

Statement of JAMES BELLINGER

RFS-TAS-096

Name James Bellinger

Address C/O Launceston General Hospital,
Tasmania

Position Human Resource Manager, Department of Health

This statement is made by me in response to RFS-TAS-096 (**'RFS'**), dated 25 July 2022 and received by me on 29 August 2022, by the President of the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings (the Commission), the Honourable Marcia Neave AO.

A. REQUEST FOR STATEMENT

1. **Identify any personal and professional email address(es) used by you during the Relevant Period (25 May 2022 – 25 July 2022).**

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B. REQUEST FOR DOCUMENTS

2. **Produce all email correspondence during the Relevant Period that passed between the email address(es) identified in your response to paragraph 1 and any email address used by (in relation to the Commission or any evidence before it):**

a) Gino Fratangelo;

- Email exchange commencing 23 June 2022 to 25 June 2022, title *Interesting times* (**Appendix 1**).

Email conversation commenced on the day the Department advised Mat, Gino and I of the

misconduct allegation and discussion regarding attending the Commission.

Generalised discussion of support and catching up at an indeterminate point in the future.

- Email exchange commencing 27 June 2022 to 28 June 2022, title *Hearing Date* (**Appendix 2**).

Discussion regarding date of appearance at Commission and generalised comments re how we felt.

- Email exchange commencing 28 June 2022 – 29 June 2022, title *RUOK* (**Appendix 3**).

Discussion and supportive comments following my appearance at Commission and prior to Gino's appearance.

The email proposed talking the following morning in advance of Gino's appearance regarding 'how' the Commission worked and the process of giving evidence.

Whilst the email proposed talking in that manner, the conversation did not occur.

Having reflected on the email overnight I decided not to proceed as proposed in the email. When we spoke in the morning I suggested it better to not have the planned discussion. As a result I referred Gino to [REDACTED] who had watched the Commission and, at that time, was not a witness. Gino was initially reluctant to speak with [REDACTED] but agreed.

Gino and I spoke twice that morning; the first occasion for approximately four minutes when I referred him to [REDACTED] per above, and the second time for three minutes, which included [REDACTED] answering and going to find him, to thank me for referring him to [REDACTED]. We did not discuss his evidence.

In offering to discuss the processes of the Commission I was thinking of procedural aspects such as; room layout; unlike our previous experience in other forums Counsel representing the State or him were not permitted to ask questions or interject; to be clear on what was being asked of him by Counsel and if in doubt, to clarify; to clearly answer the question that has been asked of him; and to take his time. However, as described above, we did not discuss these matters.

- Email exchange commencing 1 July 2022 to 14 July 2022, title *Catch up time* (**Appendix 4**).

Discussion over 1 and 2 July re catching up following appearance at Commission.

Discussion recommenced on 12 July as I'd not responded to Gino since 2 July. Confirmed catch up for 16 July 2022.

- Email exchange commencing 18 July 2022 to 23 July 2022, title blank (**Appendix 5**).

Email expressing appreciation for the opportunity to talk and debrief the previous Saturday, commentary re Department's response.

b) [REDACTED]

- Email exchange commencing 27 May 2022 to 30 May 2022, title *Special Commission of Inquiry Leave*

(Appendix 6).

Email announcing 'Special Commission of Inquiry Leave' and confirmation of its coding in the payroll system.

- Email exchange on 1 June 2022 titled *COI response* **(Appendix 7)**.

Email discussion arranging time with [REDACTED] to refresh my memory for my first COI Statement.

This discussion is reflected in full in my first statement RFS-TAS-059.

[REDACTED] assisted to refresh my memory with respect to historical HR practices and SRLS/EIMS systems that existed prior to my commencement with the Hospital; questions 16, 18, 20

- Email exchange 8 July to 12 July 2022, title *Moving Forward* **(Appendix 8)**.

Email discussion following a meeting on 7 July 2022 convened by my manager to debrief regarding the COI and the way forward.

The meeting included a discussion about the need for more HR resourcing and the difficulties in evidencing HR Generalists workload. The email served to support the evidence.

- Email 6 July 2022, title *4K script 20201112.docx* **(Appendix 9A and 9B)**.

The Secretary, Kath Morgan-Wicks, appeared before the Commission on 5 July 2022 and on 3 July 2022 the Department announced the Child Safe Governance Review.

I did not watch the Secretary's appearance at the Commission. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] did and described to me what the Secretary had said.

In that discussion I was interested to understand if the Secretary's position had changed over time, and I recalled her attendance at the LGH in 2020 to present to staff in the Lecture Theatre re the same subject.

I searched for and retrieved the script the Secretary wrote for the 2020 meeting and provided it to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. In 2020 the Secretary had asked me to print the script for her immediately prior to her attending the LGH.

c) [REDACTED]

- Per above, email 6 July 2022, title *4K script 20201112.docx* **(Appendix 9A and 9B)**.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Interesting times

Appendix 2: Hearing date

Appendix 3: RUOK

Appendix 4: Catch up time

Appendix 5: No title

Appendix 6: Special COI Leave

Appendix 7: COI response

Appendix 8: Moving forward email

Appendix 9: 4K script (covering email and attachment)