

**Royal Commission
into the Management of Police Informants**

STATEMENT OF JOHN JOSEPH BLAYNEY

1. My full name is John Joseph Blayney. I am known more commonly as Jack. I am an Assistant Commissioner at Victoria Police, however I am currently on long service leave. I am retiring in September 2019. Prior to commencing my long service leave, I held the role of Chief Information Officer.
2. I make this statement in response to a request from the Royal Commission into the Management of Police Informants dated 19 March 2019.
3. This statement is limited to my involvement in, and awareness of, Ms Gobbo's dealings with Victoria Police in 1996.
4. I will provide a further statement to the Royal Commission relevant to Ms Gobbo's subsequent dealings with Victoria Police as Informant 3838.

Educational background and employment history

5. I commenced employment with Victoria Police in 1975 and graduated from the Police Academy as a constable in 1976. A summary of my employment history since that time is set out below:
 - a) 1976-1981: General Duties Constable at Russell Street, Flemington and Doncaster Police Stations.
 - b) 1981: Senior Constable.
 - c) 1981: Divisional Detective at Heidelberg Criminal Investigative Branch.
 - d) 1983: Detective Senior Constable, Drug Squad.
 - e) 1987: Sergeant, Licensing, Gaming and Vice Squad.
 - f) 1988: Detective Sergeant, Drug Squad.



- g) 1989: Instructor, Detective Training School.
- h) 1990: Senior Sergeant at Audio Visual Division.
- i) 1992: Senior Sergeant, Northcote Station.
- j) 1993: Detective Senior Sergeant, Covert Investigation Unit.
- k) 1997: Acting Inspector, Local Priority Policing project.
- l) 2000: Staff Officer to Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources.
- m) 2002: Inspector, Forensic Services Project.
- n) 2003: Inspector, Project Clarendon.
- o) 2004: Inspector, Darebin District.
- p) 2004: Detective Superintendent, Major Fraud Investigation Division, Crime Department.
- q) 2006: Detective Superintendent, Major Crime, Tasking and Coordination Manager, Crime Department.
- r) 2008: Divisional Superintendent, Fawkner Division.
- s) 2011: Chief of Staff, North West Metro Region.
- t) 2011: Assistant Commissioner, Western Region.
- u) 2014: Assistant Commissioner, Eastern Region.
- v) 2015: Chief Information Officer/ Assistant Commissioner.

6. I have undertaken the following qualifications and training:

- a) Bachelor of Arts (Criminal Justice Administration), Phillip Institute, 1987
- b) Graduate Certificate of Applied Management, Australian Institute of Police Management, 2000
- c) Executive Masters (Public Administration), Melbourne University, 2008.

7. I have undertaken Victoria Police qualifications and training including:

- a) 1975 – 1976: Recruit training
- b) 1981: Detective Training School



- c) 1987: Sergeants Course
- d) 1989: Advanced Detective Training School
- e) 1997: Inspectors Course

Involvement or association with any investigation which had dealings with Ms Gobbo (question 2)

8. I was involved with *Operation Scorn* which took place in 1996. I had no recollection of my involvement in *Operation Scorn* until I was asked to make this statement and shown an 'Application for Authorised CIU Assistance' dated 19 February 1996 (**Application**)¹ and a Covert Investigation Unit Operation Progress Report (**Progress Report**).²
9. I have reviewed the Progress Report and recognise my handwriting.
10. At the time of the 1996 events, I was a Detective Senior Sergeant in the Covert Investigation Unit. The Covert Investigation Unit sat within Victoria Police's Crime Department. The Unit was responsible for Victoria Police's undercover investigations across the state. In my role, I was responsible for managing these investigations.
11. During the course of the investigation, the undercover operative's controller was required to update me on the progress of the investigation and to inform me of any concerns as they arose. I would update the Progress Report each time I received an update from a controller including any concerns regarding the investigation. The Progress Report was for my internal purposes and assisted me to track the investigation.
12. Based on my review of the Application and the Progress Report, I believe that on 19 February 1996, Sergeant C Brien of A District Support Group made a written application to the Unit for assistance in relation to the investigation of a target known

¹ VPL.0005.0007.0116

² VPL.0005.0007.0122



as Brian Wilson. The operative is identified as 33, however I cannot recall their identity. The Application indicates the identity of the controller.

13. The Progress Report has the four entries under the hearing 'Progress'.

14. I believe that, based on the third entry, on 5 March 1996, a discussion occurred between the Controller and I in relation to the continued use of Ms Gobbo as a human source in the investigation. As a result of that discussion, we decided to cancel the undercover job.

15. It was not my usual practice to identify a human source in a progress report unless there were concerns being raised with me in relation to the human source. In the normal course of affairs, I would not be aware of the human source's identity. The fact that I named Ms Gobbo in the Progress Report indicates to me that during the discussion with the controller he disclosed her identity and that this occurred in the context of raising concerns as to her reliability.

16. I cannot recall what the reference to the ALP/LIB docs related to, although it would have meant something to me at the time.

17. I did not have any direct contact with Ms Gobbo during Operation Scorn.

Use of Ms Gobbo as a human source (questions 3-8)

Question 3

18. I refer to my response to Question 2 concerning my state of knowledge as to information or assistance provided by Ms Gobbo during 1996.

Question 4

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19. Based on the Application and the Progress Report, I believe that as at February 1996, the controller, [REDACTED] and the Operation Scorn investigative team were aware that Ms Gobbo was providing information and assistance to Victoria Police, by virtue of their involvement in the Operation.

Question 5

20. I am not aware of who was involved in the authorisation.

Question 6

21. I do not recall ever having any personal contact with Ms Gobbo.

Question 7

22. I refer to my response to question 2. As outlined at paragraph 4, I will provide a further statement responding to this question in relation to the subsequent time period.

Question 8

23. This question is not applicable to the 1996 events. I will respond to this question in my further statement to the Royal Commission.

Concerns in relation to Ms Gobbo (questions 9-11)

Question 9

24. I will respond to this question in my further statement to the Royal Commission.

Question 10

25. I am not aware of any concerns being raised as to the use of Ms Gobbo as a human source during 1996, apart from the concerns that the controller raised with me as detailed in my response to question 2. These concerns did not relate to Ms Gobbo's

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position as a legal practitioner as she was not admitted at the time. I will otherwise respond to this question in my further statement.

Question 11

26. I have no knowledge of this matter relevant to 1996. I will otherwise respond to this question in my further statement.

Other relevant matters (questions 12-14)

Question 12

27. I will respond to this question in my further statement.

Question 13

28. I recall receiving the following training or re-training in relation to the identified topics:

- a) This formed part of recruit training at the Police Academy. Retraining also occurred as part of the Detective Training Course, the Sergeants course and in the Advanced Detective Training Course.
- b) This was covered as part of recruit training at the Police Academy and the training provided in other courses in 28(a) above.
- c) This was covered as part of recruit training at the Police Academy and the training provided in other courses in 28(a) above.
- d) This was covered as part of the Detective Training Course.
- e) This was covered as part of the Detective Training Course.
- f) This is covered at the Police Academy and on an ongoing basis in each training course. It is a high priority in many training courses.


Question 14

29. I have nothing further to add in response to this question.

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Dated: ~~3/27/2019~~ 27/3/2019


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John Joseph Blayney