

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

STATEMENT OF STEVEN PAUL COOMBS

1. My full name is Steven Paul Coombs. I am Acting Manager of the Crime Intelligence Group.
2. I make this statement in response to a request from the Royal Commission into the Management of Police Informants. This statement will be produced to the Royal Commission in response to a Notice to Produce.

Educational background and employment history (question 1)

3. I graduated from the Police Academy in 1992. A summary of my employment history since that time is set out below:
 - a) Feb 1992 I commenced duties as a trainee Constable at Chelsea Police Station;
 - b) June 1994 transferred to Warrnambool Police Station where I worked both general duties and in a plain clothes special duties section;
 - c) December 1996 transferred to Narre Warren Police Station where I worked general duties with stints as an investigator at the CIU;
 - d) In June 2001 I moved to South Melbourne Uniform before transferring to;
 - e) Melbourne Prosecutions in August 2001. I undertook prosecutions duties at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court and Melbourne Children's Court;
 - f) Feb 2004 Moonee Ponds Crime Desk. Crime Scene investigation;
 - g) July 2005 State Intelligence Division attached to the Human Source Management Unit. I undertook analytical and administrative tasks in supporting the HSMU. Assisted in running training courses;
 - h) May 2006 Australian Crime Commission. I obtained an external secondment to the ACC where I worked as an Intelligence Collection Officer;
 - i) November 2008 I returned to Victoria Police on Promotion to a Sergeant and worked at the State Intelligence Division in the Strategic Analysis Unit. This unit was responsible for undertaking higher level strategic assessments. I also

had stints at the Central Analysis Unit which focussed on Intelligence products with an operational context. I undertook a number of upgrading assignments as Officer-In-Charge of the unit during this period;

- j) Dec 2011 I moved to the Crime Department and was posted to the Office of Chief Examiner as the Intelligence Manager. In this role I assisted the Chief Examiner in preparation for examinations particularly with sourcing information and documents;
 - k) January 2018 I moved to the Crime Intelligence Group. In this role I manage Tactical Intelligence Operatives that are embedded in the various Crime Squads within Crime Command. I was attached to the Armed Crime Squad; and
 - l) Since July 2019 I have been upgraded as a Senior Sergeant in charge of CIG.
4. I have undertaken Victoria Police qualifications and training including the following:
- a) Prosecutors' Training Course;
 - b) Field Investigators Course;
 - c) Intelligence Practitioners Course;
 - d) National Strategic Intelligence Course (Charles Sturt);
 - e) Human Source Management Course [REDACTED]
 - f) Crime Scene Examination Course;
 - g) Sergeant Qualifying Program;
 - h) CT JIGOSEC course; and
 - i) Various other mandatory operational courses.

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

5. I have been informed about an entry in a Source Management Log collated by the Source Development Unit (SDU) which records the following on for 18 November 2005: *"Change of Participants hand delivered by [Officer Black] to COOMBS at IMU for LIR signature and processing."*

6. At that time, I was a Senior Constable at the State Intelligence Unit (SIU) assisting the Human Source Management Unit (HSMU), which was also known as the Informer Management Unit (IMU). I do not have diaries from this time period.
7. The HSMU maintained a central database where all contact reports and information reports (IRs) generated from a human source were stored. This included registration and activation forms, risk assessments etc. From time to time, the SIU also assisted the SDU with administrative matters. Such assistance was usually managed by Intelligence Analyst, [REDACTED]
8. During my time at the SIU, I did not undertake intelligence work for the SDU nor did I work with the human sources the SDU was managing. I do recall however, that there was a particularly high level human source the SDU was managing that even the SIU were quarantined from. For example, we had no involvement with the paperwork regarding the initial registration and activation of that human source and there seemed to be an additional layer of anonymity. I now believe that human source was Ms Gobbo.
9. I do not recall receiving the Change of Participants Form from Officer Black on 18 November 2005. However, if I did receive it, Officer Black most likely would have provided it to me in a sealed envelope. I would not have opened the envelope and would have placed in [REDACTED] in-tray. This was my usual practise if I received documents from the SDU.
10. I did not organise for the signature of the Local Informer Registrar (LIR) to be obtained on the Change of Participants Form. I also did not enter the document into the relevant database. These processes were usually managed by [REDACTED]
11. I have been informed for the purposes of preparing this statement that Change of Participants Forms refer to human sources by registration number only, not by name.
12. In 2011 as a Sergeant at the Office of the Chief Examiner, I assisted the Chief Examiner to prepare for his examinations relating to the [REDACTED] In this role, I had access to all of the relevant information and investigation files. I do not specifically recall seeing Ms Gobbo's name in the file. At that time, I did not know that Ms Gobbo was a human source.



13. I am otherwise not aware of having had involvement or association with investigations that had dealings with Ms Gobbo.

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

Question 3

14. My first awareness of Ms Gobbo providing information or assistance to Victoria Police was via the media. I previously had suspicions that Ms Gobbo had provided information or assistance to Victoria Police (especially during reporting relating to Lawyer X) but I only received confirmation of those suspicions via the media reporting once the suppression orders were lifted earlier this year.
15. I have been informed for the purposes of preparing this statement, that there is a list of people who were aware that Ms Gobbo was a human source.¹ Despite my name being on that list, I confirm that was not the case.

Question 4

16. The relevant members of the SDU were obviously aware that Ms Gobbo was providing information or assistance to Victoria Police. I did not know this during my time at the State Intelligence Unit when I was interacting with those members.
17. I am otherwise not aware of other members of Victoria Police or other organisations who were aware that Ms Gobbo was providing information or assistance to Victoria Police, other than what has been reported in the media.

Question 5

18. I do not know who was involved in the authorisation and continued authorisation of Ms Gobbo as a human source, other than what has been reported in the media.

Question 6

19. I had contact with Ms Gobbo in my role as a prosecutor from 2001 to 2004. My recollection is that Ms Gobbo was a solicitor at that time. Whilst I recall having contact with Ms Gobbo in my role as a prosecutor, I have no independent memory of the cases in which we had such contact.
20. I otherwise do not recall other contact with Ms Gobbo.

Questions 7 and 8

¹ Exhibit RC112b.

21. I have no knowledge of these matters.

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

Question 9

22. I have no knowledge of these matters.

Question 10

23. I have no knowledge of these matters.

Question 11

24. I have no knowledge of these matters.

Other relevant matters

Question 12

25. I have no knowledge of these matters.

Question 13

26. My recollection of the relevant training or retraining I have received is as follows:

- (a) Obligation of disclosure – initial training provided in the Academy with updates following changes to legislation or case law. I also received further training during the Prosecutors' Training Course;
- (b) The right of an accused person to silence – this is a fundamental right that is first taught at the Academy;
- (c) The right of an accused person to a legal practitioner - this is a fundamental right and is first taught at the Academy;
- (d) Legal Professional Privilege - this is first taught at the Academy. I also received further training during the Prosecutors' Training Course;
- (e) Public Interest Immunity – this is first taught at the Academy. I also received further training during the Prosecutors' Training Course;
- (f) Professional and ethical decision making – this is built into all Victoria Police training. I have also attended a number of leadership and other courses during my employment with Victoria Police of which professional and ethical decision making was a component.

Question 14

27. I have nothing further to add in response to question 14.

Dated: 27 August 2019

Sl A/S/Sat
29/6/19

Steven Paul Coombs