and, as of last 14 Thursday, I resigned from the board and I have informed the 15 16 Chief Justice and the relevant Minister concerned. 17 18 As I say, I don't know whether issues might or might not need to be addressed by me, but I thought it 19 20 appropriate that I make that disclosure at the outset. 21 Thank you. Yes? 22 23 MR EMMETT: May it please. 24 25 Your Honour, before I call Assistant Commissioner 26 Rashelle Conroy, there is a tender bundle that has been prepared for this hearing. It's 10 volumes, and I ought 27 28 tender that, subject to non-publication orders that I'm 29 about to ask your Honour to make. 30 31 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Thank you. 32 33 MR EMMETT: Could I inquire, does your Honour have --34 THE COMMISSIONER: 35 Not yet, I think is the answer. 36 37 MR EMMETT: Could I provide --38 THE COMMISSIONER: 39 Certainly. 40 41 MR EMMETT: Could I be clear that those proposed orders deal with volumes 1 to 10, but there is a further volume in 42 43 relation to which those assisting you and the Police Force 44 are discussing appropriate NPOs, or non-publication orders. 45 46 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. 47

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1 MR EMMETT: The document I have handed up deals with the 2 first 10 volumes. 3 4 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. And is that by consent, 5 Mr Mykkeltvedt? 6 Yes, Commissioner. MR MYKKELTVEDT: 7 8 9 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Thank you. In relation to 10 volumes 1 to 10, I make the orders by consent in the short 11 minutes. Thank you. 12 EXHIBIT #51 TEN-VOLUME TENDER BUNDLE 13 14 THE COMMISSIONER: 15 Thank you, yes? 16 17 MR EMMETT: While I'm attending to the tender of matters, Commissioner, I tender a copy of three letters from those 18 assisting this Commission to the NSW Police Force in 19 20 relation to exhibits and investigative practices. They are 21 letters dated 13 March 2023, 12 May 2023 and 26 May 2023. 22 23 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. 24 EXHIBIT #52 THREE LETTERS FROM THOSE ASSISTING THE 25 COMMISSION TO THE NSW POLICE FORCE IN RELATION TO EXHIBITS 26 AND INVESTIGATIVE PRACTICES DATED 13 MARCH 2023, 12 MAY 27 28 2023 AND 26 MAY 2023 29 They have been redacted in certain respects 30 MR EMMETT: which we understand is not in contest between us and the 31 32 Commissioner. 33 34 THE COMMISSIONER: Very well. Thank you. 35 MR EMMETT: I call Assistant Commissioner Rashelle Conroy. 36 37 <RASHELLE FIONA MAREE CONROY, sworn: 38 [11am] 39 <EXAMINATION BY MR EMMETT: 40 41 MR EMMETT: Could you tell the Commissioner your full 42 Q. 43 name? 44 Α. Rashelle Fiona Maree Conroy. 45 46 And your occupation? Q. I'm a police officer. 47 Α.

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1 2 THE COMMISSIONER: What you're going to have to do, unfortunately, is speak up just a little or try - if you 3 4 just move a bit closer, it might help, thank you. 5 I think it was picked up. You said your 6 MR EMMETT: Q. occupation is a police officer? 7 8 Α. Correct. 9 10 Q. And your place of address is Police Headquarters? 11 Α. Yes. 12 13 Q. You have prepared a statement for this Special Commission of Inquiry dated 2 May 2023? 14 15 Α. Yes. 16 17 Q. Do you have a copy of that in front of you? 18 I do, yes. Α. 19 20 Are the contents of that statement true and correct in Q. 21 every particular? 22 Α. Yes. 23 You have also prepared a statement - you don't need to 24 Q. go to it; we will come to it in due course - dated 11 June 25 2023? 26 Α. Yes. 27 28 29 MR EMMETT: Commissioner, in the printed tender bundle it is volume 8, tab 4 [NPL.9000.0008.1049] 30 31 32 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. 33 MR EMMETT: Q. Are the contents of that statement true 34 35 and correct in every particular? Α. Yes. 36 37 38 Q. Assistant Commissioner, you have been a member of the Police Force for 27 years? 39 40 Α. Yes. 41 And you have the qualifications that are set out in 42 Q. paragraph 11 of your statement? 43 44 Yes. Α. 45 46 What led you to undertake the bachelor's degree Q. 47 there - the Bachelor of Policing?

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1 Α. It was personal development whilst I was a police 2 officer. I took it upon myself to continue my education 3 and do a Bachelor of Policing at Charles Sturt University. 4 5 Q. You saw that as having a benefit, a value to you as a police officer? 6 Yes. 7 Α. 8 9 Q. It may be possible to answer this question at great 10 length or briefly, but to what extent - how did what you learnt during that degree affect your approach to policing? 11 It's a long time ago now, 2004 I finalised that 12 Α. 13 diploma and policing course. It assisted me with all 14 avenues of policing in terms of investigative skill, community engagement, statement preparation, brief 15 16 preparation - there was a number of modules in that 17 Bachelor of Policing that was of benefit to me as a police officer. 18 19 20 Q. Do you have a sense of how common it is for officers 21 to undertake either that qualification or a similar one? 22 Α. No, I don't. 23 24 Q. At paragraphs 12 to 13 you describe a number of courses and qualifications that you have obtained? 25 Yes. 26 Α. 27 28 And then at paragraphs 14 to 18 of your statement you Q. 29 describe your policing experience? Yes. Α. 30 31 32 In your current role, you are the commander of the Q. 33 FE&TS Command? 34 Yes. Α. 35 Is that how I should describe it? 36 Q. 37 Α. We call it FE&TS. 38 Okay, FE&TS. And what is the function of the FE&TS 39 Q. 40 Command? 41 Α. The function of the FE&TS Command is broken up into I have the Crime Scene Services 42 four different branches. That's a command of about 422 sworn and unsworn 43 Branch. 44 officers that are located in laboratories across the State 45 and they're responsible for going out and examining crime 46 and coronial scenes and collecting evidence, interpreting evidence and providing evidence to the judiciary. 47

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1 2 I have the Identification Services Branch, and there's 3 around 250 staff in that command, both sworn and unsworn. 4 Within that command I have the Forensic Ballistics 5 Examination Unit: I have Fingerprint Operations Branch, who are responsible for fingerprint identifications; I have 6 Criminal Records Section, they look after criminal records 7 8 of individuals; I have the DNA Results Management Unit, and 9 I have the Engineering Investigation Unit, so that's, in 10 totality, what makes up the Identification Services Branch. 11 12 I also have the High Tech Crime Branch. High Tech Crime Branch look after digital forensics, so extracting 13 evidence from digital forensics, computers and mobile phone 14 I have the Telecommunications Interception Branch 15 devices. 16 and I have the Technical Capability Unit. 17 18 And then I also have the Technical Evidence and Science Branch, so part of that is the State Technical 19 20 Investigations Unit, which looks after electronic 21 surveillance. 22 I also have our Science and Research Unit, which looks 23 24 after our ongoing science and research capability for FE&TS Command including pharmacology and Technical Capability 25 Unit, and then I have the Advanced Technology Centre, which 26 27 supports our technical capability. 28 29 And then to support myself, there are 38 staff in the Business Management Unit, which looks after all of the 30 31 functions of the region. 32 33 Q. Thank you, Assistant Commissioner. And as the 34 commander of the FE&TS Command, you have what is described as "capability ownership" of the EFIMS; is that right? 35 36 Α. Yes, we call it EFIMS, yes. 37 EFIMS. Q. 38 And what does it mean to have capability 39 ownership? 40 Α. So that means that I'm responsible for the system and 41 ongoing maintenance of that system and any replacement of that system; it's incumbent on me to ensure that we've got 42 43 succession planning in relation to exhibit management 44 across the NSW Police Force. 45 46 Your role also includes being what is described as Q. "Corporate Owner of Exhibits"; is that right? 47

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1 A. Yes, it is. 2 3 Again, what does it mean to be the Corporate Owner of Q. 4 Exhibits? 5 Α. The Corporate Owner of Exhibits again means that I have corporate ownership of exhibits, so ensuring that 6 7 the Police Handbook, the Exhibit Procedures Manual, are 8 kept up to date and that I'm across current 9 exhibit policies and procedures and updating those for the 10 NSW Police Force. 11 I did miss, as part of the Technical Evidence Services 12 Branch, I do have the MEPC, which is the Metropolitan 13 Exhibit Property Centre, my apologies, that's part of that 14 branch, and I also have responsibility of looking after the 15 16 exhibits in that area. 17 18 Thank you, Assistant Commissioner. Could I ask you, Q. 19 in section B of your statement you have given evidence 20 about the exhibit management process. You've explained 21 that that's covered by, among other things, the 22 Exhibit Procedures Manual and the exhibits chapter of the Police Handbook? 23 24 Α. Yes. 25 Is there a particular division of subject matter 26 Q. 27 between those two documents? 28 Not particularly. The Police Handbook was derived Α. 29 from police instructions and the historical originality of those exhibit management systems are in my statement. 30 31 32 The Exhibit Procedures Manual is more thorough and 33 covers off on additional areas that aren't covered in the 34 Police Handbook, and the Exhibit Procedures Manual was a recommendation of one of the audits that we had, an 35 36 external audit that came in and made a recommendation that 37 we create a Standard Operating Procedure for Exhibit Handling, so we have the two and they supplement 38 39 each other. 40 41 Q. You referred to an external audit, was that an 42 Auditor-General's report of February 2013? Yes. 43 Α. 44 45 MR EMMETT: Commissioner, I'm not going to go to the 46 documents in the hearing room but you have those documents in the tender bundle. 47

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1 2 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. 3 4 MR EMMETT: Q. You summarise in your statement the 5 exhibit management life cycle, which is six stages, and then you address each of them. Can I step through each of 6 7 them and ask you to assist the Commissioner just with what 8 each of those stages is, the first being identification? Yes. 9 Α. So when we're at a crime or incident scene, the 10 first thing we will do is identify an exhibit. So we look at something that has potential evidentiary purpose or 11 value and we would look at just making a decision whether 12 we would collect that piece of evidence. So that's the 13 14 first step, is identification. 15 16 Q. Then --17 Α. Collection. 18 Q. -- collection? 19 20 Α. So once we've made a decision that we've Yes. 21 identified an exhibit and we have a lawful power to collect 22 that exhibit, then we will collect it. Depending on the 23 type of exhibit will depend on the collection methodology. 24 25 Q. We'll come to that in more detail shortly. The next 26 is recording? 27 So we photograph exhibits that we record and Α. Yes. 28 then we also enter them into an exhibit book or into EFIMS, 29 as we would in current practices. 30 31 Q. And then testing? 32 So not all exhibits will be subject to testing, so Α. it's only exhibits that have got evidentiary value for 33 34 further analysis, but testing is something that we organise, whether it's for fingerprints or whether it's for 35 36 DNA or some other type of testing. 37 38 Q. Who makes that judgment as to whether or not to test 39 a particular item? 40 Α. Well, depending on what the type of testing it is, 41 that person with the subject matter expertise, along with 42 the officer in charge of the investigation. 43 44 Thank you, Assistant Commissioner. Then the fifth Q. 45 stage of the life cycle is storage? 46 So once we've collected it, we store it. Α. Yes. So we store it in exhibit rooms within police area commands and 47

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1 police districts. 2 3 Again, we'll come to each of these in more detail. Q. 4 The sixth stage is disposal? 5 Α. Yes. 6 7 You explain in your statement that it is the police Q. 8 area command or the equivalent specialist commanders who 9 are accountable for exhibit management? 10 Α. Correct. 11 12 Q. What are the mechanisms for enforcing that 13 accountability? 14 Well, when an exhibit is collected, it's entered into Α. Once it is entered into EFIMS it's stored in an 15 EFIMS. 16 exhibit room. Once it's under the exhibit room, in the 17 exhibit room, the exhibit officer is responsible for that exhibit, however the OIC remains responsible for the life 18 19 cycle of that exhibit. And then the officer - the 20 commander of that police station is - then takes whole 21 responsibility for ensuring that auditing and storage, 22 retention or disposal of that exhibit is in accordance with the Police Handbook or with the legislation around that 23 24 exhibit. 25 Am I right that there are a number of older cases 26 Q. where the exhibits have not yet been entered onto EFIMS? 27 28 All exhibits should be entered into EFIMS at this Α. 29 point in time. 30 31 And are there processes for the supervision of OICs in Q. 32 relation to the recording of those exhibits? 33 Α. Could you ask that question again? 34 35 I'm sorry, yes. I'm seeking to understand the way in Q. 36 which the commanders who are responsible or who are accountable for the exhibits are held accountable, and I'm 37 interested, among other things, in the process by which 38 they come to be recorded on EFIMS. How is that supervised 39 40 or --41 Α. When an OIC collects an exhibit, the first thing that they have to do at the first available opportunity is enter 42 43 that exhibit into EFIMS. Once they've entered it into 44 EFIMS, they will then hand that exhibit over to an 45 exhibit officer, and that exhibit will be stored into 46 a storeroom, an exhibit room, a secured exhibit room. 47

1 The commander is responsible for ensuring that we 2 comply with our Command Management Framework, which is 3 a risk-based governance structure implemented across police 4 districts and police area commands, to ensure that we're 5 auditing exhibits that are in our custody, so the exhibits are sighted and that the exhibits are disposed of in an 6 7 appropriate manner according to legislation or judicial 8 discretion. 9 10 So the commander has the overall responsibility of ensuring that those exhibit audits are conducted and that 11 they are signing off, one, they do an exhibit audit 12 themselves every 12 months, but then that the exhibits 13 14 within that possession, within their PD, are subject to those audits, whether it be weekly or monthly. 15 16 17 Q. Thank you, Assistant Commissioner. And there's a process, am I right, to ensure that if an OIC leaves the 18 Force or is absent for an extended period, 19 20 responsibilities, including exhibit responsibilities, are 21 allocated to another officer? 22 Α. Correct. 23 24 Q. What is that process? 25 Α. The commander, or generally it would be that 26 supervising sergeant in charge of that officer, would 27 allocate or reallocate that investigation including the 28 exhibit management to a new officer within that team or 29 within that section of the police station. 30 31 Now, in section C of your statement you have given Q. 32 evidence about obtaining exhibits. Is that also what 33 you've described as the identification stage of the life cycle? 34 Yes, and collection. 35 Α. 36 37 Q. In determining whether an item ought to become an exhibit - and can I be clear, am I right to use that 38 language when I'm talking about the decision to take an 39 40 object into police custody, to hold, because it might be of 41 value to an investigation or a prosecution later, that's 42 what you mean by an item becoming an exhibit? Α. Yes. 43 44 45 Q. And in making a decision whether an item should become 46 an exhibit, an officer will consider both the evidentiary purpose and the officer's powers of seizure? 47

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1 Α. Correct. 2 3 Q. Who makes that judgment? 4 The officer in charge of the investigation. Α. 5 And then, you referred earlier to various ways in 6 Q. which exhibits can be taken or lifted or obtained. They're 7 8 summarised in paragraph 40, with guidance summarised in 9 paragraph 41 of your statement? 10 Α. Correct. 11 You've said that at the time of collection, the 12 Q. officer collecting the exhibit should, wherever possible, 13 14 photograph the item. What factors may influence an inability to photograph the item, or do you mean by that, 15 16 because the item is too small to photograph or not 17 practicable to be photographed? 18 Or the inability of the officer to have a digital Α. 19 device to take a photograph. 20 21 Are you able to assist the Commissioner with how long Q. 22 it has been the case that the officer should, wherever possible, photograph the item? 23 24 I would have to refer back to the police instructions Α. around that, but from memory, we've had that in place for 25 26 a significant period of time. 27 28 Q. For as long as you have been an officer? 29 Α. I think so. I'm not a hundred per cent sure. I'd have to go back and check the instructions. 30 31 32 You've said that the officer collecting the Q. 33 exhibit should wherever possible photograph the item and 34 make a record of the exhibit. The officer should always make a record of the exhibit, shouldn't they? 35 36 Α. Correct. 37 You've given evidence in your statement about prior 38 Q. practices, including from the 1970s to the 1990s, and it's 39 40 important to note much of which was from before you were 41 a police officer; am I right? 42 Α. Yeah. 43 44 You've given evidence, so far as you're able, from Q. 45 your review of the Standard Operating Procedures and other 46 published documents? Yes. 47 Α.

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1 2 Have you made any other inquiries or spoken to other Q. 3 officers about the practices during those periods? 4 Α. No. 5 Am I right, prior to 1990, exhibits were typically 6 Q. collected in what you've described as a "brown paper, 7 8 unlabelled bag", unless there was a particular kind of 9 exhibit for which special procedures applied --10 Α. Yes. 11 12 -- is that right? And then the practice, as you Q. understand it, was that the item would be recorded in the 13 14 exhibit book? Yes. 15 Α. 16 17 Q. And there would be a cross-reference in the exhibit book back to the event number? 18 19 Yes, but COPS, just noting, didn't - was not Α. 20 implemented until 1994. So prior to 1994 it would not have 21 a COPS event number. 22 And so before then, in, say, the 1970s and 1980s, 23 Q. 24 would some sort of cross-reference be added to some other 25 record-keeping system? 26 Α. Yes. 27 28 Q. What was that cross-reference? 29 Α. It would be the location the exhibit was collected or 30 any other details around the investigation of that 31 particular case. 32 33 Q. And that would be noted in the exhibit book? 34 Α. Yes. 35 36 Q. Would it also be noted on the paper bag? I couldn't answer that question, I'm not sure what 37 Α. they would record on the bag. 38 39 40 Q. But at the very least - and I'm looking at 41 subparagraph (c) of paragraph 52 of your statement - the 42 exhibit reference number is recorded on the bag? Yes. 43 Α. 44 45 Q. And then the item is secured in the exhibit room of 46 the charging - or, sorry, it was, during this time, secured in the exhibit room of the charging police station? 47

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Yes. Α. 1 2 3 In around 1999 to 2000, the Police Handbook was Q. 4 replaced by the Commissioner's Instructions, and that 5 migrated to an online resource? Yes. 6 Α. 7 8 Q. What impact did that have on police access to 9 resources? 10 Α. Well, once it was online, we could get amendments faster and it was more available to every police officer, 11 without having to have access to a paper hard copy book. 12 13 14 Q. I'm looking at paragraph 58 of your statement. There were significant developments, weren't there, in forensic 15 16 testing over the course of the 1990s and the 2000s? 17 Α. Yes. 18 19 Q. One of the most significant ones, of course, is the 20 prevalence of DNA? 21 Α. Correct. 22 23 Q. Are there other improvements in forensic testing that stand out in your experience over that period? 24 DNA was the most substantial forensic testing 25 Α. capability developed over that period of time for 26 27 NSW Police. 28 29 Q. In terms of exhibit management, one of the other 30 things that occurred is that for items, even if they did 31 not require forensic testing, there was still a process 32 with items being put in bags, but there was a printed 33 section for reference numbers and labelled containers; is 34 that right? Correct. 35 Α. 36 37 Q. During this time there was an audit process --Α. Yes. 38 39 40 Q. -- in respect of exhibit management? How often were 41 exhibit books checked? Sorry, was part of that audit process a review of individual exhibit books? 42 Yes. 43 Α. 44 45 Q. And how would they be checked? 46 They would be checked by the officer in charge of the Α. police station and they would go through each page of the 47

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1 exhibit book and cross-reference and sight the exhibit that 2 was in the police exhibit office. 3 4 Q. Are you able to assist the Commissioner with what 5 quality control or oversight procedures there were to ensure that the officer conducting that audit was doing so 6 7 thoroughly? 8 Not that I can give evidence to, I'd be speculating. Α. 9 10 They may have existed but if they did, you don't know Q. what they were? 11 Α. Yes. 12 13 14 Are you aware of examples of situations in which Q. officers were either corrected or provided with performance 15 16 management or disciplined for failures to conduct regular 17 audits or appropriate oversights of exhibit books? Oh, I'd be speculating. I haven't got that 18 Α. information in front of me. 19 20 21 Q. We don't want you to speculate. 22 Α. Thank you. 23 24 Q. In more recent times, the exhibit management procedures have changed significantly; is that right? 25 26 Yes. Α. 27 28 Q. Exhibits - I'm looking at paragraph 66 of your 29 statement - are stored and retained for as long as they are needed for investigative purposes or as evidence in a 30 31 prosecution. Again, who makes that judgment? 32 It would be the OIC and also in accordance with LEPRA Α. 33 legislation and any directions from a judiciary. 34 What happens if the cases become - to use a loose 35 Q. 36 expression, if the cases become cold, if the OIC has perhaps lost interest in it but the case has migrated to 37 the Unsolved Homicide Team, do you know in that situation 38 how judgments are made as to the storage and retention of 39 40 exhibits? 41 Α. Well, from the moratorium in 2002, all Unsolved 42 Homicide exhibits are retained indefinitely. 43 44 Since 2014, there has been an exhibits managers Q. 45 course; is that right? 46 Α. Yes. 47

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1 Q. What's the length and structure of that course? 2 Α. It's a four-day course, face to face. 3 4 Q. Who within the Force participates in that course or 5 completes that course? Exhibit officers attached to a police station or 6 Α. 7 a police district. 8 Does that mean - will there be at least one of those 9 Q. 10 people who have done that course attached to each police station? 11 I couldn't say with certainty that they've completed 12 Α. It is available to them, so if there's any 13 the course. staff turnover and they haven't attended the course in a 14 period of time - but there is an option for every 15 16 exhibit officer to attend that course, yes. 17 18 THE COMMISSIONER: Can I just interrupt. 19 20 Do I take it from what you just said that they're not Q. 21 mandatory, the courses? 22 It is not mandatory. Α. 23 24 Q. And who conducts them? Are they face to face or online? 25 Face to face. 26 Α. 27 28 Q. And who conducts them? Different people, I presume? 29 Α. It is run via our People and Capability Command at Goulburn, at the Police Academy. 30 31 32 And just as a matter of interest, why isn't it Q. 33 mandatory? 34 I couldn't answer that, I'm sorry. Α. 35 36 THE COMMISSIONER: Fair enough. Okay. 37 MR EMMETT: Q. 38 Does someone within the force, to your knowledge, keep records of which stations have an 39 40 exhibit manager who has done the course as opposed to an 41 exhibit manager who hasn't done the course? It should be on PETE which is our learning environment 42 Α. 43 online system. 44 45 But are you able, for instance, to identify stations Q. 46 that don't have an exhibit manager who has done that 47 course?

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1 Α. I would have to run the report, using the PETE 2 program, to identify it and I wouldn't be able to comment 3 with clarity as to what that particular report would tell 4 me, so I would need to run that first before I could answer 5 that question with confidence. 6 7 That's not something that you or, to your knowledge, Q. 8 someone else within the Force monitors on a regular basis? 9 Α. Not that I'm aware of. 10 If somebody did monitor that on a regular basis, whose 11 Q. responsibility would that be? 12 13 Α. The owners of the course are People and Capability, so 14 I imagine it would fall to them. 15 16 Q. And to whom do they report? 17 Α. They report to Deputy, Corporate Services. 18 Is that inside FE&TS or is that outside of FE&TS? 19 Q. 20 Α. No, externally. 21 22 THE COMMISSIONER: Can I interrupt again, I'm sorry. 23 24 In paragraph 12 of your statement, you set out various Q. 25 courses that you have taken. Do I assume that in each and 26 every one of those courses, they are in-house? If you have 27 paragraph 12 there, the first one is the vehicle 28 identification course, and so it goes on. Are those in a similar category to those we're discussing? Were they 29 30 in-house courses or not necessarily? Not all of them. 31 Some of them have been through the Α. 32 AFP, some of them have been through UTS. 33 34 The next question, though, is this: some of those Q. courses - for example, hairs and fibre examination, 35 36 chemical targeting, biological evidence, and so on - those were courses you did in 2000, 2002 and 2004. 37 What happens to technological changes that may have occurred in any of 38 those areas? I take it's not mandatory for persons such as 39 40 yourself, or anyone, to go to any fresh courses that might 41 be conducted, because I'm assuming science doesn't stand 42 still in some of those areas? 43 No, and so for myself I'm no longer holding expertise Α. 44 in crime scene methodology, but if I would be, I would be 45 required to sit proficiency tests every 12 months and those 46 proficiency tests would be subject to scientific improvements and capabilities over that period of time. 47

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1 2 And take an example, hairs and fibre examination: it Q. would not be out of the bounds of possibility that 3 4 technology might have changed since 2001? 5 Α. Correct, yes. 6 7 THE COMMISSIONER: Okay, thank you. 8 9 MR EMMETT: Q. Coming back to the current system for 10 storing exhibits, exhibits may be stored at police 11 stations? Α. Yes. 12 13 Exhibits may also be stored - and you've referred to 14 Q. 15 this - at the MEPC? 16 Α. Yes. 17 18 Q. Which is the Metropolitan Exhibit and Property Centre. 19 How does one work out whether an exhibit is going to be in 20 one place or the other - that is, at police stations or the 21 Centre or somewhere else? 22 So for the MEPC, we have a requirement that they have Α. to meet for the exhibits to be put at the MEPC, and that is 23 24 that it is for a serious indictable offence with a sentence 25 of over 15 years. Those matters go there. Unsolved 26 homicides go there and anything in public interest would go 27 So that's sort of the criteria that we have to there. 28 accept exhibits into the MEPC, and that would include 29 suspended investigations where they cannot be stored at the local police station or the police district - we would keep 30 31 them at the MEPC for long-term storage. 32 33 Q. And then there are some special kinds of storage -34 I don't want you to talk about them for the most part, but 35 an example is biological evidence such as a sexual assault 36 investigation kit could be stored in a refrigerator? 37 Α. Correct. 38 What about exhibit books? Starting with physical 39 Q. 40 exhibit books, where are they kept? 41 We don't have very many physical exhibit books Α. So each station would retain one on the 42 anymore. 43 off-chance that EFIMS is unavailable, and they are stored 44 with the exhibit officer. 45 46 And what about historical - physical exhibit books Q. 47 from before you had EFIMS?

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They were stored at the police station or the police 1 Α. district for up to two years until the final action had 2 3 been completed in the exhibit book, so that was all 4 exhibits had been acquitted or accounted for, and then 5 after that period they would then be archived -I understand that the archiving location is at Kingswood -6 7 and they would be held in a repository at Kingswood for 8 20 years. 9 10 Was there a process by which physical exhibit books Q. were translated, were recorded electronically? 11 Α. 12 No. 13 At the end of that 20-year period, who decides that 14 Q. the exhibit book will be destroyed? 15 16 That's up to the Corporate Owner of Records Management Α. 17 and the destruction advice or the schedule that they have provided for those exhibit books or for those particular 18 accountable books or documents. 19 20 21 Q. And are copies made of exhibit books and similar 22 documents before they are destroyed? Not that I'm aware of. 23 Α. 24 25 Q. And are you aware of police keeping a record of when exhibit books and other documents are destroyed? 26 Again, that would fall to the Corporate Owner of 27 Α. 28 Records Management. 29 30 Q. And you don't know? 31 Α. No. 32 33 THE COMMISSIONER: Mr Emmett, I was going to take a break, 34 if that's convenient. 35 MR EMMETT: 36 Yes. 37 THE COMMISSIONER: 38 I will take a short break, thank you. 39 SHORT ADJOURNMENT 40 41 42 MR EMMETT: Might Assistant Commissioner Conroy resume in the box? 43 44 45 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Ms Conroy, if you would come back 46 to the box, thank you. 47

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Assistant Commissioner, can I turn to 1 MR EMMETT: Q. 2 past practice and procedures associated with storing 3 exhibits. In the 1970s to the 1990s, am I right that, for 4 the most part, exhibits were stored at particular police 5 stations? 6 Yes. Α. 7 8 Q. How would one work out which police station the 9 exhibits were stored at? 10 Generally it would be at the police station closest -Α. that the OIC was attached to or it would be at a charging 11 station. 12 13 14 Q. And what if the OIC moved from one station on another? So the exhibit would remain with the police station 15 Α. 16 and it would be reallocated to another officer if they've 17 been transferred to another police district 18 19 Q. Exhibits during this period, to your knowledge, were 20 stored in bags or boxes, grouped by crime scene, where 21 possible; is that right? 22 Α. Yes. 23 24 Q. And those bags or boxes were labelled? 25 Α. Yes. 26 27 And you've said, because it was a manual process, the Q. 28 exhibit book was not always updated when things were moved? 29 Α. Correct. 30 31 When exhibits were moved, it was supposed to be Q. 32 recorded in the exhibit book, wasn't it? 33 Α. Yes. 34 To your knowledge, did the applicable police 35 Q. procedures during this period require the exhibit book to 36 be kept up to date in this respect? 37 Α. Yes. 38 39 40 And proper police practice at that time required the Q. 41 exhibit book to be kept up to date in that respect? 42 Yes. Α. 43 44 Audits, you've explained at paragraph 82, were to be Q. 45 required every three months? 46 Α. Yes. 47

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1 Q. What happened if, during the audit, exhibits weren't 2 located? 3 If an exhibit wasn't located, the OIC would report Α. 4 that to their supervisor and then a report would go up to 5 the commander of that police station in relation to the loss of the exhibit or the inability to find that exhibit. 6 7 8 And so there'd be an independent record made that that Q. 9 exhibit couldn't be found? 10 Α. There should be, yes. 11 And presumably efforts might be made then to find the 12 Q. 13 exhibit? 14 Correct. Α. 15 16 Q. Do you know what efforts were typically made? I'm assuming that they would look at the exhibit book 17 Α. and they would try to find who was the last person that had 18 19 visibility or ownership of the exhibit and speak to that 20 officer. 21 22 Are you able to assist the Commissioner with whether Q. 23 or not there were consequences - disciplinary or 24 performance management or support consequences - for the situation where an exhibit cannot be located or ends up in 25 26 the wrong place? 27 Α. Well, I just said I can't speculate on what the 28 outcomes are of previous investigations that I've not had 29 any information over, so --30 31 Q. You have no personal knowledge of that? 32 Α. No personal knowledge of that, no. 33 34 In the early 2000s, in 2001, the Command Management Q. Framework was implemented; is that right? 35 36 Α. Yes. 37 Could you explain for the Commissioner what the 38 Q. Command Management Framework is and how it operates? 39 40 Α. It's a risk-based accountability structure that was 41 originally in place in a paper-based form and it identifies 42 an area of risk within the police station or the police 43 district command and it mandates certain inspections are 44 done, dip samples are done and reporting is done to the 45 commander in relation to a range of systems within that 46 police station. 47

1 Q. And the range of systems includes systems for 2 exhibit management? 3 Α. Yes. 4 5 Q. You've referred in paragraph 87 to a 100 per cent audit of exhibits that takes place annually. 6 What's 7 a 100 per cent audit? 8 It means every single exhibit has been inspected and Α. 9 ratified against the exhibit book within that police 10 station. 11 12 And if an exhibit appears to be missing, there should Q. 13 be an independent record made of that? 14 Yes. Α. 15 16 Q. What happens to those records - that is, the records 17 of what has been identified as missing? Oh, again that would be the OIC or the duty officer, 18 Α. 19 systems duty officer, would make a notation of that and 20 report that to the commander in relation to a missing 21 exhibit. 22 23 Q. And do those records just stay within each individual 24 command? Up until the time CMF was put on to our electronic 25 Α. 26 computer system, yes, they were manual records, and they 27 would have been held at the police station. Since 2005, 28 I think the CMF went on to a computerised system and we 29 make records of that in the computer system 30 And in 2005 when the CMF moved to the computer system, 31 Q. 32 were existing records digitised? 33 Α. Not that I'm aware of. 34 I'm about to move to the handling of exhibits, but 35 Q. before I do, in relation to the storage of exhibits, would 36 you agree that the careful gathering, labelling and 37 retaining of exhibits is a critical matter for 38 investigations? 39 40 Α. Yes. 41 42 In relation to unsolved cases, it becomes even more Q. 43 important with the passage of time? 44 Α. Yes. 45 46 And, of course, those attending a crime scene might Q. not know which cases will end up being unsolved? 47

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Α. 1 Correct. 2 3 If a case ends up being an unsolved case, the Q. 4 objective evidence in the form of exhibits and 5 contemporaneous documents is going to become even more important with the passage of time as compared to 6 7 evewitness accounts? 8 Well, I'd be hypothesising on that one. Α. I'm not sure 9 what the exhibits are that would be collected but yes, 10 exhibits are important for unsolved homicide 11 investigations. 12 And to your knowledge, everyone understood that in the 13 Q. 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, didn't they? 14 Sorry, what was that question? 15 Α. 16 17 Q. To your knowledge, everyone understood in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s that the careful gathering, labelling and 18 19 retaining of exhibits is a critical matter in 20 investigations? 21 Α. I can't be drawn on what investigators thought were 22 critical back in the '70s and; '80s. Sorry, I can't answer 23 that question. 24 25 Q. Nothing you feel you're able to assist the Commissioner with in relation to that? 26 27 Α. No, sorry. 28 29 Q. In section E of your statement you've given evidence about the handling of exhibits, including the current 30 31 practices and procedures governed since 2012 by the 32 Exhibit Procedures Manual and the EFIMS chapters of the 33 Police Handbook? 34 Yes. Α. 35 36 And you've explained in paragraph 93 - I don't need Q. you to list them - various considerations that arise in 37 relation to some kinds of exhibits? 38 39 Α. Yes. 40 41 Q. You identify in particular - can I hone in on subparagraph (e), the inspection of the item during audits. 42 43 How does that take place? 44 When we run an EFIMS audit, we run it with a barcode Α. 45 scanner and every exhibit within the exhibit room has 46 a barcode, which is a unique identifier for that particular exhibit, and we'll run the barcode scanner across each 47

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1 exhibit and ratify that against the internal audit report 2 from EFIMS. 3 4 Q. In the past, in the 1970s and the 1990s, the important 5 document was the exhibit book; is that right? Yes. 6 Α. 7 8 Q. That's where all movements of the exhibit should have 9 been recorded? 10 Α. Yes. 11 And that includes the circumstances in which the 12 Q. exhibit was obtained, any transfer in location and any 13 decision to dispose of or destroy the exhibit? 14 Yes. 15 Α. 16 17 Q. And that system was, in part at least, dependent on the thoroughness with which the person responsible for 18 maintaining the exhibit book maintained the exhibit book? 19 20 Α. The exhibit officer maintained the exhibit book. 21 22 It was the exhibit officer rather than the OIC who Q. would be responsible for that during the 1970s to the 23 1990s? 24 The OIC would enter exhibits into the exhibit book but 25 Α. the custody of the exhibit book would stay with the 26 27 exhibit officer. 28 29 Q. And you've explained that during the 2000s, the access and movement of exhibits remained a completely manual 30 process, and it was in 2012 that that changed? 31 32 Yes, it was in 2011 when we got EFIMS. Α. 33 34 Q. I'm sorry. Α. Yes. 35 36 37 Q. In section F you deal with the disposal of exhibits. You explain the current practice in paragraphs 103 and 38 following. 39 Yes. 40 Α. 41 42 You explain that whether an exhibit can be disposed of Q. 43 is dependent on the need for its retention for evidentiary 44 purposes during an investigation or prosecution? 45 Α. Yes. 46 And also you've referred to the moratorium? 47 Q.

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Α. 1 Yes. 2 3 Can you explain to the Commissioner the impact of that Q. 4 moratorium? 5 Α. The impact of the moratorium was after the Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Act was implemented and we had 6 7 a National Criminal Investigative DNA Database. So the 8 moratorium was in response to the ability to test exhibits 9 for DNA. So the moratorium was put in place across 10 NSW Police Force to not dispose of any exhibits that had 11 biological/forensic value. 12 13 Q. How would you decide whether an exhibit had biological or forensic value? 14 We'd first look at why it was collected and then we 15 Α. 16 would look at the ability to recover trace DNA, blood, 17 semen and saliva, from that exhibit. 18 19 Q. But before the moratorium, when biological material 20 was taken into custody, if dealing with an unsolved 21 homicide, would there ever be a good reason to make 22 a conscious decision to destroy that biological material? 23 Well, prior to DNA evidence, DNA technology becoming Α. 24 available, then I imagine that the investigator wouldn't So in the '70s and the '80s when 25 put their mind to that. DNA was not available, when an exhibit was collected that 26 27 had biological evidence in it, the only value to that would 28 have been for semen detection or for blood grouping, and 29 that was being done at the Forensic Analytical Science Service, and then once that testing and that report had 30 31 been returned to the NSW Police Force, then realistically 32 there was no other evidentiary value to that exhibit. 33 34 What about at least in the '90s, when DNA testing was Q. understood to be a reality, by then would there be a good 35 36 reason for it? 37 Α. It migrated very slowly into the NSW Police Force investigative cycle, so DNA first became available to us in 38 1992 but it was - it didn't change our processes, it was 39 40 just a capability or a test that FASS could do at that time 41 should the unique circumstances enable that test to be 42 It really wasn't until 1998 and the development of done. 43 Profiler Plus that we had an ability and a validated 44 process to use DNA more routinely in investigations. 45 46 If the question I'm about to ask is outside your Q. 47 knowledge, say so, but it would seem - it must have been

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obvious to Homicide detectives by at least the early '90s 1 2 that DNA technology was on the scene and likely to advance? 3 I can't put myself in the minds of the investigators. Α. 4 It was very early in the evolution of DNA in the 1990s. As 5 I said, '98 was really when we saw the biggest change in DNA with the Profiler Plus system being able to identify 6 7 biological evidence. 8 9 Q. Again, if you can't answer the question I'm about to 10 ask, by all means say so, but are you able to agree or disagree that labs were using DNA to establish paternity in 11 the 1980s? 12 13 Α. That's outside my area of expertise, I'm sorry. 14 Or that DNA was first used in a criminal investigation 15 Q. 16 in the UK in 1986, leading to a conviction in 1987? 17 Α. I am aware of that, but we weren't using that 18 technology in the NSW Police Force at that time. 19 20 Q. That's quite a well-known case in forensic science 21 circles; is that right? 22 Α. Yes. 23 24 Are you able to agree or disagree with the proposition Q. 25 that by 1989, there were New South Wales cases where DNA 26 testing took place by sending the samples overseas? 27 Α. Correct. 28 29 Q. Did that start, to your knowledge, in 1989 or earlier? From my knowledge it was 1989, but I think that 30 Α. 31 evidence would probably need to come from FASS. 32 33 Q. Again, to your knowledge - and if you don't know, say 34 so - did FASS's Forensic Biology and DNA Unit begin testing DNA in New South Wales in 1989 or 1990? 35 36 Α. I think that evidence should come from FASS, yes. 37 One thing I think you are able to say is that at least 38 Q. from February 1992, the service was formally available to 39 40 the NSW Police Force? 41 Α. In a limited capacity, yes, correct. 42 43 In paragraphs 104 to 110 you've given evidence about Q. 44 the disposal of certain exhibits? 45 Α. Yes. 46 The need to retain exhibits is a matter that the OIC 47 Q.

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1 assesses themselves on a case-by-case basis; is that right? 2 Α. Yes. 3 4 Q. Has that been the case since the 1970s, to your 5 knowledge? Yes. 6 Α. 7 8 Q. You've said in paragraph 104 it's normally desirable 9 to retain exhibits when dealing with serious offences? 10 Α. Yes. 11 Has that been the case, to your knowledge, since the 12 Q. 1970s - since and including the 1970s? 13 14 It wasn't explicitly in the instructions but certainly Α. it would be preferable to keep exhibits for serious 15 16 indictable offences for production at court. 17 18 In your view, proper police practice requires Q. 19 exhibits to be retained in relation to serious offences? 20 Depending on the evidentiary value. Α. 21 22 In paragraph 105 you have referred to the need to Q. 23 retain exhibits on a case-by-case basis considering "all 24 relevant legislation". When you refer to "all relevant legislation", what legislation do you mean? 25 26 So particularly Part 17 of LEPRA, but also the Crimes Α. 27 (Appeal and Review) Act and the Criminal Procedures Act. 28 29 Q. And LEPRA - I know it's a common shorthand - is the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act? 30 31 Α. Correct. 32 33 Q. You've also given a reference to the Exhibits 34 Procedure Manual and the "Exhibits" chapter of the Police Handbook, which have sections on the disposal of exhibits? 35 36 Α. Yes. 37 38 MR EMMETT: Again, those are in the tender bundle, Commissioner. I don't propose to take the Commission to 39 40 them. 41 42 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. 43 44 MR EMMETT: Q. Can I say this, your statement doesn't 45 refer to consideration of the State Records Act in relation 46 to exhibits. 47 Α. Correct.

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1 2 Q. Is that a piece of legislation to which consideration 3 is given when considering the destruction or the disposal 4 of an exhibit? 5 Α. Not that I'm aware of, no. 6 7 I can't see any reference to it in the Q. 8 Exhibit Procedures Manual or the "Exhibits" chapter; is 9 that right? 10 Α. Correct. 11 12 You don't know what I can see, sorry. You're not Q. aware of any procedure, any part of the applicable Exhibits 13 Procedure Manual or "Exhibits" chapter that deals with the 14 15 State Records Act? 16 Α. Not that I'm aware of, yes. 17 18 At paragraphs 111 and following, you give evidence Q. 19 about the prior practices in relation to disposing of 20 exhibits. That's the practice, so far as you're able to 21 give evidence about it, from the 1970s to the 1990s? 22 Yes. Α. 23 24 And you refer in paragraph 113 to the assessment of Q. forensic value - I'm sorry, to the future evidentiary or 25 forensic value of exhibits. 26 Yes. 27 Α. 28 29 Q. And what you say - am I right in understanding that the process at the time, that is, in the 1970s to the 30 31 1990s, was to consider the future evidentiary and forensic 32 value of exhibits before making a decision to dispose of 33 them or destroy them? 34 Yes. Α. 35 36 But, in looking at the 1970s, we need to be conscious Q. 37 that, for example, DNA testing was not available? Α. Correct. 38 39 40 Q. Nevertheless, would you agree that proper policing 41 practices in the 1970s and following required consideration of that matter - that is, the future evidentiary or 42 43 forensic value of the exhibit - before destroying or 44 disposing of it? 45 Α. Correct. 46 47 Q. And if a decision to dispose of or destroy an

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1 exhibit were made, you would expect a record of that? 2 Α. Yes. 3 4 Q. And would you agree that proper policing practice 5 required a record of any such decision to destroy or dispose of an exhibit? 6 Α. Yes. 7 8 9 Q. In the 1970s and 1980s - well, if the Commissioner 10 needs to make a judgment about whether police should have been mindful of the prospect of technological changes or 11 developments, are you able to assist the Commissioner with 12 evidence in relation to that matter? 13 14 In what regard? Α. 15 16 Well, it may be said that police officers in the 1970s Q. 17 and 1980s should have known that forensic science had developed and come a long way over the course of the 20th 18 19 century and were likely to go - and technological advances 20 were likely to continue. Are you able to assist the 21 Commissioner with that proposition? 22 Α. No. 23 24 Q. It may be said that DNA was transformative, but that forensic science was making advances all the time through 25 26 the '70s, well, throughout the 20th century, and that 27 police officers should have been mindful of that during the 28 1970s and 1980s. Are you able to assist the Commissioner 29 in relation to that? 30 Α. No. 31 32 Are you aware of cases, homicides from the 1970s or Q. 33 1980s, in which important exhibits were, in fact, retained? 34 Not off the top of my head. I'd have to have a look Α. 35 at a case review. 36 Q. 37 But there were such cases? Α. That we would retain exhibits? 38 39 40 Q. Yes. 41 Α. Yes. 42 43 Q. And there are cases - again I'm not asking you to list 44 them, you might not be able to, but there have been cases 45 in which exhibits that were, in fact, retained from the 46 1970s or 1980s provided the basis for reinvestigation and 47 breakthroughs in the case?

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Α. 1 Yes. 2 3 In the 1970s and 1980s, it was a matter for the Q. 4 judgment of the OIC in each particular case whether it 5 warranted retention of exhibits; is that right? Α. Yes. 6 7 8 Q. And it was a matter for the OIC's judgment which 9 exhibits should be retained, if any? 10 Α. Yes. 11 That judgment by individual OICs, would I be right in 12 Q. assuming you can't assist the Commissioner one way or the 13 other with the extent to which those judgments may have 14 15 been informed by conscious or unconscious bias? 16 Correct, I can't assist with that. Α. 17 18 But if an OIC has a conscious or an unconscious bias Q. 19 against people from a particular community, there is a risk 20 of that infecting their judgment as to whether exhibits 21 should be retained in relation to the apparent homicide of 22 a victim from that community? I can't comment on that. 23 Α. 24 25 Q. You can't comment? Knowing what we now know about police attitudes - and again if you can't comment about 26 27 this, and I shouldn't confine this to police attitudes -28 knowing what we now know about police attitudes and the 29 attitudes of the wider community in the 1970s and 1980s towards LGBTIQ people, are you able to comment on whether 30 31 the Commissioner can infer that there is a significant 32 prospect that some OICs were affected by conscious or 33 unconscious bias in the decisions they made as to the 34 retention of exhibits? No. 35 Α. 36 And what about later in the 1990s and 2000s? Are you 37 Q. able to provide evidence about that subject in relation to 38 the later period, that's the subject of this Inquiry, the 39 40 1990s and the 2000s? 41 Α. On - what was the question? 42 Q. 43 The risk of conscious or unconscious bias affecting 44 decisions as to the retention of exhibits? 45 Α. No, I can't comment on that. 46 Can I turn next in a little bit of detail to the EFIMS 47 Q.

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1 system and can you help us to understand. The relevant 2 part of your statement commences at paragraph 119. By the 3 mid 2000s - well, EFIMS, am I right, grew in part out of the appreciation of the increasing demand for DNA services? 4 5 Α. Correct. 6 7 And it also followed a review by the Ombudsman in Q. 8 relation to DNA sampling and forensic procedures? 9 Α. Yes. 10 MR EMMETT: Again, Commissioner, you have in the tender 11 bundle the Ombudsman's report. 12 13 14 Q. The review made over 100 recommendations, including recommendations to improve DNA information management work 15 16 flows and DNA processing? 17 Α. Yes. 18 19 Q. And what was the consequence of those recommendations? 20 For Forensic Evidence & Technical Services Command, it Α. 21 was that we needed to implement a new forensic case 22 management system that could manage the DNA exhibits and the integration between the LIMS system and the NSW Police 23 24 Force in relation to DNA results management. 25 And that started out, did it, as what was described as 26 Q. FIMS, the Forensic Information Management System? 27 28 Α. Yes. 29 Q. And that was a paper-based system? 30 No, that was fully electronic. 31 Α. 32 33 Q. Oh, sorry. It was going to be an electronic computer system for 34 Α. 35 managing forensic exhibits. 36 37 Q. And during the period 2007 to 2009, the project team identified that that system might be extended to 38 exhibit management generally; is that right? 39 40 Α. Exactly, yes. 41 42 And that was because it was identified by the team Q. 43 that the paper-based exhibit management system was 44 dysfunctional, inaccurate, labour-intensive, constrained by 45 red tape and embodied significant and substantial 46 operational problems and risks? 47 Α. Yes.

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1 That included the loss of exhibits? 2 Q. 3 Yes. Α. 4 5 Q. And a decision, or the recommendation was to 6 transition to an electronic exhibit management system? 7 Α. Yes. 8 9 Q. The intention was that that would drastically reduce the incidence of loss of exhibits and miscellaneous 10 property items? 11 Yes. Α. 12 13 14 The result of that, am I right, was what we've been Q. referring to as EFIMS - the establishment of EFIMS? 15 16 Α. Yes. 17 18 Q. What steps were taken to ensure that all exhibits 19 currently held had an entry in EFIMS? 20 When EFIMS was created, any exhibit that was a live Α. exhibit that was currently within a police station would be 21 22 enrolled on to EFIMS, but historical exhibits were not enrolled on to EFIMS at the time. 23 24 25 Q. So in relation to cases from the '70s, '80s and '90s, 26 the position was, at least as far as the initial set-up of 27 EFIMS was concerned, those exhibits continued to be held 28 alongside exhibit books in individual area commands; is 29 that right? 30 Initially, and then every exhibit was since enrolled Α. 31 on to EFIMS. 32 33 Q. What was the process by which every exhibit was then 34 recorded on to EFIMS? Each police station was responsible for their exhibits 35 Α. 36 and transferring those exhibits from an exhibit book into EFIMS. 37 38 Q. 39 How long did that take? 40 Α. I think it - well, I couldn't really answer that 41 question without forming opinions. I know it took 42 a significant period of time. 43 44 But months, years, most of the time since 2011? Do Q. 45 vou have --46 I think they were still undertaking some reviews in Α. relation to exhibits all the way through to 2016, so 47

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1 I think it took quite a number of years to enrol all of the 2 exhibits, pre-EFIMS, into EFIMS. 3 4 Q. Did that include digitising exhibit books? 5 Α. Not to my knowledge, no. 6 7 Are you aware of whether exhibit books have been Q. 8 digitised? 9 Α. No, not that I'm aware of. 10 You explain at paragraphs 128 and to 130 the capacity 11 Q. and functionality of EFIMS? 12 13 Α. Yes. 14 And as you explain, since EFIMS was introduced, the 15 Q. 16 Police Force has continued to make improvements to EFIMS? 17 Α. Yes. 18 19 Q. And they include improvements to system performance, 20 reporting functionality and integration into other systems? 21 Α. Yes. 22 Q. What's the integration into other systems? 23 24 Α. So --25 To the extent you can talk about it? 26 Q. It integrates with the LIMS system, so the Laboratory 27 Α. 28 Information Management System at FASS for all of our DNA 29 and our illicit drug exhibits. So there's that integration 30 It also integrates with COPS, our Computer point there. 31 **Operation Policing System** 32 33 At paragraphs 137 and following, you've described the Q. 34 process by which exhibits come to be recorded on EFIMS? 35 Α. Yes. 36 37 Q. What's the process by which the police officers implementing, taking those steps, are supervised or 38 monitored for quality control? 39 40 Α. When the officer enters the exhibits into EFIMS, 41 that's not supervised, but where they transition and record the exhibits to a movement location, that has to be 42 43 accepted by another officer, so there's two officers there 44 that would look at the exhibit entry there. One is the one 45 providing the exhibit to the exhibit officer, and the 46 exhibit officer confirms the entry and then logs that exhibit into the exhibit room, into a certain location 47

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1 within that exhibit room, so it's managed by two people at 2 that point. 3 4 Q. But when it's first being recorded, there's only one 5 officer that takes that step? 6 Α. Correct. 7 8 Q. And is there any system to pick up errors or 9 oversights in that process by that officer? 10 What sort of errors do you mean? I don't know what Α. 11 you mean. 12 13 Q. A wrong entry or missing an exhibit or entering in 14 something in the wrong section? The EFIMS has a lot of capability where there's fixed 15 Α. 16 forms or cells, so if you make a mistake, it will 17 intuitively tell you that you've made a mistake and that it 18 will ask you to either enter information that's missing or to fix an error. So it's got some intuitive systems logic, 19 20 inside of it. 21 22 Will that pick up a misdescription by the officer or Q. 23 an error in the way the officer describes where the 24 exhibit was found or what was observed about the exhibit at 25 the time? 26 If they've entered the details of the Α. No. exhibit incorrectly, the system will not pick that up. 27 28 29 Q. And is there a system to monitor or ensure quality control in relation to that process? 30 31 Yes. So when the exhibit officer is handed the Α. 32 exhibit, they'll look at the exhibit entry in EFIMS and 33 then they'll look at the exhibit description on the 34 exhibit bag and they'll see that that correlates, and that's how you can generally pick up a mistake, if there's 35 36 a mistake in EFIMS, from the recording of the exhibit in 37 the bag. 38 Is there an audit process as well in relation to EFIMS 39 Q. 40 on a regular basis in relation to the entries once they've 41 made it into the system? 42 So there's auditing functionality as part of the Α. Yes. CMF in EFIMS. 43 44 45 Q. In paragraph 142 and following, you've indicated that 46 a new system is proposed following the decommissioning of 47 the current EFIMS system?

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1 2	A. Yes.
3	Q. Can you explain to the Commissioner of this Inquiry
4	that new system, so far as you're able?
5 6	A. So we're still currently in the procurement process
0 7	and haven't signed a contract with the new vendor yet. So the new system is a system that every other policing
8	jurisdiction across the country uses and we've got great
9	confidence in that system. What that system will do is
10	look at our forensic case management side but also the
11	wider exhibit management, and we'll have improved
12	capability from what we currently have now under EFIMS.
13	supastificy from mac no sufficiency have non ander Eriner
14	Q. All the other jurisdictions, I think you said, have
15	adopted it?
16	A. Yes.
17	
18	Q. What will it add that we don't presently have or that
19	the New South Wales Police Force doesn't presently have?
20	A. It will have an integration into the JusticeLink so
21	we'll be able to get outcomes by the magistrates and the
22	judges. It will also have dashboards and Power BI
23	reporting which will be able to identify if there's an
24	inaccuracy with an exhibit. If an exhibit has been moved
25	and there's an unexpected transfer it will have an alert.
26	
27	It'll also give us alerts when exhibits are
28	a candidate for disposal. It'll give us alerts where we
29	expect an exhibit in transit to have been received and it's
30	not been received. So it'll be a lot more intuitive in
31 32	terms of managing exhibits in real time and we'll be able
32 33	to identify if there is a loss or a movement of an exhibit exactly when that happened. So it will just - what
33 34	we've said is take out a lot of the pain points of the
35	current system and continuous improvement in
36	exhibit management.
37	
38	Q. Thank you, Assistant Commissioner. In section H you
39	have given evidence about the centralised storage of
40	exhibits. I don't want to ask about the detail of the
41	storage facilities save to ask there are, in addition to
42	individual police stations, storage facilities for some
43	exhibits?
44	A. Yes.
45	
46	Q. You have given evidence about that in paragraphs 145
47	and following of your statement.

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1	A. Yes.
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16	Q. In the last section of your statement of 2 May 2023, you address certain other matters and, in particular, improvements or changes which reduce the prospect, in your view, of exhibits being lost or not being able to be accounted for or their value being degraded. Can you explain to the Commissioner your view about the current position and how that position differs from the position in the 1970s and '80s? A. Yes. So there's been a suite of changes since 2000, so largely legislation, with the Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Act legislating when we can and can't take DNA from people and from crime scenes. We have the national DNA database, so we now have a searching capability for DNA.
17 18 19 20 21 22	We've got EFIMS, so we've got that centralised database for exhibit management which takes the life cycle of exhibits from collection to disposal. That record is never disposed of and it's retained permanently.
22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36	We have a governance structure in terms of our CMF ensuring that those exhibits and those auditing functionalities are conducted at a frequent level. We also have a suite of, you know, training in terms of our forensic investigators and our police; we've got contamination procedures in place; we've got collection procedures in place; we've got long-term storage procedures in place; and we've also had other procedures through the Police Handbook, through the Exhibit Procedures Manual and through legislation that mandates that we absolutely retain exhibits from unsolved homicides and from serious indictable offences carrying life sentences - like, a sentence over 15 years.
37 38 39 40 41	So we've got those long-term storage facilities that hold the exhibits in the appropriate environmental conditions and appropriately packaged to avoid contamination and degradation of the exhibit for future analysis.
42 43 44 45 46 47	Q. Thank you, Assistant Commissioner. Would you pardon me for a moment. You have given evidence that all exhibits should be recorded on EFIMS? A. Yes.

1 Q. Are you aware of instances where some exhibits have not been recorded on EFIMS, by oversight or otherwise? 2 Not to my knowledge particularly, no. 3 Α. 4 5 Q. If an officer is examining a cold case and is trying to work out what exhibits exist, their starting point is 6 EFIMS? 7 8 Α. Yes. 9 10 Q. Would you expect an officer to look only on EFIMS if they wanted to ask themselves what exhibits currently exist 11 in relation to a given unsolved homicide? 12 EFIMS would be the first point but they could also 13 Α. 14 look at exhibit books and other archives records. 15 16 Q. If the officer had a concern that the EFIMS record may 17 not be complete, the other places that the officer would 18 need to look in order to understand where exhibits are 19 held, would they include other police computer systems? 20 Potentially COPS or e@gle.i. Α. 21 And would they need to look at what records there are 22 Q. 23 at the police area command where the original investigation 24 was conducted? 25 Α. A physical search would be required, yes. 26 27 And they might need to ask whether there are any Q. 28 exhibits held by FE&TS, including the Crime Scene Services 29 Branch? Yes. Α. 30 31 32 And they might need to ask whether there are exhibits Q. 33 being held at the Metropolitan Exhibit and Property Centre? 34 Α. Yes. 35 36 Q. Are you able to assist the Commissioner with whether there are any, and if so how many, exhibits held at the 37 Centre which are not on EFIMS? 38 From my knowledge, every exhibit at the Metropolitan 39 Α. 40 Exhibit and Property Centre is on EFIMS. 41 42 Is there a system to ensure that that takes place -Q. 43 that is, an exhibit doesn't get into the Centre without 44 being processed through EFIMS? 45 Α. Yes, it absolutely has to be processed through EFIMS 46 to be accepted into the Centre. 47

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And they may need to ask particular police officers 1 Q. who have been involved in the investigation but who may 2 3 have moved to another command? 4 Α. Yes. 5 What about the State Archives or the Kingswood Q. 6 archives, at least for documentary records, is there 7 8 a possibility that documentary exhibits may end up there? 9 Α. Yes. 10 Again, would you expect to see a record of that in the 11 Q. Police Force somewhere? 12 A record of? 13 Α. 14 Q. Of the fact that that's where the exhibit is? 15 16 Α. Yes. 17 18 Q. Could I turn next to your statement of 11 June 2023. Mmm-hmm. 19 Α. 20 21 Q. That's not in the folder you have. 22 Oh, it's not in my folder, I'm sorry. Α. 23 24 Q. That's in volume 8 of the exhibit bundle. There are lots of sub-tabs, but it's tab 4 [NPL.9000.0008.1049]. 25 26 This was a statement you prepared in response to a letter 27 from the Special Commission of Inquiry asking for 28 information as to certain exhibits that could not be 29 located? 30 Correct. Α. 31 32 The letter being dated 26 May 2023? Q. 33 Α. Yes. 34 Could I ask that you be provided a copy of that 35 Q. letter. 36 37 I can indicate, Commissioner, it forms part of 38 MR EMMETT: exhibit 52 that I tendered this morning. 39 40 41 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. 42 43 MR EMMETT: Q. Turning to page 2 of the letter, the 44 Commissioner was asked for a statement, or statements, that 45 addresses the matters in numbered paragraphs 1 to 5. 46 Α. Yes. 47

And you, in your statement, have addressed those 1 Q. 2 matters in relation to most of the entries on the table 3 titled "Updated Schedule of Exhibits", which appears to be 4 the fourth page of this document, or starts on the fourth 5 page of this document? Yes. 6 Α. 7 8 Q. In preparing your statement addressing the matters in 9 this table, what inquiries did you make? 10 Α. I reviewed statements, police statements, in response to some of the matters; I had information provided to me in 11 relation to what exhibits had been located and what 12 documents had been located. 13 14 Where available, did you review the submissions of 15 Q. 16 Counsel Assisting and of the Commissioner of Police in 17 relation to the matter in question in this Inquiry? 18 I read through them, yes. Α. 19 20 And you did that in part to understand the context in Q. 21 which the exhibits were being sought? 22 Correct. Α. 23 24 And their potential forensic significance to each Q. 25 case? Yes. 26 Α. 27 28 Now, in your statement of 11 June, after an Q. 29 introductory section, you commence in section A by referring to and summarising some of the evidence that you 30 31 gave in your earlier statement? 32 Α. Yes. 33 34 And then, in section B, commencing at paragraph 24, so Q. far as you were able, you answered the questions that had 35 36 been asked of you? Yes. 37 Α. 38 You've said at paragraph 26 that you are unable to be 39 Q. 40 absolutely certain whether or not the policy you have 41 identified is, in fact, the policy in place at the time. What is the source of your doubt in relation to that? 42 Only if the investigation spanned longer than the time 43 Α. 44 of the incident and I just wasn't sure whether the incident 45 instruction that I identified spanned the entirety of the 46 full investigation. 47

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1 Q. In fact, in a situation like that, it may be that 2 multiple instructions applied at different times? 3 Α. Correct. 4 5 Q. And indeed, if there were an investigation in the '70s, an instruction applicable in the '80s would continue 6 7 to govern, for example, retention of exhibits in respect of 8 that investigation? 9 Α. If the exhibits were still available. 10 You've said at paragraph 28 that in relation to the 11 Q. 12 schedule of exhibits that either cannot be located or have been lost, you do not understand what the act or omission 13 may be that you were being asked about? 14 15 Α. Correct. 16 17 Q. But you understand in relation to each of those matters that the exhibit cannot be located? 18 19 Α. Correct. 20 21 Q. And that, to your knowledge, police have made every 22 effort to obtain the exhibit and been unable to do so? 23 Α. Correct. 24 25 Q. And you understand that the Commissioner doesn't know how that came to be? 26 Yes. 27 Α. 28 29 Q. And in most or all of these cases, there's no record enabling one to - sorry, I should say, in most of these 30 31 cases, there's no record enabling one to understand how it 32 was that the exhibit was lost, whether it was because 33 someone lost it at the station, whether it was because 34 there was a deliberate decision to destroy it, whether it was lost in transit - there's no record indicating how the 35 exhibit came to be missing? 36 37 Α. Correct, yes. 38 39 Q. The absence of any record as to those matters is 40 likely to have involved a breach of one procedure or 41 another, isn't it? Well, I'm unable to make comment on that. I don't 42 Α. 43 have any of the documentation to be able to provide any 44 response. 45 46 Well, the very fact that you don't have that Q. documentation, isn't that indicative of a breach of 47

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1 a procedure? 2 Well, for exhibit books, they were only required to be Α. 3 retained for 20 years post completion of the exhibit book, 4 so the exhibit books may, in some cases, not be - have been 5 disposed of appropriately according to the schedule. 6 7 We'll come to an example, but the earliest death that Q. 8 this Commission was looking at, at least that appears in 9 this list, in this table of missing exhibits, is I think 10 1976? Yes. 11 Α. 12 13 Q. So if the exhibit book should have been kept for at 14 least two years in the command after it was regularly being used, and 20 years after that, it shouldn't have been 15 16 destroyed any earlier than 1998. 17 Α. Correct. 18 19 And by that time, people within the Force; new full Q. 20 well the importance of DNA and other technological advances 21 in forensic analysis that had occurred up until 1998? 22 Α. Yes. 23 24 Q. And they must have appreciated that exhibits in relation to cases from the '70s might be amenable to 25 26 analysis using the technology that had been developed by 27 then. 28 Well, that's if the exhibit was still on hand at the Α. 29 time. 30 31 Q. Quite. If the exhibit were on hand, anybody in 1998 32 or later must have appreciated that the technological -33 that any exhibits that had been retained might be subjected 34 to that kind of - to modern technology, to modern forensic 35 analysis? 36 Α. Yes. 37 And any person considering the position in 1998 would 38 Q. appreciate that the exhibit book was a necessary record to 39 40 understand what exhibits had been retained? 41 Α. Yes. 42 43 And indeed, the exhibit book, if maintained properly, Q. 44 was also a critical record to understand what exhibits 45 might have been destroyed or otherwise lost? 46 Α. Yes. 47

And in those circumstances, it wouldn't be consistent 1 Q. 2 with police practice, would it, to destroy the exhibit book 3 just because it has been 20 years in archives? 4 I don't destroy the exhibit books, you'd need to get Α. 5 a Corporate Sponsor for Records Management to be able to provide that advice. 6 7 You can't assist the Commissioner in relation to that? 8 Q. 9 Α. No. 10 As an assistant commissioner of the NSW Police, do you 11 Q. consider it consistent with police practice for an 12 exhibit book in that situation to be destroyed? 13 14 It would depend if the exhibit had been enrolled into Α. I would need more context in relation to the 15 EFIMS. 16 question before I could answer that. 17 18 I'm asking you about the situation in 1998, where Q. somebody is considering whether to destroy an exhibit book 19 20 in relation to a cold case from the mid '70s - I shouldn't 21 say "cold case"; in relation to an unsolved homicide or 22 potential homicide from the mid '70s. Is there any good reason, consistent with police practice, why such an 23 24 exhibit book would be destroyed? It could be destroyed if the relevant pages were 25 Α. 26 digitised and formed part of a greater investigative case 27 file. 28 29 Q. If it were digitised, that might be a reason not to 30 retain the paper version? 31 Correct, yes. Α. 32 33 But it would be important, in that case, to retain the Q. 34 digitised version, wouldn't it? Yes. 35 Α. 36 37 Q. Can you think of a good reason to destroy it without ensuring that there is a digitised version of the 38 exhibit book? 39 40 Α. No. 41 42 In fairness, and I think you have said this, the Q. agency that holds the exhibit books may not be the Police 43 44 Force? 45 Α. Correct. 46 47 Q. To your knowledge, in the late '90s, did the Police .4/07/2023 (72) 4833 R F M CONROY (Mr Emmett)

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1 Force have a say in whether exhibit books from the late or 2 the mid '70s should be destroyed? 3 I'm not sure. You would have to ask the Corporate Α. 4 Owner for Records Management questions in that regard. 5 It would surprise you if the Police Force didn't have 6 Q. a say, wouldn't it? 7 8 I think we were subject to a schedule, a disposal Α. 9 schedule, and then when exhibits or - when exhibit books or 10 accountable books were able to be retained, depending upon the offence category or what it was that it was in relation 11 to being retained, it would say you'd have to retain it for 12 five years or for 10 years or for 20 years or, "This record 13 14 needs to be retained forever" and we would abide by that schedule of disposal. 15 16 17 Q. Exhibit books in relation to unsolved homicides or suspected unsolved homicides - they should have been 18 retained forever, shouldn't they? 19 20 Well, you would think that the records pertaining to Α. 21 those could have been digitised. 22 So there should have been a digital record of 23 Q. 24 exhibits, of exhibit books, in relation to unsolved homicides from the '70s? 25 26 Again, it's not my area of expertise, I'd ask that you Α. 27 speak to the corporate sponsor for that particular area. 28 29 Q. In relation to the table that appears, am I right that, as I understand your evidence, where an 30 exhibit cannot be located, you are not able to say when or 31 32 by whom or how that exhibit came to be lost? 33 Α. Correct. 34 35 Q. And you are not able to say whether it was intentional 36 or accidental? 37 Α. Correct. 38 And in informing yourself in relation to that, the 39 Q. 40 inquiries you made included a review of the statements that 41 had been made to this Commission? 42 Α. Yes. 43 44 And the written submissions that had been made, if Q. 45 they had been made, by Counsel Assisting and by the 46 Commissioner of Police? Yes. 47 Α.

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1 2 Q. Did you also review the files? 3 No, I did not. Α. 4 5 Q. Did you ask somebody to make inquiries as to what can be said now as to when or by whom or how an exhibit came to 6 7 be lost? 8 I sought all information around the exhibit and the Α. 9 documentation around that exhibit, prior to making my 10 statement, from our legal team. 11 Would that be a convenient time, Commissioner? 12 MR EMMETT: 13 THE COMMISSIONER: 14 Yes, certainly. I will adjourn until 15 after lunch, thank you. 16 17 LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT 18 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes? 19 20 21 MR EMMETT: Can I invite Assistant Commissioner Conroy to 22 resume her seat. 23 24 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you, yes. 25 Assistant Commissioner, we spoke shortly 26 MR EMMETT: Q. before the adjournment about the inquiries you made in the 27 28 course of preparing your statement of 11 June 2023, and we 29 spoke about files that you reviewed. Do you remember that evidence? 30 Yes. 31 Α. 32 33 Q. Some of the files, files in relation to some of the 34 material or, sorry, files in relation to some of the deaths that are the subject of the Inquiry have been produced by 35 36 the Police Force to the Commission; is that right? 37 Α. I believe so. 38 Is that your understanding? Those files, to the 39 Q. 40 extent that they have been produced to this Commission of 41 Inquiry, you didn't review them for the purpose of preparing this statement? 42 No, I didn't. 43 Α. 44 45 Did you take the time to understand what was the Q. 46 content of those files insofar as the Police Force doesn't presently have them because this Inquiry has them? 47

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Α. Yes. 1 2 3 Q. And that informed the matters - the response you 4 prepared in this statement? 5 Α. Correct. 6 7 In paragraph 35 of your statement, you take as an Q. example the case of Mr Cuthbert, and you say that you are 8 9 not able to reach a confident conclusion as to whether or 10 not the fact that there are no exhibits held - that the exhibits are no longer held represents a failure to comply 11 with the relevant policy or procedure, and you identify 12 that some exhibits may be consumed by FASS in analytical 13 14 testing? Yes. 15 Α. 16 17 In examining the material you had access to in Q. relation to the Cuthbert file, did you observe a statement 18 19 from Ms Franco of FASS that cigarette butts were likely to 20 be consumed in the original testing? 21 Α. Yes. 22 She didn't say in her statement or suggest that -23 Q. well. exhibits. relevant exhibits included a handkerchief 24 and a sock? 25 Yes. 26 Α. 27 She didn't say that they were likely to have been 28 Q. 29 consumed in the original testing? Not that I can recall, no. 30 Α. 31 32 From your knowledge as Corporate Owner of Exhibits and Q. 33 from your knowledge of past exhibit retention practices, it 34 is not likely that the exhibit or the sock were consumed in forensic testing? 35 36 Α. Correct. 37 38 Q. In reviewing the file, you would have observed that Mr Cuthbert was plainly the victim of a homicide? 39 40 Α. Yes. 41 And that the Coroner had found that Mr Cuthbert had 42 Q. 43 died from wounds inflicted by a person or persons unknown? 44 Α. Yes. 45 46 In that context, knowing now that the handkerchief and Q. the sock cannot be located, it must follow either that they 47

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1 were destroyed at the time of the investigation or later, 2 or that they have been lost? 3 Α. Correct. 4 5 Q. Is that right? Or, they're unavailable, correct. 6 Α. 7 8 Q. And if they were --9 10 THE COMMISSIONER: Q. I'm sorry, unavailable for one of those two reasons, surely - not just unavailable, namely on 11 a shelf somewhere but unavailable, they've been lost so 12 they can't currently be located or they must have been 13 destroyed? 14 Correct. 15 Α. 16 17 MR EMMETT: Q. And if they were destroyed, a record of 18 that should have been made? Yes. 19 Α. 20 21 Q. If they'd been moved to a location and we don't know 22 where that location is, that indicates a failure in the 23 procedures? Yes. 24 Α. 25 So you are able to conclude, aren't you, that there 26 Q. has been a failure to comply with applicable police 27 28 procedures; it's just that you can't say which procedure 29 has been breached? There's just insufficient evidence or insufficient 30 Α. 31 information for me to come to any conclusion around that. 32 33 Well, you are able to conclude that applicable police Q. 34 procedures were not complied with, aren't you? 35 Α. No. 36 37 Q. Well, can you offer an explanation consistent with applicable police procedures for how it comes to be that 38 the handkerchief and the sock are not available? 39 40 Α. They could have been disposed of. 41 Well, you told me that if they had been disposed of, 42 Q. there should have been a record of that? 43 44 Yes. Α. 45 46 And you told me there is no record of that? Q. 47 Α. I haven't been able to locate a record of that, yes.

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1 2 Well, the inability to locate a record is indicative Q. that a police procedure has not been complied with, isn't 3 4 it? 5 Α. The record may have been disposed of in accordance 6 with our disposal schedule. 7 8 Q. And you have no record of that one way or the other? 9 Α. No. 10 Do you understand your disposal schedule to 11 Q. contemplate the destruction of records in relation to 12 exhibits for what is known to be an unsolved homicide? 13 14 Α. No. 15 16 Q. You are not aware of any procedure that justifies the 17 destruction of exhibits such as a handkerchief and a sock that are relevant to a known unsolved homicide? 18 19 Are we talking about the exhibit book or the exhibits? Α. 20 21 Q. Talking about the exhibits. 22 The exhibits? So according to the instructions at the Α. time for 1976 it was a 33 instruction and that was quite 23 24 clear that it said that if the exhibit had been analysed and a certificate had been returned to NSW Police Force and 25 26 there was no further requirement for the exhibit, then the 27 exhibit could be destroyed. 28 29 THE COMMISSIONER: Q. But does that mean if the exhibit is destroyed, though, that it clearly is no longer 30 31 available should any prosecution become a possibility? 32 In 1976 that was the case, from the instructions. Α. 33 34 Q. But you do solve cases of that vintage from time to time, don't you? 35 36 Sorry, I didn't hear you, sorry, sir. Α. 37 38 Q. Cases of that vintage are solved from time to time, 39 aren't they? 40 Α. Yes, if the exhibits are retained. 41 And more often than not, when exhibits are retained, 42 Q. 43 because the solution often turns upon science rather than 44 a witness's recollection, because given the passage of 45 time, some witnesses have a habit of dying? 46 Α. Yes. 47

1 MR EMMETT: Q. And proper police practices required a record to be made of any decision to destroy those 2 3 documents --4 Α. Yes. 5 Q. -- sorry, those exhibits? 6 7 Α. Yes. 8 9 Q. And that should have been in the exhibit book, at 10 least by the late '70s or whenever it was that the decision was made to destroy the exhibit? 11 Α. Yes. 12 13 Q. If that's what occurred? 14 15 Α. Correct. 16 17 Q. Twenty years later, it was still known that the - if someone were looking at this exhibit book, it would have 18 been perfectly clear that this was an exhibit book related 19 20 to an unsolved brutal homicide; is that correct? 21 Α. Yes. 22 23 Q. Are you aware of any police procedure that would justify destroying such an exhibit book? 24 25 26 THE COMMISSIONER: You mean exhibit? 27 28 MR EMMETT: The exhibit book. This is the hypothesis that 29 the exhibits have been destroyed. 30 I'm sorry, yes. 31 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. 32 33 MR EMMETT: In that situation, the Assistant Commissioner has agreed that there will be at least a record that that 34 has occurred. 35 36 37 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. 38 39 MR EMMETT: I'm exploring the circumstance in which there 40 is now no longer a record of that having occurred. 41 Thank you. Perhaps put it again for THE COMMISSIONER: 42 purpose of the witness. 43 44 45 MR EMMETT: Q. If an exhibit has been destroyed and an 46 exhibit book is being held in relation to what is known to be an unsolved homicide, you're not aware of any applicable 47

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1 procedure that would justify destroying that exhibit book, 2 are you? 3 But again, I would refer to the Corporate Α. I'm not. 4 Spokesperson for Records Management. 5 You have referred at paragraph 41 to the fact that 6 Q. some of the investigations were the subject of a coronial 7 8 determination that there were no suspicious circumstances? 9 Α. Yes. 10 You're only referring there, aren't you, to the 11 Q. circumstance where the Coroner has made a concluded finding 12 to that effect; am I correct? 13 14 Correct. Α. 15 16 Q. Not the situation where the Coroner has made an open 17 findina? 18 Correct. Α. 19 20 By "open finding", I mean the Coroner may say it's not Q. 21 clear what the cause of death is? 22 Α. Yes. 23 Because if it's not clear what the cause of death is. 24 Q. 25 there may very well be suspicious circumstances? Α. Yes. 26 27 28 Q. To your knowledge, do police continue to treat such 29 a death - that is, where it is not clear what the cause is and the Coroner has returned an open finding - as a death 30 31 that should be treated as suspicious? 32 Α. Yes. 33 If you were dealing with a situation where the Coroner 34 Q. has determined that there were no suspicious 35 36 circumstances - in other words, the Coroner has made a positive finding, for example, of death by accident - in 37 that situation, if a decision were made to destroy or 38 dispose of exhibits, there ought to be a record of that, 39 40 according to appropriate police practice? 41 Α. Yes. 42 43 And if that record has been lost or destroyed, can you Q. 44 offer any good reason why that should occur? It should be recorded in an exhibit book or it 45 Α. No. 46 should be recorded in EFIMS. 47

1 Q. Now, at paragraphs 43 to 44, you give evidence that there are some investigations where the unavailability of 2 3 the relevant exhibit was almost certainly a breach of the 4 relevant policy, and the example you give is the death of 5 Mr Bedser? 6 Α. Yes. 7 8 Q. That was a death where, again, it was clearly 9 a homicide? 10 Α. Yes. 11 Q. And where one of the exhibits was the murder weapon? 12 13 Α. Correct. 14 And that's an example where you were able to say that 15 Q. 16 it is very unlikely that there was a proper basis for 17 destroying or losing that exhibit? Yes. 18 Α. 19 20 What are the other exhibits in the table in that Q. 21 category? You've only given us one example? 22 Well, in that category, it would be anything that's Α. a murder weapon or a weapon that was materially involved in 23 24 the cause of the death of a person. 25 26 Why only a murder weapon? Why not another Q. exhibit that has ongoing forensic utility? 27 28 Under today's standards, then absolutely we would Α. 29 collect and retain that exhibit. You're looking at exhibits from 1976 when DNA wasn't available and at the 30 31 forefront of the investigator's mind, so they would have 32 a different mindset about the retention of exhibits. But 33 under the coronial instruction, it's very clear that we 34 have to retain anything that is materially related to the cause of a death of a person without the direct 35 authorisation and discussion with the Coroner. 36 37 Q. But in 1976, or in Mr Bedser's 38 THE COMMISSIONER: case, 1980, fingerprint technology was readily available, 39 40 wasn't it? 41 Α. Yes, it was. 42 43 Q. And are you familiar with the difficulties encountered 44 in the Bedser case with whether or not fingerprints were 45 taken from the handle of the knife and whether such 46 a report currently exists or not? Correct. I've seen that there's been an inability to 47 Α.

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1
         find that information, yes.
2
3
                           You agreed with me before lunch that it
         MR EMMETT:
                      Q.
4
         was always a consideration, including in the '70s, that
5
         exhibits that have ongoing evidentiary value or forensic
6
         value should be retained?
              Yes.
7
         Α.
8
9
         Q.
              And that was the case, to your knowledge, in relation
10
         to police standards in the '70s?
11
         Α.
              Yes.
12
13
         Q.
              A different judgment might be made, taking as
14
         a particular example DNA, because DNA may not have been on
15
         people's radar; is that right?
16
         Α.
              Correct.
17
              But the question a police officer ought have asked
18
         Q.
19
         themselves is still the same question, isn't it - that is,
20
         does this exhibit have forensic value?
21
         Α.
              Yes.
22
         Q.
              And if the answer is "Yes", it shouldn't be destroyed?
23
24
         Α.
              That would be a matter for - depending on the
25
         instruction at the time, the time of the investigation.
26
27
              And if you're dealing with an unsolved homicide and
         Q.
28
         the answer is "Yes", would you agree that it's inconsistent
29
         with proper police practices, and was in the '70s, to
30
         destroy the exhibit?
31
              Without putting my mind to the investigator in 1970 as
         Α.
32
         to what they considered forensic value of an exhibit, it's
33
         very hard for me to answer that, particularly with the
34
         knowledge that I have of today's contemporary technology.
35
36
              In paragraphs 55 and 56 of your statement, you've
         Q.
37
         given some evidence about the volume of exhibits that are
38
         identified each year under the current practice.
              This is the volume of exhibits currently on hand at
39
         Α.
40
         the MEPC?
41
42
              Well, I'm starting with paragraph 55.
                                                      So yes, but you
         Q.
43
         explain first that your estimate is that, on average, the
44
         Police Force accumulates around 34,000 exhibits per year?
45
         Α.
              That's only in regards to reportable deaths to the
46
         Coroner, not exhibits in totality.
47
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1 Q. Tell me, does EFIMS enable you to assess how many 2 exhibits are recorded on EFIMS each year? 3 Α. Yes. 4 5 Q. Because, in paragraph 55, you've not given a figure by reference to the EFIMS record, you've, rather, multiplied 6 7 out an estimate based on an average number of exhibits 8 collected per death; is that right? 9 Α. Correct. 10 Have you examined EFIMS to understand actually how 11 Q. 12 many exhibits are recorded each year? On review of EFIMS as of yesterday, there was 514,764 13 Α. 14 exhibits active in EFIMS. 15 16 Q. Are you able to indicate how many of those relate to 17 unsolved homicides? 18 I could do a search of EFIMS and that would help Α. No. 19 with the offence category to identify those exhibits, but 20 off the top of my head today, no, I don't have that 21 information. 22 And in paragraph 55, you conducted that estimate as 23 Q. 24 a shorthand to try to get to how many you think would be accumulated each year; is that right? 25 26 Just for long-term storage. So the MEPC currently has Α. 27 84,000 exhibits on hand, and then if we were going to 28 retain every exhibit collected from every reportable death 29 to the Coroner, that would give you an example of how much storage space and how many exhibits we would accumulate 30 31 over a period of time. 32 33 Q. So are existing storage facilities currently 34 approaching capacity? Not at the moment. We still have a number of years, 35 Α. 36 probably three years. But it just depends on the size of the exhibits that come into the MEPC and the volume. 37 38 Is there a long-term plan for expanding capacity 39 Q. 40 and/or how the Police Force will deal with the situation if 41 it reaches capacity? If it reaches capacity, we'll look at extending 42 Α. Yes. 43 and securing more premises, if required. 44 45 Presumably, it will do it in advance, won't it; it Q. 46 won't wait until it reaches capacity? Well, that's right, but we're not at capacity now. 47 Α.

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1 2 Q. But is there presently a long-term plan to deal with 3 that? 4 We haven't organised another property if that's what Α. 5 you mean, but we certainly have got the thoughts about what we do with retaining long-term exhibits. 6 7 8 In relation to the exhibits that are accumulated, the Q. 9 34,000 that you've estimated by reference to deaths 10 reported to the Coroner, in relation to what portion of those deaths are you able to say that there's no doubt or 11 12 little real doubt as to the circumstances of the death? 13 Α. I'd have to get that information from the Coroner. 14 Is a judgment made as to, in a particular case, the 15 Q. 16 extent to which exhibits need to be retained? I'm not sure I understand the question. 17 Α. 18 19 Q. Well, as these 34,000 exhibits per year come in, how 20 many are retained and how many are disposed of? 21 Well, they're coronial exhibits, so they'll be Α. 22 retained until the matter is dispensed with or closed, or if there's an open finding, and it will depend on how the 23 24 Coroner finds those inquiries as to whether we retain or we seek authorisation from the Coroner to dispose of those 25 26 exhibits. 27 28 From page 15 of your statement onwards, you've then Q. 29 addressed the particular items in the schedule. We've spoken briefly about Mr Cuthbert. In relation to items 2 30 31 and 3 on the list, that is David Lloyd-Williams and 32 Mr Sheil, in relation to those two persons, you understand 33 that the whole investigative file appears to have been 34 lost? Correct. 35 Α. 36 37 Q. And that would include any exhibits that were taken in relation to those two deaths? 38 Well, the investigative file is not an exhibit. An 39 Α. 40 exhibit would be considered something separate. 41 42 Do you have any way of knowing whether there were Q. exhibits taken in relation to those two deaths? 43 44 No, I don't. Α. 45 46 The source of that information would necessarily be Q. the investigative file; is that right? 47

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1 Α. Yes, I think so. 2 3 Q. Or perhaps an exhibit book? 4 Α. Yes. 5 In both cases, you're able to say, aren't you, that 6 Q. the investigative file should have been retained? 7 8 9 MR MYKKELTVEDT: I object to that. 10 THE COMMISSIONER: 11 What's the objection? 12 13 MR MYKKELTVEDT: There's not sufficient context provided for her to provide an answer that is of assistance to 14 15 your Honour. 16 17 THE COMMISSIONER: I don't follow that, Mr Mykkeltvedt. 18 19 MR MYKKELTVEDT: For example, take the matter of 20 Peter Sheil, there is no information provided to her in 21 connection with, for example --22 THE COMMISSIONER: 23 Do you mean for the purpose of --24 -- the determination that the Coroner has 25 MR MYKKELTVEDT: 26 made. 27 28 THE COMMISSIONER: I still don't follow what you're 29 saying. Do you say that the letter that was sent to the witness wasn't adequate enough or there's not sufficient 30 information in your brief or anywhere else to inform her as 31 32 to the context of the deaths of either Lloyd-Williams or 33 Sheil, or do you think it's unfair by reason of the 34 question being cryptic? What is your point? 35 36 MR MYKKELTVEDT: The concern is that if in isolation she 37 is asked a seemingly straightforward question that is directed only to whether it is appropriate or not that, for 38 example, the investigative file in Mr Sheil's case is 39 40 retained, the whole context of the matter needs to be 41 understood. 42 43 THE COMMISSIONER: I still don't follow what you're 44 putting. It can be dealt with separately, then if you've 45 got a point at the end of it that it's only one file and it 46 doesn't mean anything beyond that, can't you make that point if it turns out to be accurate? 47

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1 2 MR MYKKELTVEDT: No doubt, your Honour. 3 4 THE COMMISSIONER: Well, when you say "No doubt", the 5 answer to the question is "Yes", isn't it? 6 7 MR MYKKELTVEDT: Yes, your Honour. 8 I will allow it. 9 THE COMMISSIONER: All right. 10 Thank you, Mr Mykkeltvedt. 11 In relation to Mr Sheil, you're able to 12 MR EMMETT: Q. 13 say, aren't you, that the investigative file should have 14 been retained? I haven't seen the investigative file and I haven't 15 Α. 16 received any documentation in relation to that matter. 17 18 Q. Well --19 20 THE COMMISSIONER: Q. But if the absence of material doesn't shed a light on anything, you would never know, 21 22 would you, one way or the other, whether a practice had been adhered to or not? 23 24 Α. Correct, your Honour. 25 26 So it would just be a complete mystery, from the Q. police's point of view, as to whether the absence of the 27 28 file meant that practices had been adhered to perfectly or 29 not adhered to at all - you would never know the answer to that question; is that right? 30 31 Correct, your Honour. Α. 32 33 MR EMMETT: Q. Isn't that itself a failure in proper 34 police practices? I'm unable to comment any further. I haven't got 35 Α. 36 any --37 THE COMMISSIONER: But if you don't know where your 38 Q. files are and you can't find a reason why they're not 39 40 there, and any number of possibilities arise, then how does 41 that help you, as an investigative agency, let alone anybody else, trying to work out what might have happened, 42 43 and wouldn't that be important to work out if practices had 44 been breached, or not, as the case may be? 45 Α. Yes, your Honour. But what I would say is the 46 investigative file would be an investigative document owned by the detectives and that they might be the better person 47

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1 to ask questions in relation to the investigative files. 2 3 What, do you mean? It might be in their shed at home? Q. 4 Α. I can't bring any more light to that question. 5 Well, when you say it might be - well, why didn't you, 6 Q. if - when I say "you", I take it you have been unable to 7 8 find the investigative officers concerned? You would know, 9 wouldn't you, where your former staff were, even though 10 they may be disengaged? You would know whether they were alive or dead, and wouldn't you be able to make inquiries 11 if you were looking for a file? 12 13 14 Say, for some reason, the police wanted this file of 15 Mr Sheil's, then what you are telling me is that 16 a possibility is that you track down, what, the officer in 17 charge or somebody, whoever might be alive, and just say "What did you do with a box of stuff 30 years ago"; is that 18 19 what you are telling me? 20 This would be undertaken by our Unsolved Homicide Team Α. 21 and they have a schedule of documents and places that they 22 look for, for these investigative files, but as I said, 23 that's not done by myself or by FE&TS, that's done by --24 25 Q. You're the person in the witness box at the moment. 26 I do understand that there will be other people who might 27 be more appropriate to answer the question, but you're 28 suggesting that, in some cases, it may need to be the case that you go, what, back to the investigating officer to 29 30 find out whether he or she might have something or might 31 know where something is? 32 Correct, that would certainly be something you Α. 33 could --34 35 Q. That seems a pretty imprecise way of dealing with 36 records, but anyway - okay. 37 MR EMMETT: Bringing it back to your area of 38 Q. exhibits, the result of that is you have no way of knowing 39 40 whether there may be exhibits in relation to Mr Sheil's 41 death somewhere among the police stores? 42 Correct. Α. 43 44 Looking at item number 5 on the list, Mr Stewart, who Q. 45 died in May 1976, again, there are significant exhibits 46 there? Yes. 47 Α.

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1 2 Q. Those items could not possibly have been consumed? 3 Α. No. 4 5 Q. And if they were destroyed or disposed of or returned to the family or returned to somebody else, there ought to 6 have been a record of that? 7 8 Α. Yes. 9 10 Q. And having made inquiries, you're not able to point to a record of that? 11 Correct. 12 Α. 13 14 Can you offer the Commissioner any inference other Q. than that the police procedures have not been complied 15 16 with? 17 Α. In the absence of documentation, that would in itself assume that there's been no - there's possibly been 18 19 a breach of police policy or procedure. 20 21 The next entry is Wendy Waine who died on 29 April Q. 22 1995. Again, on reviewing the file you understood that this was obviously a homicide? 23 24 Α. Yes. 25 26 Wendy Waine was shot. You no doubt observed that Q. there were no exhibit books or EFIMS records? 27 28 I feel that the bedding was located in EFIMS in our Α. 29 Forensic Ballistics Section. 30 31 Q. But the hair and cigarette butts? 32 Α. Correct. 33 34 And in the absence of exhibit books or EFIMS records Q. in relation to the other bullet points, you have no way -35 36 the other exhibits, you have no way of knowing what 37 happened to them? Α. Correct. 38 39 40 Q. And this death having occurred in 1995, you're able to 41 say, aren't you, that the inability to locate those 42 exhibits or say what happened to them reflects a breach of 43 a police procedure, even if you can't say which procedure? 44 Α. Yes. 45 46 Now, in relation to the fired bullets, did you Q. observe - and this is set out at least in the written 47

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1 submissions of Counsel Assisting - that the fired bullets 2 appear in a review of this case, the reference to "fired 3 bullets" appear in a review of this case by the Unsolved 4 Homicide Team, and that review recorded the fired bullets 5 as having been examined by ballistics, but that nobody has been able to locate the fired bullets or the review. Did 6 7 vou observe that? 8 Α. Yes. 9 10 Q. We now don't know whether the fired bullets were taken into custody or not. Do you understand that? 11 Α. Yes. 12 13 Again, if the exhibit books had been properly 14 Q. maintained we'd know that for certain? 15 16 Α. Correct. 17 18 And again, the failure to do so indicates a failure to Q. 19 comply with the applicable police procedures of the time? 20 Α. Yes. 21 22 Mr Slater died in December 1980, again in Q. circumstances that appeared - sorry, I shouldn't say 23 "again" - in circumstances that appeared to be an assault? 24 25 Α. Yes. 26 You observed that there were a number of exhibits 27 Q. 28 taken for forensic testing in 1981? 29 Α. Yes. 30 31 Q. At least some of those exhibits could not possibly 32 have been consumed by forensic testing; is that right? 33 Α. Correct. 34 And those that are capable - well, in relation to the 35 Q. 36 blood and the swabs, we have no way of knowing whether they were consumed in forensic testing; is that right? 37 Unless FASS are able to provide evidence of that, no, 38 Α. I don't know. 39 40 41 Q. Police have no way of knowing that? 42 I haven't seen a record to say that they were consumed Α. 43 in testing, no. 44 45 Q. Had the exhibit book been properly maintained, there 46 would have been a record of that, wouldn't there? It may have been on the analytical report that was 47 Α.

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1 provided by FASS. 2 Well, wouldn't that also appear in the exhibit book? 3 Q. 4 Α. We may have been able to record in the exhibit book 5 that the exhibits were consumed in testing, yes. 6 7 But that's something that should be recorded in the Q. 8 exhibit book, isn't it? 9 Α. Yes. As I said, it could have been acquitted by the 10 analytical report with the P377. 11 12 There's now no record that enables - to your Q. 13 knowledge, there's now no record that enables us to understand what happened to those exhibits? 14 15 Α. Yes. 16 17 Q. And are you aware of any procedure that would have justified destroying any record that existed in the past of 18 what happened to those exhibits? 19 20 Α. No. 21 22 I won't go through all of them, but can I move next Q. to item 10, Mr Jones. Again, in relation to Mr Jones, you 23 24 would have observed that he died on 26 September 1976? 25 Α. Yes. 26 And that this was, again, plainly a homicide? 27 Q. 28 Α. Yes. 29 There were exhibits - it is possible to identify from 30 Q. 31 the file exhibits, many of which were plainly not consumed 32 or could not have been consumed by forensic testing? 33 Α. Yes. 34 35 Q. If a decision were made to dispose of those exhibits, 36 you would expect that decision to be recorded? Yes. 37 Α. 38 And in relation to some of the exhibits, especially 39 Q. 40 the knife, there could be no reason consistent with proper 41 police practice for destroying or disposing of those exhibits? 42 I would think not. 43 Α. 44 45 When dealing with an unsolved homicide, the same goes Q. 46 with the other exhibits in this list, doesn't it? As I said, it would depend on whether they were 47 Α.

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1 consumed in testing, but for the physical exhibits, 2 retention of the exhibits would be obviously preferable. 3 4 Q. More than preferable; retention of the exhibits would 5 be required by proper police practice? Well, again, 1962 instruction, there was nothing 6 Α. 7 specific about that about retaining exhibits outside of 8 having them forensically examined. Obviously with what we 9 know today, the retention of those exhibits would 10 absolutely occur. But certainly in terms of the murder weapon, absolutely that should have been retained. 11 12 13 Do you mean by that answer that in relation to the Q. 14 other exhibits, you don't feel you are able to assist the Commissioner with whether or not it was consistent with 15 16 proper police practice? 17 Α. As I've said, the instruction doesn't explicitly say 18 the retention of the exhibits is mandated, and when the 19 exhibits have been analysed to the capability of the 20 laboratory at the time, they could have been disposed of 21 with those instructions. 22 As you sit there, are you able to assist the 23 Q. 24 Commissioner with whether or not it was consistent with 25 proper police practice to dispose of or destroy those 26 exhibits, if that's what occurred? 27 Α. No. 28 29 Q. In relation to John Russell, a clump of hair was visible in the crime scene photographs. Do you recall 30 observing that that clump of hair was found on or in 31 32 Mr Russell's hand? 33 Α. I recall that in the documentation review for that 34 matter, yes. 35 36 And it should have been plain to investigating Q. officers that that clump of hair had forensic significance, 37 potential forensic significance? 38 39 Α. Yes. 40 41 Q. And it should have been taken into custody as an exhibit? 42 Yes. 43 Α. 44 45 Q. And it should have been retained as an exhibit? 46 Α. Yes. 47

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1 Q. And you're able to say that that should have happened 2 even by the standards of the day, aren't you? 3 Α. Yes. 4 5 THE COMMISSIONER: Q. Is it at all possible that that clump of hair is sitting somewhere in police archives and 6 nobody knows about it because it's either been improperly 7 8 or irregularly labelled? Is it possible that it might be 9 sitting there still to this day? 10 Α. It's possible, your Honour. 11 12 And what would you suggest in terms of searches that Q. might be undertaken to ensure that it's not just sitting 13 14 out there? Is there somewhere in archives, for example, if I may put it this way, the miscellaneous section, if there 15 16 is such a section, where things are kept that are not or 17 have not been capable of being joined up to files? Is 18 there a section where exhibits which are not either clearly 19 labelled or may be - people may have some doubt about it -20 that they're kept in some repository, hopefully one day connected up to a case, or is there not such a section 21 22 called "Miscellaneous" - I call it that having no idea -23 out there in archives? 24 Not to my knowledge, there isn't. Α. 25 26 Okay. So you wouldn't find anything that was not Q. allocated or labelled in current archives? 27 28 Α. Correct. 29 THE COMMISSIONER: Okay, thank you. 30 31 32 MR EMMETT: Q. Are there searches that can be undertaken 33 to try to locate such exhibits throughout the State? Yes. 34 Α. 35 36 Q. What are those searches? So I think these are in the statements of our Unsolved 37 Α. Homicide detectives about the searches that they've 38 undertaken, so we'd look at databases, police holdings, 39 we'd look at the MEPC, we'd look at the police stations 40 41 which had some connectivity to this investigation and we would look at State Archives in terms of our case files. 42 43 44 The next entry is for William Rooney, who died on Q. 45 20 February 1986. On your review of that file you observed 46 that he appeared to have - or that he was found on the ground behind a toilet block next to a concrete retaining 47

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1 wall. Do you remember observing that? 2 Α. Correct. 3 4 Q. He appeared to have fallen, or it was possible that he 5 had fallen? Possibly, yes. 6 Α. 7 8 Q. And it was not known whether it was an accident or an 9 assault? 10 Yes. Α. 11 12 You would expect that, by the standards of 1986, to be Q. 13 treated as a suspicious death? 14 Yes. Α. 15 16 Q. And exhibits to be collected accordingly? 17 Α. Yes. 18 19 Q. Now, you've referred to semen samples. I think vou 20 may have misread the letter of 9 March, which doesn't refer 21 to semen samples being missing. Would you be assisted by 22 seeing that letter of 9 March? 23 Α. Yes. 24 25 Q. I'm sorry, we don't have a hard copy with us at the 26 moment. 27 Α. Okay. 28 We might come back to that. Exhibit books, if there 29 Q. were exhibit books - it's fair to assume, given what you've 30 31 agreed so far, that exhibits are likely to have been taken 32 into police custody, some exhibits? 33 Α. Yes. 34 35 Q. And there ought to be an exhibit book recording them? 36 Α. Yes. 37 And given that this was 1986, that exhibit book should 38 Q. have been in existence well into the 2000s? 39 40 Α. Yes. 41 42 And can you advance any reason consistent with proper Q. police practice or proper police procedure or applicable 43 44 police procedures why that exhibit book might be destroyed? 45 Α. No. 46 47 Q. The next entry on the item that I want to ask you .4/07/2023 (72)

about, entry 15, for Simon Blair Wark, W-A-R-K, first name 1 Simon, but known as Blair, who died in 1990. Again, those 2 3 biological samples should have been retained or if they were used up or disposed of, there should have been 4 5 a record about that? Yes. 6 Α. 7 8 Q. And if the Commission receives evidence from FASS that 9 any biological samples would have been handed over to the 10 NSW Police Force at the time of the autopsy, do police have any record capable of confirming or disproving that 11 12 evidence or that proposition? 13 Α. We would normally take post-mortem samples and then we 14 would return them back to the police station and enter them into an exhibit book and then we would do a P377 and then 15 16 we would take them to FASS for analytical examination. 17 18 If proper police practices have been complied with, Q. there would have been a record of that? 19 20 Α. Yes. 21 22 Could I ask you to turn to item 17, that is Crispin Q. Mr Dye again - it was plainly a homicide in relation 23 Dye. 24 to Mr Dve: vou observed that? Yes. 25 Α. 26 You observed that health care and frequent flyer cards 27 Q. 28 and items from Mr Dye's wallet were unable to be located? 29 Α. Yes. 30 Those items should have been retained as exhibits? 31 Q. 32 Α. Yes. 33 34 Q. Given the time - that is, 1993 - the exhibits ought to have been entered in an exhibit book? 35 Α. Yes. 36 37 And had proper police procedures been followed, it 38 Q. would be possible to say today what happened to those 39 40 exhibits? 41 Α. Yes. 42 43 Q. Mr Stockton died of head injuries on 11 November 1996. 44 Α. Yes. 45 46 Did you observe when reviewing the file the autopsy Q. indicated some signs that were said to be inconsistent or 47

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less consistent with a single fall, and that the 1 2 possibilities identified included an assault or a motor 3 accident? 4 Α. Yes. 5 The evidence indicated then that homicide was, at the 6 Q. 7 very least, a real possibility in relation to Mr Stockton? 8 Α. Yes. 9 Q. 10 Had police procedures been followed, those exhibits would have been retained? 11 Α. Yes. 12 13 And the inability to identify what has happened to 14 Q. them indicates a failure to comply with applicable police 15 16 procedures? 17 Α. Yes. 18 19 In relation to Mr Meek, item 20, again, Mr Meek died Q. 20 in 1995. You observed that from your review of the files? 21 Α. Yes. 22 And at least by 11 or 12 March, it was known that it 23 Q. was a homicide; did you observe that? 24 I don't recall reading that. 25 Α. 26 27 Mr Meek was found in his apartment on - I'm sorry, he Q. 28 was found on 8 March, believed to have died on 7 March 29 1995, and an autopsy was conducted on 11 March, and by 11 March it appeared that he had died from trauma to the 30 31 head. Do you understand that, or does that jog your 32 memory? 33 Α. Yes, thank you. 34 And at least by 11 March it appeared that Mr Meek was 35 Q. a victim of homicide? 36 Yes. 37 Α. 38 But from 7 March or 8 March when he was discovered, is 39 Q. it fair to say, if you don't know, if the autopsy hasn't 40 41 been conducted, it's reasonable to expect that homicide should be on the list as a possible cause of death? 42 43 Without being at the scene at the time, if we - if Α. 44 we're unsure, we'll treat it as a suspicious death, yes. 45 46 And if the records indicate that all of those exhibits Q. 47 were taken into custody in 1995, those exhibits should have

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remained in custody, in police custody? 1 2 Α. Yes. 3 4 Q. And there's no reason - you can think of no reason -5 consistent with proper police practice or applicable police procedures for those exhibits to be lost between 1990 and 6 7 now - lost or destroyed or disposed of? 8 Α. No. 9 Q. 10 And Mr Malcolm, who died in January of 1992, again, you observed it was obviously a homicide? 11 Yes. 12 Α. 13 Again, those exhibits listed, having been taken into 14 Q. custody by police, should have been retained in custody? 15 16 Α. Yes. 17 18 And there's no reason, consistent with proper police Q. 19 practice, for those exhibits to be lost? 20 Α. No. 21 22 Nor a reason consistent with applicable police Q. procedures at the time for those exhibits to be lost? 23 24 Α. No. 25 26 Q. And likewise, the absence of a record of how those exhibits came to be lost, you're able to say that's not 27 28 consistent with proper police practice at the time? 29 Α. Correct. 30 31 Q. And that that's not consistent with applicable police 32 procedures at the time? 33 Α. Correct. 34 The difficulty with lost exhibits is something that 35 Q. has been the subject of consideration within the Police 36 37 Force in the past, hasn't it? Yes. 38 Α. 39 MR EMMETT: 40 Could Assistant Commissioner Conroy be 41 provided with volume 10 of the tender bundle, tab 6F 42 [NPL.0100.0018.0001]. 43 44 THE WITNESS: Thank you. 45 46 MR EMMETT: I'm sorry, Assistant Commissioner Conroy, Q. in relation to Mr Malcolm, I suggested that it was not 47

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1 known what had happened to the exhibits. Mr Malcolm was 2 the last one on the list of the exhibits that we've been -3 sorry, Mr Malcolm, who had died in January 1992. I want 4 you to assume that the evidence to the Inquiry indicates 5 that 10 of the 14 exhibits referred to on that table had been destroyed on 1 May 1996. If you make that assumption, 6 can you offer any explanation or can you assist with 7 8 whether the destruction of those exhibits was consistent 9 with police practice at the time - that is, May 1996? 10 Α. I'd have to have a look at the list of the destroyed exhibits. 11 12 13 Q. Do you still have that letter that I --14 Α. Yes. 15 16 Q. If you turn in the table, there are pages in the top 17 right-hand corner, it's quite a long page number, but if you look at the last four digits, it's \_0013. 18 I'll have to pull it apart because it's stapled in the 19 Α. 20 corner. I'm sorry. 21 22 Q. That's fine. 23 Α. Okay, thank you, yes. 24 25 Q. Now, are you able to assist? Having refreshed your 26 memory with that, are you able to assist the Commissioner 27 with whether the destruction of the 10 of the 14 exhibits 28 referred to there was consistent with police practices 29 applicable at the time - that is, in May 1996? It just says "10 of the 14 exhibits"; it doesn't list 30 Α. 31 the exhibits of what they were. 32 33 Q. Did you review the underlying material to understand 34 which 10 they were? I did but I'd have to refresh my memory. 35 Α. 36 37 Q. We might come back to that. 38 Α. Okay. 39 40 Q. Can I ask you to turn now to the - you have a few 41 things open? 42 Yes, okay. Α. 43 44 Can I ask you, the only thing I need you to have open Q. 45 is the volume 10, that is, the volume with tab 6F. Do you 46 have that? 47 Α. Yes.

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1 2 Q. Do you want to close the other folder, just put it to 3 one side, just to give yourself more space. Thank you, 4 Assistant Commissioner. Now, is this a memorandum or 5 a report that you have seen before? 6 I have seen this, yes. Α. 7 8 Q. It's a memorandum or a report from Detective Chief 9 Inspector Lehmann of the Unsolved Homicide Team proposing 10 a project plan concerning the locating, identification and reconciliation of exhibits relating to Unsolved Homicide 11 12 cases. 13 Α. Yes. 14 15 Q. When have you had occasion to see this document 16 before? In preparation for evidence today. 17 Α. 18 19 Would it come to you in your role as Corporate Owner Q. 20 of Exhibits or does it precede that role? There was no - on the chain of command of the report, 21 Α. 22 I can't see that it has gone to the Corporate Sponsor of Exhibits at all. 23 24 25 Q. Is it consistent with your knowledge of the management of exhibits that as at August 2016 there was a problem 26 because exhibits did not exist? I'm looking there at the 27 28 "Background" section. 29 Yes, it's clear that they were having problems Α. locating exhibits from unsolved homicides. 30 31 32 Q. And one of the difficulties that existed in 2016 -33 this is described as "Problem 1" - is that it was 34 a frustrating and difficult task as many exhibits had been destroyed, lost or misplaced? 35 Α. 36 Yes. 37 And Detective Chief Inspector Lehmann observed or 38 Q. referred to a lack of proper care and diligence when it 39 40 came to exhibit retention due in part to no foresight or 41 little appreciation of the value of forensic science in 42 future investigations on cold cases? Correct. 43 Α. 44 45 But the absence of foresight or appreciation of the Q. 46 value of forensic science is not the only problem, is it? In matters we've looked at, there have been a number of 47

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failures that can't be attributed to an absence of 1 2 foresight or little appreciation of the value of forensic 3 science? 4 Α. Well, certainly there has been a lack of documentation 5 to assist us in reviewing those cases. 6 Problem 2 identified difficulties - that's in 7 Q. 8 subparagraphs (a) to (d) - even where exhibits are 9 located - that is, that exhibits may be unlabelled or 10 improperly labelled; they may be improperly secured; they may be mixed with other exhibits from other cases; or they 11 may not be readily identifiable as pertaining to 12 a particular case? 13 14 Α. Yes. 15 16 Q. And is it consistent with your knowledge and 17 experience that that was a problem in 2016? 18 It was a problem with historical exhibits, yes. Α. 19 20 Is it consistent with your experience Q. Thank you, yes. 21 and observations that that was a problem with historical 22 exhibits as at that date? 23 Α. Yes. 24 25 Q. And it's a problem with historical exhibits still? 26 I haven't looked at any Unsolved Homicide exhibits for Α. 27 a long time, so I'd have to rely on my team or from 28 Unsolved Homicide. 29 When you say you haven't looked at exhibits for 30 Q. 31 unsolved homicides, you've looked at records --32 Records, yes. Α. 33 34 -- in relation to exhibits for unsolved homicides Q. recently, haven't you? 35 Yes. I have. 36 Α. 37 And based on those observations, the problems are 38 Q. still problems in relation to historical exhibits, aren't 39 40 they? 41 Α. Yes. 42 And Problem 3, which is identified, is that some of 43 Q. 44 the poorly secured exhibits could include material that 45 could pose a biohazard creating WH&S concerns? 46 Α. Yes. 47

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1 Q. And is that still a concern in relation to some 2 historical exhibits? 3 Where we've identified those exhibits, we've been Α. 4 repackaging them and putting them into appropriate 5 packaging to avoid that issue for our officers, in terms of managing work health and safety risks. 6 7 8 And that's a process that's been ongoing for some Q. 9 time; is that right? 10 Α. Yes. 11 Was it ongoing, do you know, before 2016? 12 Q. Wherever we came across an exhibit that wasn't 13 Α. Yes. 14 packaged appropriately, it would be repackaged to today's standards. 15 16 17 Q. And problem 4 recorded that many brief of evidence 18 files and physical evidence exhibits were not archived and 19 stored in the proper manner? 20 Α. Yes. 21 22 And have you observed in relation to historical Q. records and based on your review of historical records -23 24 I'm sorry, in relation to historical exhibits and based on your review of the records in relation to historical 25 26 exhibits, that's still a problem? 27 Yes. Α. 28 29 Q. And Problem 5 is that exhibits that were not located on the first search turn up later? 30 31 Α. Yes. 32 33 Q. I'm oversimplifying. Is that the sort of situation 34 where, for example, material was gathered, either by the Unsolved Homicide Team between 2004 and 2008, or later in 35 36 the course of putting material on, putting records of exhibits on EFIMS, that a box gets missed or nobody 37 realises that there's a box in a particular station with 38 exhibits relating to the case in question - that sort of 39 40 situation? 41 Α. Correct. 42 43 Q. And the difficulty where those exhibits turn up later 44 is continuing - that's an issue that continues to be a problem from time to time? 45 46 Only brought to my attention from this, preparing for Α. 47 this, yes.

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1 2 Q. There is a comment from Detective Chief Inspector Lehmann that commences on page 4, which summarises the 3 previous searching and work that the Unsolved Homicide Team 4 5 has done, and then a reconciliation plan is proposed. Do you have any personal knowledge of that reconciliation 6 7 plan? 8 Α. No. 9 THE COMMISSIONER: 10 Q. So you don't know whether it was 11 ever implemented or not? No, I don't. 12 Α. 13 14 MR EMMETT: Q. Is it the sort of thing that you would expect to come to your attention as Corporate Owner of 15 16 Exhibits? 17 Α. Yes, I would have thought it would have, yes. 18 19 Q. Is it a fair inference that the reconciliation plan 20 has not been implemented, then? 21 Α. No. 22 Q. No, it's not a fair inference? 23 24 Α. No, I just --25 26 It's possible it's been implemented but nobody told Q. you? 27 28 Α. Correct. 29 THE COMMISSIONER: Q. And is Mr Lehmann still a serving 30 31 police officer? 32 I'm not sure, your Honour. I don't know. Α. 33 34 MR EMMETT: We've looked at various examples of Q. a situation where exhibits have been lost, destroyed or 35 36 degraded or cannot be located in relation to the deaths or missing persons that this Inquiry has considered. To your 37 knowledge, is there any way of knowing whether the volume 38 of missing exhibits in the cases the Inquiry is looking at 39 40 is indicative of the volume of missing exhibits in cases of 41 the same age across the board, or whether there is a greater volume of lost exhibits where victims are 42 43 suspected members of the LGBTIQ community? 44 I can't comment on that. Α. 45 46 You don't know one way or the other? Q. I don't know. 47 Α.

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1 2 Q. Is it possible that there are more lost exhibits where 3 the victims are members of that community? 4 I can't comment. Α. 5 Do you have any way of assessing the extent to which, 6 Q. if there were a period of widespread bias, either within 7 8 the Police Force or within the wider community, the extent 9 to which that bias may have affected exhibit retention 10 practices? Again, I can't comment 11 Α. 12 13 Q. And can you comment in relation to the situation where 14 the victims are members of any other minority group? 15 Α. No. 16 17 Q. To your knowledge, has the Police Force conducted any review of lost exhibits to try to assess whether more are 18 lost where the victim is a member of a particular minority 19 20 group? 21 Α. Not that I'm aware of. 22 THE COMMISSIONER: 23 Q. Does this exercise that you've 24 gone through recently cause you to doubt whether, across the board, that is, in relation to other unsolved 25 26 homicides, there may be a number of those where exhibits 27 are lost or cannot be located? 28 Α. Yes. 29 And do you know of any plan that the police currently 30 Q. have in place to do a stocktake or an audit to try to work 31 32 out what percentage of unsolved homicides may well be 33 affected by this kind of problem? 34 No, but I certainly think it'll be a recommendation. Α. 35 36 Q. I'm so sorrv? 37 Α. I said I think it will be a recommendation that we 38 definitely do that. 39 40 THE COMMISSIONER: Well, you may be assured of that. 41 42 MR EMMETT: Q. Assistant Commissioner, the first 43 recommendation in the final report of - well, are you 44 familiar with the final report of Strike Force Parrabell? 45 Α. No. 46 47 Q. Are you aware that there was a recommendation made in .4/07/2023 (72) R F M CONROY (Mr Emmett) 4862

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1 the final report of Strike Force Parrabell in relation to 2 the storage of evidence and investigative material? 3 Α. No. 4 5 Q. I'm just going to have that recommendation brought up on the screen [SCOI.02632 0001]. Could I have the 6 7 page with the recommendation? 8 9 Now, Recommendation 1, which is now up on the screen -10 have you seen a recommendation in those terms or similar terms made in relation to the Police Force before? 11 I've not seen that before, but I've just read it. 12 Α. 13 14 Q. Have you had a chance to read it? 15 Α. Yes. 16 17 Q. Thank you. To your knowledge, have steps been taken leading to the result that all investigative material is 18 19 stored in the same location? 20 I'm not a user of e@gle.i and I've got no subject Α. 21 matter expertise in the e@gle.i system. 22 23 Q. And may we take it, not having seen the recommendation 24 before, you are unable to assist the Commissioner with what 25 steps have been taken to implement that recommendation as 26 regards the management of exhibits? 27 Α. Well, exhibits have moved on to EFIMS, so we do say 28 that since 2011 exhibits are now managed on EFIMS, and in 29 terms of crime scene case records, as of 1 January 2017, 30 all case records are now digitised and on our RMS system. 31 32 Thank you, Assistant Commissioner. MR EMMETT: 33 34 Commissioner, those are my questions. 35 36 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Yes, Mr Mykkeltvedt? 37 <EXAMINATION BY MR MYKKELTVEDT: 38 39 MR MYKKELTVEDT: 40 Q. Just in relation to that last topic, 41 you took up your current position as the Corporate Sponsor for Exhibits in 2022; is that right? 42 Α. Yes. 43 44 So you weren't in your current position as at the time 45 Q. of the Strike Force Parrabell recommendations in 2018? 46 47 Α. No.

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1 2 I just have a few questions in relation to a couple of Q. 3 other topics. 4 5 THE COMMISSIONER: Pardon me interrupting, just for 6 a moment. 7 8 Q. Who was in your position at the time the Parrabell 9 recommendation was handed down, if you can recall, and 10 perhaps you don't know? 11 Α. Assistant Commissioner Michael Fitzgerald. 12 13 THE COMMISSIONER: Fitzgerald, thank you. 14 MR MYKKELTVEDT: 15 Q. You were asked questions in relation 16 to a series of the cases in the schedule that you've annexed at the end of your statement. I'll just ask you 17 about a couple of those, starting first with the case of 18 19 Mr Sheil. The death in that case occurred in April 1983. 20 Do you recall that? 21 Α. Yes. 22 23 Q. Do you recall that the Coroner dispensed with an inquest in September of 1983? 24 25 Α. Yes. 26 27 Does the decision as to whether or not to dispense Q. 28 with an inquest provide you with any indication as to 29 whether that death was regarded as suspicious or not? Well, the Coroner would hand down a finding as to 30 Α. 31 whether it was suspicious or not and if it wasn't 32 suspicious we could close the file; it would be a closed 33 finding. 34 35 Q. So if a Coroner determined not to hold an inquest, 36 would that be an indication that the Coroner regarded the case as not suspicious, to your understanding? 37 Α. Yes. 38 39 40 Q. Would a determination to dispense with an inquest in 41 that manner have any impact on your assessment as to the appropriateness or otherwise of the disposal of an exhibit? 42 43 At a Coroner's matter, where we've collected exhibits Α. 44 at the end of the inquest or if the Coroner has dispensed 45 with the matter, we would make written instructions to the 46 Coroner for the disposal of the exhibits and we'd get an authorisation from the Coroner to dispose of those 47

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1 exhibits. 2 3 Would you expect that it would be more or less likely Q. 4 that the Coroner would provide such authorisation in a case 5 where a determination had been made that the death was not 6 suspicious? 7 Α. It would be more likely that there would be an 8 approval to dispose of exhibits. 9 10 Q. You were asked some questions similarly in relation to the matter of Lloyd-Williams. That's a death that occurred 11 12 in August 1978. Do you recall that? Yes. 13 Α. 14 Do you recall that that was a death in which there was 15 Q. 16 a coronial finding that Mr Lloyd-Williams died of multiple 17 injuries received when he cast himself from a cliff? 18 Α. Yes. 19 20 Similarly, would such a finding, in your experience or Q. 21 to your knowledge, bear upon the appropriateness or 22 otherwise of a decision to dispose of exhibits or investigative files, for example? 23 24 For exhibits, yes. Α. 25 26 In relation to the death of Mr Wark, you were asked Q. some questions in relation to that. That was a 1990 death. 27 28 In that case, the Coroner formed the view that it was 29 likely a suicide and that an inquest was unnecessary. Do you recall that? 30 Yes. 31 Α. 32 33 Q. And again, would that have any impact on your view as 34 to the appropriateness or otherwise of the retention of the relevant exhibits? 35 36 Α. Yes. 37 Q. And what impact would that be? 38 Well, on written instruction from the Coroner, if 39 Α. 40 those exhibits could be disposed of, they would be. 41 THE COMMISSIONER: 42 Q. And in each and every one of those 43 cases, do I take it that you would either request something 44 from the Coroner or otherwise ensure that the Coroner was 45 on board with the destruction of the documents? 46 Α. Yes. 47

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1 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. 2 3 MR MYKKELTVEDT: Q. The Coroner might communicate that 4 to police in an informal way? 5 Α. Yes. The instructions say "discussion", but we'd certainly have some record of that discussion and the 6 outcome of that discussion. 7 8 9 THE COMMISSIONER: Q. It would be inappropriate not to 10 have a record for the purposes of the interests of the police, would it not, to ensure that documents were 11 12 properly destroyed in accordance with the direction of a judicial officer? 13 14 Yes. Α. 15 16 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Mykkeltvedt? 17 18 MR MYKKELTVEDT: You were asked some questions or Q. 19 a whole series of questions in relation to DNA. I just 20 wanted to ask you in relation to one of those matters. 21 Α. Yes. 22 23 Q. You indicated that DNA would only have been available 24 to the NSW Police Force in a limited capacity as at 1992. 25 Can I ask you to expand upon why it was that you indicated 26 that it would have only been available in a limited 27 capacity as at that date? 28 It was still in its infancy of being implemented as Α. 29 a law enforcement purpose and so we needed a large amount of, like, gross biological material, so blood, saliva or 30 31 semen, so - and we didn't have the typing kits that we have 32 available today and we didn't have a national DNA database. 33 So there was a limited capacity about when we would use it 34 and from '92 to '98 it was still a last-resort examination done at a special request. It wasn't a routine examination 35 36 that we did for every exhibit. So we would still do blood 37 grouping as a matter of course and then DNA could be potentially applied to an individual case. 38 39 40 Q. Do you know why it was a last resort in that 41 intervening period? I think that evidence would probably need to come from 42 Α. 43 one of the biologists. 44 45 Q. You gave some evidence in relation to the process of 46 effectively transferring exhibits into the EFIMS system. I think you indicated that that process was likely to have 47

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1 commenced in 2011 but may have continued until at least 2 2016. Was that right? 3 Α. Yes. 4 5 Q. The exhibits that are contained within EFIMS are now subject to a 100 per cent audit every year. You indicated 6 7 that? 8 Α. Yes. 9 10 Q. And I think you gave evidence that there was something along the lines of some 514,700 items in EFIMS; is that 11 right? 12 13 Α. Yes. 14 Has there been an audit conducted in the last 15 Q. 16 12 months to determine, for example, how many of the 17 exhibits contained or items contained in that 514,000 have 18 gone missing over the last year? 19 I work with Professional Standards Command to identify Α. 20 how many lost exhibit complaint investigations have 21 occurred, so where there's been a lost exhibit identified 22 through an audit or through self-reporting at a police area command or a police district, it's incumbent on the police 23 24 commander to cause for an investigation. That 25 investigation has to be enrolled on IAPro, which is our 26 investigation management system. 27 28 There's a number of incident categories on that IAPro 29 system, and so through - two of those systems are - two of those incident types are lost property or disposed 30 property. So I run a search of that through the IAPro and 31 32 identify how many complaint investigations have identified 33 a lost or a disposed exhibit, yes. 34 When you say "lost property", are you talking about 35 Q. 36 exhibits or some other kind of property? 37 Α. It includes - it also includes miscellaneous property, 38 prisoner property and exhibits. 39 40 Q. And as a result of conducting those examinations, have 41 you identified how many of the relevant items have gone 42 missing? 43 So for 2023, to date, we had 18 investigations Α. 44 enrolled on IAPro, 11 of them referred to miscellaneous 45 property and prisoner property, and 7 of them related to 46 exhibits. 47

1 Q. So of 514,000 items that are stored, there have been seven exhibits identified as lost in the last - 2023 at 2 3 least? 4 Α. Yes. 5 MR MYKKELTVEDT: Those are my questions, Commissioner. 6 7 8 THE COMMISSIONER: Anything arising? 9 10 MR EMMETT: No. 11 THE COMMISSIONER: 12 All right. Thank you very much. You may step down, thank you. 13 14 <THE WITNESS WITHDREW 15 16 17 MR EMMETT: Commissioner, the next witness will be 18 Superintendent Roger Best. I call Superintendent Best. 19 20 <ROGER ANTHONY BEST, sworn: [3.18pm] 21 22 <EXAMINATION BY MR EMMETT: 23 24 MR EMMETT: Could you tell the Commission your full Q. 25 name, please? Yes, Roger Anthony Best. 26 Α. 27 28 Q. Your occupation? 29 Α. I'm a police officer at the rank of superintendent attached to the Crime Scene Services Branch as commander. 30 31 32 And you made a statement for this Commission of Q. 33 Inquiry dated 24 April 2023? 34 Α. That's correct. 35 Q. I think that's open in front of you. 36 37 Α. It is, thank you. 38 Are the contents of that statement true and correct in 39 Q. every particular? 40 41 They are. The only thing I did notice on review last Α. night was at paragraph 50, I mentioned "Commissioner's 42 Handbook", when it should be "Commissioner's Instructions". 43 44 So that's the - flowing on from "Police Rules", then "Instructions", and then "Commissioner's Handbook", that 45 should read "Commissioner's Instructions" and then "Police 46 Service Handbook". 47

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1 2 Q. Thank you, Superintendent Best. Superintendent, you 3 have provided a summary in section A of your submission of 4 your role and police experience and in section B your 5 qualifications and training? Yes. 6 Α. 7 8 Q. You have completed the BA from Charles Sturt University in Policing? 9 10 Α. I have. 11 12 Q. What prompted you to undertake that qualification? 13 Α. That was in the early times of that course, I saw that 14 course and chose to do a course for personal development, and also with an understanding that it was going to be the 15 16 future of policing and that those types of courses would be 17 part of just general enrolment of becoming a police 18 So I saw that and to stay contemporary and then officer. 19 also for future promotion, that doing those sort of courses 20 were requirements, essentially. 21 22 And tell me, does the Force support you to undertake Q. 23 a course like that? 24 Yeah, so that was paid for. There was a scholarship Α. 25 and that was paid for. 26 27 Also on your CV - and you've attached your CV Q. 28 separately, it's in the bundle in front of you behind 29 tab 2A - you have included all your qualifications and courses, and I observed that that included, on 28 October 30 31 2019, an LGBTIQ awareness and inclusion course or program? 32 Α. Yes. 33 34 Q. What did that program comprise? So awareness - awareness of the community and the 35 Α. 36 challenges they faced, certainly in relation to historical 37 aspects, and how people might feel towards police based upon what had happened in the past, and that notion of 38 regardless of what you might feel personally, the fact that 39 40 you're wearing a uniform might elicit responses that aren't 41 directed to you as an individual but to you as a member of an organisation that has had a troubled or challenging past 42 43 with that organisation - with that group of people. 44 45 Q. How long is the course? 46 Α. It was only the day. 47

1 Q. Do you remember how it was delivered? 2 Α. Face to face with some people that came and delivered 3 it that weren't police, although, I'm just having a picture 4 of a person not in uniform, that could have also been 5 a police officer that wasn't in uniform on that day. 6 7 And did that influence, if I can put it this way, your Q. 8 policing practice, the way you conduct your - the way you 9 perform your role within Crime Scene Services Branch? 10 Personally, for me as an individual, no, because I had Α. that clarity already. So I had already come to that 11 understanding through just my exposure to that community 12 13 over time. 14 Thank you, Superintendent. 15 Q. In paragraphs 20 and 16 following of your statement, you give a background to the 17 Crime Scene Services Branch? 18 Α. Yes. 19 20 It was first established in 1938 as the Scientific Q. 21 Investigation Bureau? 22 Α. That's correct. 23 24 Q. None of us were around then - well, I don't think so. What was the remit of the Scientific Investigation Bureau? 25 26 So from my understanding and from the inquiries that Α. 27 I've made, it was bringing together that ability to collect 28 fingerprints from crime scenes, and then it moved into what 29 we talk about in relation to comparative analysis of items within scenes, but essentially it was driven through that 30 fingerprint ability and that fingerprint technology and 31 32 that stayed at the forefront of crime scenes for a long 33 time. 34 You may not know the answer to this, and if you don't 35 Q. 36 know, say so, but am I right that technologies like blood 37 typing was around in the '30s? Certainly - certainly for a long time. 38 Α. When it actually came in, I can't be certain, but it was definitely 39 40 around that time that we had blood typing and that was 41 a possibility. 42 43 And the Scientific Investigation Bureau later became Q. 44 the Scientific Investigation Section? 45 Α. Yes. 46 And then you explain in paragraph 22, it commenced 47 Q.

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what you describe as a "decentralisation program". 1 Do you 2 mean by that - well, when you say "decentralisation 3 program", what do you mean? 4 Yeah, essentially managing capacity, so that notion Α. that more and more jobs were requiring our services to be 5 at a location that was closer to where they were live. 6 So moving out of metropolitan Sydney as New South Wales 7 8 expanded and our call for service expanded. 9 10 Q. So did it also have presence in other regional areas or did everything operate out of Sydney or Newcastle? 11 12 So at that point, that was - that's what I point to Α. towards that notion of slow decentralisation, where we 13 14 slowly expanded across the State to what we have now, 18, 15 including places like Bourke, with laboratories out there. 16 17 Q. In 1973, the Service, as it then was, was placed under the Scientific and Technical Services Command? 18 19 Α. Yes. 20 21 Q. In 1987 it was transferred to the State Operations 22 Support Group and renamed Physical Evidence Section? 23 Α. Correct. 24 25 Q. Again, I appreciate this was before your time, but to your knowledge, did that bring with it changes in the 26 27 function or operations of the service? 28 So my - well, my understanding is simply those Α. No. 29 name changes came about from an administrative aspect and moving around, likewise, there was connection to the CIB at 30 one stage and then moving out of that premises at Surry 31 32 Hills, so --33 34 Q. And --Sorry. 35 Α. 36 I'm sorry, I didn't mean to speak over you. 37 Q. No, I was simply going to say I haven't come across 38 Α. anything that suggested that a particular change in that 39 40 capacity changed the name of the organisation. 41 And what kind of analysis - I'm now talking about the 42 Q. 43 '70s and '80s - during that time, what kind of forensic 44 analysis would the Scientific Investigation Section or 45 Physical Evidence Section conduct? We've referred to two, 46 that is, fingerprinting and blood typing. What other kinds of scientific analysis? 47

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Well, they weren't doing that analysis in relation to 1 Α. 2 blood typing, so at that point, they're simply in the 3 process of collecting. So identification of evidence, 4 collecting, and then transitioning those items through to 5 what was then DAL, Division of Analytical Laboratories, for those chemists and biologists and scientists to then 6 7 process those items to get evidence in relation to them. 8 9 Q. What about other kinds of analysis, microscope 10 analysis and --Yeah, so shoe and tyre impressions, that sort of 11 Α. comparative analysis, bloodstain analysis. So I couldn't 12 actually tell you when those were brought into our fold but 13 14 it's certainly around that time. 15 16 Q. That's an example, that kind of bloodstain analysis or 17 shoe and tyre analysis, that kind of evidence - I'm sorry, that kind of technology improved over the course of the 18 19 20th century, didn't it? 20 Well, that's what we call "comparative analysis", so Α. that's that notion of, you know, shoe and tyre, literally 21 22 looking at a shoeprint and making an analysis, making a comparative analysis to a shoe to say whether or not 23 24 those items were the same. So it's that. In relation to 25 technological advances, photography perhaps. 26 27 THE COMMISSIONER: What about ballistics? Q. 28 Α. Sorry, your Honour? 29 What about ballistics? 30 Q. Oh, ballistics is not something that I have turned my 31 Α. 32 mind to for this, your Honour, so I couldn't answer in 33 relation to that. 34 THE COMMISSIONER: 35 Okay. 36 37 THE WITNESS: They're not under my section at the moment. 38 MR EMMETT: Advances in technology brought with them 39 Q. 40 an increased sensitivity, so that less of a - to stick with 41 comparative analysis, a weaker or a fainter mark might 42 provide a basis for comparative analysis as technology 43 improved? 44 So in relation to - if we're talking about Α. 45 fingerprints and then here we start talking about light 46 sources and the ability to use light and then chemicals to enhance a fingerprint that, to you and I looking at it now, 47

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1 we can't see, but then with light sources and chemicals we're talking the '90s until that sort of really started to 2 3 move forward. So as far as the comparative analysis, I'm 4 not aware of anything, of any advancements in the '70s and 5 '80s that made that any more stable. 6 7 Even just simple things like better microscopes, Q. 8 better ways to look at and record --9 Α. No, I understand. 10 Q. 11 -- particular marks? 12 Α. I'm not aware of anything, but that's not to say that 13 it wasn't the case. 14 In 1990 there was what you described as the "Gibson 15 Q. 16 Review"? 17 Α. Correct. 18 19 Q. What was the substance and outcome of the Gibson 20 Review? Yeah, so modernising the Crime Scene Services Branch. 21 Α. 22 I think there was 92 recommendations and it was a very wide-ranging report looking at conditions for crime scene 23 24 officers, looking at their awards, certainly looking at So for me, reviewing that, the things that stuck 25 training. 26 out for me was that notion of training and the 27 qualifications required to be a crime scene officer. Case 28 management, you know, they spoke of the need for an 29 electronic case management system, so clearly then it was something that was the bane of their existence, as it is 30 31 now, in relation to managing that huge volume of 32 information. 33 34 And then interestingly, nothing in relation to DNA, that was 1990, although it spoke of that general notion of 35 36 training, but nothing particularly in relation to that. 37 And then the model around supervision, and so we start 38 39 talking about zones and start talking about the chain of 40 command within those zones. So, yes, it was quite a broad 41 review that looked to bring Crime Scene Services Branches 42 into a more modern state. 43 44 You referred to education and training. Am I right Q. 45 you were referring to education and training of crime scene 46 officers? Yes, that's correct. 47 Α.

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1 2 Q. Did the report also refer to or contemplate education 3 and training of other officers in relation to how to deal 4 with crime scenes? 5 Α. That's correct. So the first response officer, so 6 that officer that turns up to the scene first at any rank, 7 and that could be a probationer, or it could be anybody who 8 just turned up, "This is what you should do in relation to preserving evidence", so that was one of the 9 10 recommendations and that certainly took hold. 11 12 Then also it spoke of the relationship between investigators and crime scene staff and spoke of who should 13 14 be responsible for the submission of samples and spoke of that relationship in relation to making decisions for 15 16 samples being submitted and what evidence would be 17 progressed that way. 18 19 MR EMMETT: Would you pardon me for a moment? 20 21 THE COMMISSIONER: Can I just interrupt while you're doing 22 that? 23 24 Q. You said a few minutes ago that your Bachelor of 25 Policing was done pursuant to a scholarship. I presume not everyone who wants to do the degree gets a scholarship; is 26 27 that right? 28 Your Honour, then I --Α. 29 Or does anyone in the Police Force just put their hand 30 Q. 31 up and automatically get financial support for a Bachelor 32 of Policing degree at Charles Stuart? 33 Α. So then, your Honour, it was via application. There 34 were criteria to meet, because that was a Bachelor of Policing (Investigations). So I - my recollection, I was 35 36 selected out of a pool of candidates for that, as opposed 37 to having an open number of available spots. 38 THE COMMISSIONER: 39 All right. Thank you. 40 Following the Gibson Review, by 1995 the 41 MR EMMETT: Q. Physical Evidence Section had become the Crime Scene 42 43 **Operations Branch?** 44 Α. Yes. 45 46 And in 1995 it took on responsibility for forensic, Q. ballistic investigation and forensic image and engineering 47

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1 investigation? Under the Forensic Services Group banner, yes, that's 2 Α. 3 right. 4 5 Q. And it became known as the Crime Scene Services Branch in the mid 2000s? 6 7 Α. Yes. 8 9 Q. And the Forensic Services Group that you referred to 10 a moment ago, that's the group that is now known as the FE&TS Command? 11 Correct, ves. 12 Α. 13 14 At paragraphs 29 to 34 of your statement you give Q. evidence about the Crime Scene Services Branch 15 16 laboratories. I don't need you to give us a list of all of 17 the laboratories, but what is the function of those laboratories in the Branch's work? 18 19 So the laboratory function is the same. So the reason Α. 20 there's 18 is simply about the managing the geographical 21 challenges of the work and having a working space for the 22 crime scene officers to utilise. So those laboratories have various instruments, drying, fuming cabinets and 23 examination areas. camera facilities. 24 So it's a space for those officers to examine exhibits that come back in to 25 26 their area. 27 28 And then there are other kinds of more specialist Q. 29 forensic examination that may be carried out by other 30 organisations like FASS; is that right? 31 Α. Correct. 32 33 Q. FASS deals primarily with biological --34 Yeah, chemical and biological, so the --Α. 35 36 So that includes the examples you give in your Q. statement, blood typing and DNA and what you describe as 37 "chemical criminalistics", which includes hair, fibre, 38 paint and glass comparison? 39 40 Α. Correct. 41 42 And also FASS is involved in forensic toxicology and Q. pathology? 43 44 Yes. Α. 45 46 Tell me, are there other agencies that the Crime Scene Q. Services Branch deals with in addition to FASS to provide 47

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other kinds of specialist forensic analysis? 1 2 Α. On occasion. So, for example, there might be some 3 capacities that FASS don't have, I'm thinking of some soil 4 examinations that we required, and we reached out to 5 Western Australia. So - but that would be whilst having conversations with FASS about our requirements, so we would 6 be guided by them. So they're our first port of call. 7 8 9 Q. But they're the first port of call. There are some 10 specialised kinds of analysis where there may be a leader in the field somewhere else? 11 Α. Correct. 12 13 14 Indeed, there may be others where FASS is the leader Q. in the field and where people send material to FASS? 15 16 Α. Yes. 17 That's a matter, of course, we'll take up with FASS. 18 Q. 19 At paragraphs 35 to 45, you give evidence about the 20 training and qualifications required for crime scene 21 investigators. 22 Α. Yes. 23 24 Q. And you explain the difference between forensic investigators and crime scene officers. Would you help the 25 26 Commissioner understand the difference between a forensic 27 investigator and a crime scene officer and what their 28 respective functions are? 29 Α. They are exactly the same. So it is literally just the fact that one is sworn and one is unsworn. 30 Different 31 awards, which can be challenging. But it's, in relation to 32 what they do for our organisation, exactly the same. Same 33 training, same function. No difference. 34 So in a given case, what kinds of factors would 35 Q. 36 influence whether crime scene investigators - I'm sorry forensic investigators or crime scene officers or both 37 would be involved? 38 Yeah, no, no considerations, they're just the same 39 Α. 40 thing. 41 So it's a matter of resource allocation? 42 Q. 43 No, so they are - they are the same resource, just Α. 44 with different names, purely because one is sworn and one So that differentiation is, you know, under 45 is unsworn. 46 the award, they're employed, they've got different employment conditions and so they're separated for that. 47

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In relation to their function, no difference. 1 2 3 So if there's a crime scene, an officer on the scene Q. 4 decides that they need someone from the CSSB or the 5 procedures result in someone from the CSSB arriving, there is, in effect, a single pool of --6 7 Α. Correct. 8 9 Q. -- investigators or officers who may be one or may be 10 the other? Yes, that's right. In that - between those two, where 11 Α. 12 they are differentiated, no difference, and then there's 13 levels of training so our AFSAB qualifications, So A-F-S-A-B, AFSAB. 14 15 16 And what is the AFSAB - first, what is AFSAB and what Q. 17 is the qualification you are referring to? 18 Australian Forensic Science Advisory Board [sic]. Α. 19 20 I don't mean to, having just asked you, in your Q. 21 statement you say "Assessment Body". 22 Assessment Body. Α. 23 So it's the Australian Forensic Science Assessment 24 Q. Body? 25 26 Α. Yes. 27 28 Q. What is the qualification you were referring to 29 earlier? So that's literally what we call an expert, a forensic 30 Α. They reach that AFSAB gualification after going 31 expert. 32 through those levels of study that are required and then 33 being assessed by a board and a panel that look at their 34 work and then sign them off as an AFSAB expert. So there's 35 criteria that we have in relation to certain jobs 36 homicides, serious sexual assaults, critical incidents, where we stipulate an AFSAB expert must attend. 37 That can be a CSO, a crime scene officer or a forensic investigator. 38 That just indicates that that officer on their journey has 39 40 reached the pinnacle of their career in relation to 41 training. 42 43 In terms of training and gualifications, are there Q. 44 steps to ensure that knowledge and experience is kept up to 45 date? For the officer? 46 Α. 47

Q. 1 Yes. 2 Α. Yes. So in relation to that, those AFSAB 3 qualifications, there's a yearly and then five-yearly 4 The yearly one is, I think, a - Ma'am Conroy review. mentioned it earlier today, making sure that they're 5 contemporary in relation to changes in technologies, and 6 7 then that five-yearly one is an extensive submission of 8 their work to be reassessed again by a board. 9 10 Q. So that's the case for the AFSAB qualified people? Α. 11 Yes. 12 13 Q. That is the people with - the most qualified of the 14 officers or the investigators? 15 Α. Yeah. 16 17 Q. What about the other forensic investigators or crime 18 scene officers? 19 They're all working towards that. Α. So that's 20 a requirement of their employment that they're working 21 towards that status of AFSAB expert, and then within their 22 training requirements, which is three phases of their forensic investigator training, we call them FI1, 2 and 3, 23 24 and then their tertiary qualifications, that's an ongoing 25 process that is at least, or generally, five years. 26 27 Are you able to assist the Commissioner with an Q. 28 approximate proportion of how many of the crime scene officers or forensic investigators are fully AFSAB 29 30 qualified and how many are working towards it? 31 My recollection is 73 - so 73 AFSAB-trained officers, Α. 32 and then - and then the others are working towards that. 33 We have to back out - we have 423 staff, back out 100 of 34 those that are in our volume crime space and then others that are in administrative, so there's a large volume of 35 36 staff that is still working through that process and then, of course, we lose staff and the process starts again when 37 38 we re-employ. 39 40 Q. And at paragraphs 46 to 51, you've described the policies and guidance that apply to forensic investigator 41 42 and crime scene officer work. 43 Α. Sorry, paragraphs? 44 45 Q. I'm sorry, this is not intended to be a memory test. 46 Paragraphs 46 to 51? after I got the last one wrong, I thought 47 Α. Well,

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I would check. So "Ongoing Education" and then "Policies 1 2 and Guidance", yes, that's right. And then there I'm 3 talking about some exhibit handling policies and guidance. 4 5 Q. Can I come to section D of your statement and the 6 decision to undertake forensic analysis. Again, 7 I appreciate that this is before your time in the Force. 8 In the 1970s and 1980s, what factors - well, who made 9 a decision that forensic analysis should be undertaken? 10 I don't think that's changed and it's that notion of Α. 11 a joint discussion between the investigator and the crime 12 scene officer, and that's that relationship that can be competing at times in relation to needs, but essentially 13 14 comes down to the communication and relationship and making 15 sure that the right things go through. 16 17 Q. So in a given investigation, will there typically be 18 an OIC and a lead crime scene investigator or lead forensic 19 investigator? 20 That's a reasonable proposition, so, yes, there's some Α. 21 other layers to it, depending on the size of the job, but 22 essentially, yes. 23 24 Q. Will those two persons, will they be two people who work together a lot or will they come together on 25 26 a case-by-case or investigation-by-investigation basis? 27 Historically, we're speaking? Α. 28 29 Q. Yes, so to the extent that you can address it, the 1970s and 1980s? 30 31 So we've got some guidance in relation to, you know, Α. 32 what we had in the Gibson Review pointing backwards from 33 1990 and that highlighting that need for that enhanced 34 relationship, so that gives us some indication that it existed there, and certainly in the '80s and then in the 35 36 '90s it existed where it was, as you describe, two people coming together, but not - not in a - it was a random 37 nature, a particular OIC, a particular crime scene officer, 38 certainly not working together except for that case. 39 40 41 And if the crime scene is a possible homicide, who Q. 42 would make a decision as to what exhibits ought be taken 43 into custody? 44 Again, so '70s to '80s, yes, we can see that they were Α. 45 talking about a joint decision and a joint discussion, and 46 I think that, you know, as it is now, the ownership is with the OIC, the ownership is, I think, with the commander of 47

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that area where the crime took place, so we can't move away 1 2 from that, that they own that crime and they own all the 3 responsibility around that. And then as crime scene 4 officers, well, as the Crime Scene Branch, we're coming in 5 as a resource for them to use and then that discussion about what goes forward is off the back of the expertise 6 7 that that crime scene officer brings. 8 9 Q. So the crime scene officer might give advice based on 10 that expertise to the OIC? 11 Α. Correct. 12 What about in the '90s? 13 Q. 14 No, that's the same. So that hasn't changed at all. Α. You know, the ownership of those crimes lies with the 15 16 commanders and the OICs. What did take place, and the 17 Gibson Review pointed towards that, was the impact upon DAL of OICs, investigators, constantly making contact in 18 19 relation to their particular case, perhaps putting too many 20 items through, you know, without triaging as we do now, and 21 so they tried to manage that issue and then that was - and 22 we've had that issue since, where DAL, and now FASS, point to an impact upon their business by investigators 23 24 continually reaching out and contacting them about a particular case or then, as we had in 2005, a large backlog 25 26 of items caused by investigators putting everything 27 forward. 28 29 Q. What about deciding whether or not, or when, to release a crime scene, you know, if it's private property, 30 back to whoever is entitled to possession of the property? 31 32 Historically? Α. 33 34 Yes, starting again before 1990, in the '70s and '80s? Q. Yes, I haven't come across anything specifically in 35 Α. 36 relation to that, and I doubt there would have been other 37 than that notion of, again, a communication between the two people involved: one is the crime scene officer managing 38 that crime scene; and, two, the investigator. 39 But 40 I haven't come across any specific policy pointing towards 41 that. 42 43 Q. Okay, and what about in the '90s? 44 No, no different, so - and then, of course, I suppose Α. 45 we've got the Coroners Act and the fact that, in those 46 cases, we are perhaps getting powers from the Coroner in relation to access to those scenes, so that would come into 47

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1 it as well. But in relation to the decision to release, 2 again, crime scene officers involved in that process, but 3 the ownership of that lies with the officer in charge and 4 their command. 5 Q. To your knowledge, the decision to release - and if 6 you can't answer, say so - is that informed by 7 8 a consideration such as what exhibits of potential 9 relevance have been identified? Insofar as that haven't been collected or? 10 Α. 11 12 Well, do you ask for that clarification because you Q. would expect that all exhibits should be collected before 13 14 the crime scene is released? That's right. If we're at the point of releasing, 15 Α. 16 generally we're having that conversation because we expect 17 further clarity from some other process, typically the So invariably, now, a decision to release, 18 autopsv. 19 especially in some challenging cases like fires comes down 20 to we think that we understand what we're dealing with, but 21 that might not be the case until we get some further information such as the autopsy. 22 23 The Commissioner received evidence recently - you may 24 Q. not be familiar with the case of James Meek who died 25 26 in March 1995? 27 Not of the details. Α. 28 29 Q. He was found deceased in his apartment and, among other things, in the apartment were observed a used condom 30 and a handkerchief and some empty sachets of lubricant? 31 32 Α. Yes. 33 34 Q. At the time, the cause of death was not known and, for better or worse, somebody appears to have thought it was 35 36 not a homicide. The crime scene was released and the 37 apartment was tidied up. Four days later, the autopsy indicated death by trauma to the head and it has been 38 treated as a homicide ever since. And so if the 39 40 Commissioner is trying to understand whether something went 41 wrong and, if so, where, with a decision like that, how does your evidence - am I right in understanding your 42 evidence is that that's the OIC's call? 43 44 Well, in that case, it sounds like there's some Α. 45 potential breakdowns, if there was trauma to the victim, 46 the deceased there, then crime scene should have been pointing to that, and then conveying that back to the 47

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officer in charge in relation to, well, this doesn't appear 1 2 to be of natural causes, which is that really difficult 3 thing that we have to make a call on early in these cases. 4 5 Q. In fairness, it may not have been obvious that it was 6 trauma, that there was trauma to the head. There are different views about that. 7 But certainly there was no 8 known heart condition or any other reason to expect him to 9 have died at 65. 10 If there is no other indicators, then no, because that Α. comes down to this risk that we face, and we face it today, 11 12 of getting that assessment right in relation to death 13 scenes, because that's our biggest call for service outside 14 of volume crime. 15 16 We've got, you know, 7,600 calls for service in 17 relation to scenes of death to the Police Department 18 annually - that was last year's figures - and then perhaps 19 4,000 of those come into crime scene. That's a lot of 20 deaths that our officers are going to and then we look at 21 some data that - I think for 2020, I think it was 2020 data 22 from the Coroners Court, was that for that year there were 6,500 deaths reported to the Coroner; 67 per cent of those 23 were natural causes. So my staff are going to scenes of 24 death routinely that are natural causes. 25 26 27 It's really challenging to make sure - I tell them, 28 and this is a conversation we have: "Understand, you are the organisation's safety net in relation to scenes of 29 death and that you are going to these ones", and it's an 30 issue that they raise, saying that, "Yeah, we go to a lot 31 32 of scenes of death that we don't add any value to because 33 they end up being of natural causes". Of course the answer 34 is twofold: one, you are the safety net to make sure that 35 you bring your expertise to assess that; and then, two, 36 going to those in themselves makes you the expert, because 37 you're watching things like lividity and rigor mortis in a natural general death, seeing the signs that you see, so 38 then when you go to one where that doesn't look right, you 39 40 are the one to pick that up. But it is challenging and it 41 is off the basis of capacity of number of calls for service 42 that we get. 43 44 THE COMMISSIONER: Q. But in most cases where you have -45 let's take the one that you have been asked about -46 a person is found deceased, let's assume you don't see an 47 obvious cause, for the moment. There is no particular

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rush, is there, to, as it were, undo a crime scene, or is 1 2 there any particular need prior to post-mortem? In the 3 case we're talking about, the death occurs perhaps on the 4 7th, he's discovered on the 8th, post-mortem on the 11th 5 of March. I mean, in that window, is there any particular need not to have a crime scene maintained just until you 6 7 find out? 8 Capacity, your Honour. So the number of deaths that Α. 9 we're going to. If we're holding crime scenes for all 10 those deaths, we're talking six a day across the State. 11 12 Q. But if the person is living alone in a flat, again, is 13 that a circumstance you'd take into account? I mean, it's 14 not a community centre, it's not a school, it's not a hospital; it's a flat where one person lives alone. It's 15 16 a case of locking the door for a few days, isn't it? 17 Α. We would have to guard that, your Honour, if we're holding the scene then we would have to guard it, so police 18 are there for 24/7. Because we've made that 19 20 determination --21 22 So it is a resources issue, is it? Q. Yes, I think, yeah, that would be fair to say, with 23 Α. 24 those number of deaths that we're going to. But, you know, 25 that's - so out of that 67 per cent, then those others sit 26 there, generally you're getting a clear indication from 27 your first scene assessment, and that's down to if this 28 person's had trauma to the head, you know, the officer's 29 really, really closely feeling and looking for trauma, that our crime scene officers do. But if it was the case where 30 31 it was a trauma that really wasn't detected until the PM, 32 that would be challenging. 33 MR EMMETT: 34 Q. Well, as the safety net, does the training and gualifications encourage them to err on the 35 36 side of caution when they don't know the cause of death? So it's - the policy says "where it doesn't appear to 37 Α. be of natural" - "where it is not of natural causes" so, 38 you know, that's what they are told in relation to it. But 39 40 then they are trying to find evidence and they are trying 41 to identify crime. 42 43 Q. According to the policy, you need to be positively 44 satisfied that it is natural causes --45 Α. So it says - the policy says that - "in cases where it 46 is not natural causes", so it is a difficult balancing act, as I say, with those numbers, 67 per cent of the ones that 47

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1 were going to end up being natural causes. 2 3 And both the crime scene officer and the officer in Q. 4 charge need to make a judgment? I'm sorry, were you going 5 to say something --6 No, I was going to say probably we went a little Α. 7 outside of what that policy is. That's about our 8 attending, not about holding a scene. So, yes. 9 10 Q. I'm sorry. So in relation to our attendance and making 11 Α. 12 a determination, that's of natural causes. So nothing in 13 relation to holding the scene. But if there is nothing there to suggest on the contrary, that's where it becomes 14 15 challenging. 16 17 Q. In doubtful cases, the OIC or the crime scene officer. or both, need to make a judgment - do I understand your 18 19 evidence - about whether or not to release the crime scene, 20 whether or not to take further exhibits before releasing 21 the crime scene? 22 Α. Correct. 23 24 That's a judgment capable of being affected by either Q. 25 conscious or unconscious bias? 26 I don't - that's not within my realms of expertise. Α. 27 28 Well, were you trained to take care to try to avoid Q. 29 unconscious bias? Were you trained about how to take care in relation to unconscious bias? Of course, because it is 30 31 unconscious, you don't notice it. 32 Α. Yes. 33 34 Q. You were trained about that? So I've certainly - I've certainly been trained about 35 Α. 36 it. I'm just trying to think where. I can't recall. But 37 I certainly understand the concept. 38 And what about conscious bias? To your knowledge, are 39 Q. 40 police officers trained to avoid conscious bias? 41 Α. Yes. 42 43 Q. And to be vigilant for conscious bias in other people? 44 Yeah, look, that's that notion of motive and then Α. 45 trying to make sense of what's there against what might be 46 there, or presented to you, to try and lead you in a different direction. 47

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1 2 Q. And what about the risk of an officer, whether it's 3 a crime scene officer or an OIC, making a judgment in part, 4 again, perhaps intentionally or unintentionally, based on 5 how sympathetic they perceive the victim to be - that they might be more careful with a victim they perceive to be 6 7 sympathetic? 8 No, I don't think that would happen. Α. I don't think -9 our staff don't get exposed to the victims, you know? 0ur 10 staff are - the way - the reason that they are able to survive in our world, in that world of crime scene, is that 11 12 disconnect and they just come to it with a scientific mind and they approach it as a complex puzzle to make sense of. 13 14 Not necessarily deliberately, but the very dynamics of a crime scene and the way that they are managed, they are 15 16 excluded from that world of victims. They are certainly 17 not interviewing victims, speaking to them. They do see that and I think we would have more issues of officers 18 19 struggling with our environment and the trauma that they 20 are exposed to if they were, additionally, exposed to the 21 traumas of the victims. 22 THE COMMISSIONER: 23 Q. Can I just interrupt and ask you 24 In 1995, going back to the case we were talking this. about, would it have been open to a police officer, where 25 26 cause of death was not obvious, to call in a medical officer or medical person in order to make some assessment 27 28 of whether or not it was a homicide or a suspicious death? 29 Α. So the forensic pathologist coming to a scene? That 30 was certainly something that took place, and now I can't 31 remember when that stopped. So I know I've been to scenes 32 myself as an investigator where the forensic pathologist 33 came to the scene. That stopped. I'd have to make inquiries, your Honour, I can't remember what - when that 34 35 took place. 36 37 THE COMMISSIONER: Is that a convenient time, Mr Emmett? 38 39 MR EMMETT: It is, your Honour. 40 41 THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, I will adjourn to the morning, 42 thank you. 43 44 AT 3.59PM THE SPECIAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY WAS ADJOURNED 45 ACCORDINGLY 46 47

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