



Special Commission of Inquiry into the Ruby Princess

# EXHIBIT 109

Police statement of Colin White dated 5 May 2020



## STATEMENT OF A WITNESS

**In the matter of:** Investigation into the Ruby Princess and COVID-19 related deaths

**Place:** Mt Druitt Police Station

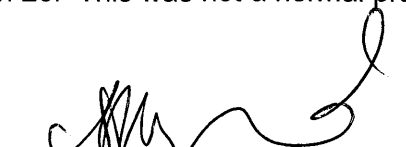
**Date:** 5 May 2020

**Name:** Colin WHITE

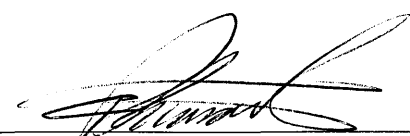
### STATES:

1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I would be prepared, if necessary, to give in court as a witness. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I will be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything that I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.
2. I am 70 years of age.
3. I am a bus driver for Southern Cross Buses at Werrington. I drive a mini bus for that company on a casual basis. We mainly do airport runs, and cruise ship and club runs. The mini bus normally has a trailer on the back of it for luggage.
4. On the 8 March 2020 I was allocated a driving job to drive 10 passengers from 3 different personal homes in the Penrith area to The Ruby Princess at Circular Quay and collect the same passengers again on the 21 March 2020. The client was Anthony [REDACTED] and I am told he arranged it through Greater Western Limousines. Greater Western Limousines have some link to our company. I also gave Anthony [REDACTED] my business card private mobile number for the return journey.
5. I dropped the group on the 8 March 2020 at Circular Quay. I dropped them as normal.
6. Between the 8 March 2020 and the 18 March 2020, I was aware of COVID-19 and that countries were taking precautions and social distancing was a new term around. Our business at that stage had very little work due to this situation. At this time I was using hand sanitiser and Glen 20. This was not a normal practice prior to COVID-19. I did not wear a mask.

Witness:

  
DSC Stephen HUNGERFORD  
5 May 2020


Signature:

  
Colin WHITE  
5 May 2020

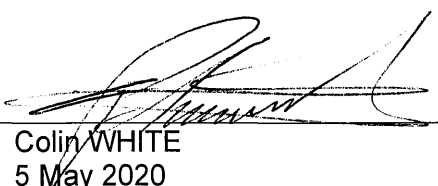
**Statement of** Colin WHITE  
**In the matter of** Investigation into the Ruby Princess and  
COVID-19 related deaths

7. On or about the 16 March or 17 March my company advised me that The Ruby Princess was returning early on the morning of the 19 March 2020. I was told it was an early pick up as normal about 8.30am. The day before on the 18 March 2020 I was told from Steve that pick up might be later as the passengers had advised the company that they expected they would be held up leaving the boat for health checks. So not know an exact time but thought about 10.30am
8. My mobile is not an I phone so I did not receive any messages from the passenger until the 19 March 2020.
9. About 8.30am on the 19 March I was on my way to the Ruby Princess and got a call from Tony [REDACTED] shortly after 8.30am and was told they were already on shore and they had not been delayed and they were ready to be picked up. I told them I was already on the way but would be about an hour. Anthony was fine with this they had not expected to be so quick. I was surprised they were so quick. The normal time to collect passengers from a cruise ship would be 8.30am and 9.30am but we were all expecting long delays.
10. About 9.30am I drove onto Circular Quay West and stopped near the wharf area. I had called them five minutes out to warn them. There was 100's of passengers standing on the wharf area waiting to be picked up this is normal. I did not see any sign of social distancing. There was no warning of any health issue. I made the pick up and it appeared just like a normal pick up from the cruise ship. I did not see people wearing masks. I picked up the same 10 passengers as last time organized by Anthony [REDACTED]. I assisted put their bags in the trailer and drove them back to the Penrith area and dropped them off at the same 3 residential locations as before.
11. On the return trip I spoke to one of my passengers and I asked them why they were off so early did not go through medical, and he said no just walked straight through. I can not recall them talking about self isolation. None of them appeared unwell. I dropped them off as normal.
12. At this time we had no work due to the COVID-19 issue.

Witness:

  
DSC Stephen HUNGERFORD  
5 May 2020

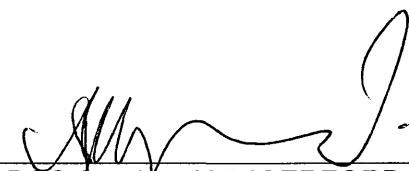
Signature:

  
Colin WHITE  
5 May 2020

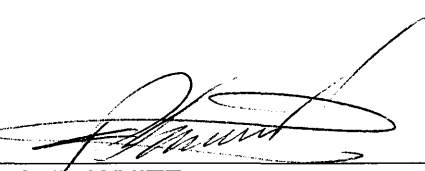
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13. About 2 or 3 days later I received a call from someone at Health and I was advised because I had picked up the customers from the cruise ship and there was potential COVID-19 passengers on that ship. I would be required to remain in self isolation for 14 days. I had been doing that anyway as there was no work for my job at that time. There was no mention of what my wife and daughter had to do who also lived in my house. I moved into the spare bedroom.
14. I was sent a text every day for the first 8 days asking me to confirm if I felt ok or not and I replied each day. After 8 days the texts stopped. I did not feel unwell at any time. I later received a call to find out if I was alright and they confirmed the procedure of texts had changed. I came out of self isolation 14 days later. I was never tested for COVID-19 and never felt unwell.
15. On the 8 April 2020 I received a call from DSC Hungerford who stated he was on the Ruby Princess investigation and he wanted to confirm I knew about the passengers in my bus. I confirmed I had done my self isolation and Health had already notified me. Until I received this call I did not know any of my passengers I had collected from the Ruby Princess had actually contracted COVID-19 just there was a possibility they had. I did not know one of my passengers had died as a result of COVID-19.

Witness:

  
DSC Stephen HUNGERFORD  
5 May 2020

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