ROYAL COMMISSION INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF POLICE INFORMANTS

Held in Melbourne, Victoria On Friday, 29 March 2019

Led by Commissioner: The Honourable Margaret McMurdo AC

Also Present

Counsel Assisting: Mr C. Winneke QC

Mr A. Woods

Ms M. Tittensor

Ms P.A. Neskovcin QC

Mr S. Mukerjea

Counsel for Victoria Police Mr S. Holt QC

Ms R. Enbom

Ms K. Argiropoulos Mr B. Murphy QC

Mr M. McLay

Counsel for State of Victoria Dr C. Button SC

Mr L. Brown

Counsel for Nicola Gobbo Mr P. Collinson QC

Mr R. Nathwani

Counsel for DPP/SPP Mr C. Caleo QC

> Mr P. Doyle Ms K. O'Gorman

Mr G. Chettle Counsel for Police Handlers

Ms L. Theis

1 COMMISSIONER: If the transcript of the terms of the order 10:28:29 10:28:32 2 just made could be provided to Commission staff that would 3 be useful so the order can be typed up and posted. 10:28:35

> MS NESKOVCIN: Commissioner, can I also suggest that in addition to referring to s.24 your order refer to s.26 to make it clear that the closure of the hearing room also applies to the streaming and non-publication of any transcript of the proceedings.

All right. Yes, all right then. COMMISSIONER: simply won't be any streaming so I think maybe we don't need to make an order in relation to the streaming but certainly to the transcript.

MS NESKOVCIN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER: And I suppose to the order itself.

MS NESKOVCIN: Yes. Although the order will of course still be on the door of the court.

COMMISSIONER: Yes. Perhaps it doesn't matter if the order is published because there's nothing in the order that is controversial, no.

MS NESKOVCIN: I agree, Your Honour.

COMMISSIONER: So I further order Yes, all right then. under s.26 *Inquiries Act* that the transcript of the closed hearing is not to be published and I further direct that that part of the order also be placed on the door of the hearing room.

Where do we start?

MR WINNEKE: I think the issue arose with questioning last night, in fact which brought questioning to a halt last night, and perhaps Mr Holt might like to raise the issue that concerns his client because there is a suggestion of a way of dealing with the problem that was raised.

COMMISSIONER: Yes Mr Holt.

Thank you Commissioner. The issue that was raised just before questioning concluded last night raises a core issue of public interest immunity from the police's

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I've spoken with my learned friend Mr Chettle perspective. this morning and he's very kindly and in a way in which we hope will continue indicated to me that the line of question which he intends to take from this point forward. It's only the first question which is essentially a version of the question which was asked last night, which would be a question which attracts the problem which arises, and Assistant Commissioner Paterson is available to give evidence about why that is a significant issue, if the Commissioner please, but we have an alternative proposal which is that that question and answer be given in closed session subject to prohibition orders. And that then the remainder of the questions as they've been advised to us, or at least the matter cleared by us to us, would not be problematic as we presently understand them, though of course we will reserve our position in that respect. particular issue arises in the context of the policy and practice documents that we've referred to and which the Commission has given us until 2 April to review. my expectation is that we will maintain the public interest immunity claim in respect of that particular topic but it will become part of a clearer position by that date, in which case it can then be resolved by the Commission if it needed to be, and that would then determine whether publication orders in respect of the question and answer that would be given this morning would need to be lifted or would otherwise be maintained. But our learned friend Mr Chettle indicates that he considers the question and answer to be a critical precondition to the questions that would then follow which are not objectionable. There is no dispute as to the answer to the question Mr Chettle will give but it's simply one that we would assert public interest immunity in respect of. So that's the proposal as a way of getting through matters this morning and otherwise the question of public interest immunity itself would now need to be resolved but we're hoping not to waste the Commission's time in effect and allow matters to proceed on that basis.

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10:32:12 **26**

COMMISSIONER: Again, you're not seeking to make submissions on the broader issue until after 2 April?

MR HOLT: We think that's sensible, Commissioner, in terms of the efficient use of time and because of the conversations I've had with Mr Chettle this morning I think that it can be dealt with on that relatively narrow basis.

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Thanks Mr Holt, I understand your position. 1 COMMISSIONER: 10:33:02 2 Mr Chettle, would be happy to just ask this one question in 10:33:05 closed hearing? 10:33:08 10:33:09 4 MR CHETTLE: Yes. 5 10:33:10 10:33:10 6 And then open and continue your examination? 7 COMMISSIONER: 10:33:10 10:33:13 8 MR CHETTLE: Yes, Commissioner. 9 10:33:13 10:33:14 10 COMMISSIONER: I understand it arises because the issue of 10:33:15 11 10:33:19 12 between handlers and informers as a is something that is not, is something that in 10:33:25 13 $\overline{ extsf{Victoria}}$ is, well, understood to be important but it 10:33:30 14 doesn't get into the public sphere. 10:33:34 **15** 10:33:37 **16** 10:33:38 17 My question was too broad, I apologise. MR CHETTLE: 10:33:41 18 not actually, nobody had spoken to me about the issue. 10:33:44 **19** 10:33:45 **20** COMMISSIONER: No, no, that's all right. 10:33:46 21 10:33:46 22 MR CHETTLE: I understand this, what 10:33:49 23 is in relation to the and informers is 10:33:52 24 not relevant. What is relevant is that in this case every conversation that they had face-to-face, that is the unit 10:33:57 25 had with Ms Gobbo, was recorded. 10:34:00 **26** That is inevitably going 10:34:05 27 to become a central part of this Commission. What are the 10:34:09 28 contents of those tapes, what she said, whether it was legally professionally privileged, the circumstances in 10:34:12 29 10:34:15 30 which she obtained the information. 10:34:17 **31** 10:34:17 32 COMMISSIONER: Certainly the fact that there were tape 10:34:19 33 recordings is going to be an important part. 10:34:23 34 10:34:24 35 MR CHETTLE: And the contents of them obviously. 10:34:26 **36** 10:34:26 37 COMMISSIONER: Yes, exactly. 10:34:27 38 10:34:28 39 MR CHETTLE: My line of questioning is really along the 10:34:32 40 lines nobody listened to all of these and in order to 10:34:34 41 prepare the materials that were - - -10:34:35 42 10:34:36 43 COMMISSIONER: I understand. Probably you will be able to 10:34:39 44 ask those questions shortly. Mr Winneke. 10:34:42 45 10:34:42 46 As I understand it what Mr Chettle wishes to MR WINNEKE:

achieve is evidence to the effect that face-to-face

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meetings with this particular informer were recorded and transcribed. Now, it does seem that that will become apparent in due course in any event and it will be in the public domain.

COMMISSIONER: Yes.

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MR WINNEKE: So a question to the effect of were meetings face-to-face with Ms Gobbo recorded, that would adduce the evidence that Mr Chettle would be, or were all meetings recorded, or even without the word all - - -

MR HOLT: This is a conversation we've had. As I understand it's critical - and I understand why forensically it's critical.

MR WINNEKE: If I could just continue.

MR HOLT: I'm sorry.

MR WINNEKE: That's the evidence that needs to be established by Mr Chettle. It may well be that that is or that is not innocuous, but in any event it will become apparent in due course as the Commission goes on that conversations face-to-face between Ms Gobbo and handlers were recorded because there will be transcripts of evidence.

COMMISSIONER: And very extensive ones.

MR WINNEKE: And extensive transcripts of evidence. I understand the sensitivities about the general principle or proposition that they are recorded. But - - -

COMMISSIONER: Do we even need that question to be asked?

MR WINNEKE: That's what I'm wondering, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Yes, I see.

MR HOLT: Can I indicate, Commissioner, there's no dispute that the proposition that Mr Chettle wishes to establish is one which is so. The answer to the question would be yes. So the question of, that is all of those conversations with Ms Gobbo were recorded.

COMMISSIONER: Yes.

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MR HOLT: So to the extent that Mr Chettle wants that as a foundation so that the Commission understands, it doesn't even need to go that far, but if it needs to be that's how we'd ask it be done.

COMMISSIONER: Yes.

MR HOLT: I should say, Commissioner, and I apologise, I know we need to get on, but Assistant Commissioner Paterson is in a position to give evidence about this, why these issues are so important. They may not be matters that are readily apparent to those who don't have the expertise that the Assistant Commissioner has and does, and if the Commission would be assisted he is available to assist in that regard now if that would help. We hope we can find a quick way through it.

COMMISSIONER: I've been informed that the position, that it's not common knowledge that handlers and informers in Victoria are and that if it were that might

MR HOLT: I think Assistant Commissioner Paterson's evidence would put that higher but certainly that would be so.

COMMISSIONER: That's the gist of it. Mr Chettle, do we even need to have a private session?

MR CHETTLE: No.

COMMISSIONER: We don't, do we?

MR CHETTLE: You can inform yourself in any way, Commissioner. You are informed of that. It's a central fact we are going to be relying on, especially after 2 April.

COMMISSIONER: What, the central fact that you're going to be relying on is?

MR CHETTLE: The fact that will become central to this Commission that every conversation with her was tape recorded, that is every face-to-face conversation.

1 COMMISSIONER: I thought there may have been some 10:37:54 2 face-to-face conversations weren't tape recorded? 10:37:55 10:37:57 3 4 MR CHETTLE: No, the evidence will be that every 10:37:57 5 conversation face-to-face with her with my clients was tape 10:38:00 recorded. 10:38:02 6 7 10:38:03 10:38:03 8 COMMISSIONER: That doesn't mean that is 9 with 10:38:07 10 MR CHETTLE: I'm not saying anything about any 11 12 10:38:09 10:38:09 13 COMMISSIONER: So that information being in the public 10:38:09 14 No. record does not indicate that that is with 10:38:13 **15** 10:38:15 **16** 17 MR CHETTLE: No. And can I say - - -18 19 10:38:16 20 COMMISSIONER: Which is the problem with the question you asked it seems. 10:38:18 21 10:38:19 22 10:38:19 23 MR CHETTLE: It was the question I asked last night and it 10:38:22 24 was the wrong one. 10:38:23 25 COMMISSIONER: Assuming now that you're not going to ask 10:38:23 **26** 10:38:25 27 that question again, can we continue with public hearings? 10:38:30 28 10:38:31 29 MR CHETTLE: I believe so. 10:38:32 **30** 10:38:33 31 MR HOLT: I should be clear, Commissioner, I apologise but I should clear that that lesser proposition that all of the 10:38:35 32 10:38:37 33 calls or all of the contacts with witness Gobbo were 10:38:40 34 recorded is a matter over which public interest immunity is 10:38:43 35 claimed as well at this point. 36 37 COMMISSIONER: All right. 38 10:38:45 39 MR HOLT: And we may well be able to resolve the bounds of 10:38:48 40 that after 2 April. But at present my instructions are 10:38:51 41 clear that even that piece of information in the public 10:38:53 42 domain carries with it a very substantial risk of the 10:39:00 43 efficacy of the program. 10:39:00 44 10:39:00 45 COMMISSIONER: At the moment you are asking that the 10:39:02 46 questioning be limited to a great deal of conversations

with Ms Gobbo were recorded?

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                           I'm not even sure for the purposes of the line of
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                 questioning that Mr Chettle wishes to proceed, that even
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                 that is necessary. As I understand it it is a precursor to
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                 having - Mr Paterson of course wasn't present during any of
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                 this which is the other point in this cross-examination -
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                 to confirm that the process that then followed in terms of
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                 the capturing of that information of Ms Gobbo through that
                 process. So that's as I understand it.
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                                Mr Chettle, would you please clarify what
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                 COMMISSIONER:
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                 your line of questioning is going to be?
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                 MR CHETTLE:
                              Yes.
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                                     The base material in the possession of
                 the unit was not examined by Comrie.
                                                         It wasn't all
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                 examined by Kellam and that accordingly their conclusions
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                 are based on, if that's right, their conclusions are
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                 incomplete.
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                 So you're going to be asking questions about
                 there were a great many transcripts, recordings and they
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                 weren't examined.
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                              To that effect.
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                 MR CHETTLE:
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                 Recordings and they weren't examined in the
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                 Comrie - - -
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                 MR CHETTLE: Can I quote to you from the Supreme Court
                 judgment published, Mr Justice Ginnane.
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                 COMMISSIONER:
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                                Yes.
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                 MR CHETTLE:
                             Literally thousands of hours of recorded
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                 conversations and debriefings. It's already -
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                That will be the line of your
                 cross-examination, those words?
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                 MR CHETTLE:
                              Yes, Commissioner.
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                 COMMISSIONER: You understand the limits that are being
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                 placed on your cross-examination by the concerns raised?
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                 MR CHETTLE:
                               I do.
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By Mr Paterson and Mr Holt which we're told

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COMMISSIONER:

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                 we'll know more about after 2 April.
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                 MR CHETTLE:
                               2 April should fix all things.
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                 imagine how this Commission could ever function without
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                 reference to those tapes.
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                 No one is suggesting that the Commission
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                 doesn't have not only reference to but full access to those
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                 tapes.
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                 MR CHETTLE:
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                               Thank you.
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                 We can now resume with an open hearing.
                 Could I ask you, Madam Associate, to let everyone know that
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                 MR WINNEKE:
                               Just before you do.
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                 Sorry, just a moment.
                                                          Too good to be true.
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                               Perhaps I was distracted but is the
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                 MR WINNEKE:
                 Commissioner permitting or not permitting a question to be
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                 asked as to the situation with respect to Ms Gobbo?
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                                 Yes, the line of questioning will be along
                 COMMISSIONER:
                 what was said by Justice Ginnane with Ms Gobbo, that there
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                 were many recorded conversations with Ms Gobbo but not that
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                 every conversation was recorded.
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                 MR WINNEKE:
                               I understand that.
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                 Many conversations, thousands of hours of
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                 them.
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                 MR WINNEKE:
                               I don't know whether there were thousands of
                 hours but certainly if that is what Justice Ginnane said -
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                 It will do us for the time being anyway
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                 until know differently.
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                               I've been told there are a number of 100s of
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                 MR WINNEKE:
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                 hours.
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                 MR HOLT:
                            186 hours.
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                 MR WINNEKE:
                               186 hours.
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                 MR HOLT:
                           But that is what Justice Ginnane said.
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                 COMMISSIONER:
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                                 It is what Justice Ginnane said, okay.
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                 That's perhaps something Mr Paterson will be able to
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                 correct in his evidence. If not him, someone else.
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                 MR WINNEKE: Yes, thanks Commissioner.
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                All right then.
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                           Sorry, Commissioner, there is one matter that
                 might be dealt with in the closed hearing as well.
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                Yes.
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                           That is the confidential affidavit which we had
                 MR HOLT:
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                 identified in respect of the public interest immunity
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                 matter that remains in relation to Mr Paterson's statement,
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                 we had indicated we would follow up this morning.
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                This is also to be dealt with after 2 April?
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                 MR HOLT:
                           No, we don't think it needs to be dealt with but
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                 we have on going conversations with our learned friends
                 about a process for dealing with it.
                                                         We've sent
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                 correspondence about that last night but I'm having very
                 anxious to have the confidential information, affidavit out
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                 of my hands and into the Royal Commission.
                                                               So might I file
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                 that on a confidential basis?
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                Just remind me, is this the unredacted
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                 version?
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                 MR HOLT:
                           This is the unredacted version in respect of the
                 paragraphs that might risk the identification of certain
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                 persons.
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                 Okay.
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                 MR HOLT: And if the Commissioner requires me to provide
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                 more information I will be for more people to be removed
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                 from the hearing room.
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                All right, I'll give you leave to file it.
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It's a confidential affidavit of Scott Mahoney

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MR HOLT:

and I ask that - it's already in the sealed taper proof 10:43:30 1 2 evidence bag I should indicate, Commissioner, and I'd ask 10:43:37 that an order be made by the Commission that it be placed 3 10:43:39 10:43:42 4 into a sealed envelope and not opened other than by direction of the Commissioner. 5 10:43:47 10:43:49 6 COMMISSIONER: Am I to read this? 7 10:43:49 10:43:52 8 MR HOLT: Yes. 9 10:43:52 10:43:53 10 COMMISSIONER: And at what point do I read this? 10:43:54 11 10:43:57 12 I suspect, Commissioner, you'll take advice about 13 that from counsel assisting but it may be appropriate for 10:43:57 14 the Commissioner to read it now, not right now but as in at 10:43:59 **15** 10:44:00 16 a convenient point and we will continue discussions with counsel assisting as to whether or not the public interest 10:44:03 17 immunity issue that arises needs to be formally resolved or 10:44:06 18 10:44:11 19 whether, as we proposed, there might be another way through But this information will be of 10:44:12 20 that, this issue. assistance to the Commissioner and to counsel assisting. 10:44:16 21 10:44:20 22 10:44:21 23 COMMISSIONER: I'm just a little confused, is this related to what's going to happen after 2 April? 10:44:23 24 10:44:25 25 No, it's different. MR HOLT: 10:44:25 **26** 27 28 COMMISSIONER: It's a different question, okay. 29 10:44:26 30 MR HOLT: It's the identification of two persons which are 10:44:27 31 currently where information that might lead to their identification is presently redacted from Mr Paterson's 10:44:32 32 10:44:36 33 statement. 10:44:37 34 COMMISSIONER: Right. 35 36 10:44:37 37 MR HOLT: We have raised a public interest immunity question in relation to it. We've been provided with some 10:44:38 38 10:44:39 39 additional information from the Commission about that. 40 COMMISSIONER: 41 I see. 42 10:44:44 43 MR HOLT: We've made further investigations over the last 10:44:45 44 two days. 10:44:46 45 10:44:46 46 COMMISSIONER: This is in relation to

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Yes, in relation to those matters. We undertook to provide, the Commissioner will recall I assured the Commission we would provide the information as soon as we So we have it. had it.

COMMISSIONER: Yes.

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So I wish to provide it in a confidential form and to continue discussions with our learned friends and if necessary have a private hearing with the Commission to determine the appropriate way forward. But for present purposes I think filing it, such that the Commissioner has access to it, and senior and junior counsel presumably assisting the Commission have access to it so that we can have discussions on an equal information basis.

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COMMISSIONER: All right then. Are you happy for me to give leave to file this, Mr Winneke?

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MR WINNEKE: I am. Can I just make it clear, we're told senior and presumably junior counsel and instructing solicitors as well? I would have thought that is appropriate.

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> Commissioner, it's a matter for the Commissioner MR HOLT: It is a confidential affidavit and it is as to sees it. filed on that basis. Our expectation would be that it would be kept to the minimum number of people necessary to We would necessarily expect that that would be senior counsel and junior counsel assisting the Commission in this regard, and if it is necessary for one of the

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senior solicitors then of course we would have no objection to that and we would expect everyone would understand the confidential nature of it.

10:45:53 31 10:45:56 32 10:45:59 33

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COMMISSIONER: That's suitable?

10:46:04 35 10:46:05 36

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MR WINNEKE: Yes.

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10:46:07 40

It would include one senior solicitor COMMISSIONER: nominated, whether it be Mr Rapke or Ms Teague or someone else.

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> MR WINNEKE: I would have thought both frankly.

10:46:16 44 10:46:18 45 10:46:18 46

COMMISSIONER: All right, it shall be both.

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MR WINNEKE: Yes.
                                      Thank you Commissioner.
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                 I have given you leave to file that now.
10:46:21
                 Where is it now?
10:46:24 4
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                 MR WINNEKE:
                               Thanks very much, I've got it.
         7
                 COMMISSIONER:
                                 So we can now open the court?
10:46:31
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10:46:33
                 MR WINNEKE: Yes, Commissioner.
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                 COMMISSIONER:
                                 Madam Associate, would you let everybody
                                                        I think it was open
10:46:37 13
                 know that the hearing is now open.
                 before we managed to get the notice on the door.
10:46:50 14
                 Mr Paterson should go back into the witness box now?
10:47:01 15
10:47:04 16
10:47:04 17
                 MR HOLT:
                            Thank you.
10:47:05 18
10:47:05 19
                 COMMISSIONER:
                                 Thanks Mr Paterson.
10:47:14 20
                 MR CHETTLE:
                              Does the Commissioner want the streaming back
10:47:15 21
                 on?
10:47:17 22
10:47:17 23
                 COMMISSIONER: Yes, that will be attended to.
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