



Special Commission of Inquiry into the Ruby Princess

EXHIBIT 89

Statement of Laraine Fenton dated 5 May 2020



STATEMENT OF A WITNESS

In the matter of: Strike Force BAST
Place: State Crime Command
Date: 5 May 2020

Name: Laraine FENTON

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 73 years of age.
3. I have been married to Robert Fenton for 52 years. We have three children, Rebecca [REDACTED] (47), Shelley [REDACTED] (45) and Bradley [REDACTED] (43). We are currently residing at [REDACTED] NSW.
4. In 1963, I completed my Leaving Certificate. I then was employed at Prince Alfred Hospital as a trainee Radiographer attending Sydney Technical College. I retired in 2007.
5. My husband and I enjoy cruising especially as Robert has some mobility problems and uses a walker. We booked our cruise through My Cruises 12 months in advance. The cruise cost \$[REDACTED] for both. Reference number [REDACTED]. We received correspondence from Princess Cruises prior to the cruise in relation to highlights available on board and boarding schedule.
6. On 8 March 2020, we arranged transport via Here & There Coach's service from home to Circular Quay, where the Ruby Princess was berthed. We received several txt (SMS) messages from Princess Cruises on the morning of the 8 March on my mobile phone, advising us of delays for boarding and we were fortunate in that we were able to change our pick-up time till later in the day and did not arrive at Circular Quay until 5.00pm. The shuttle driver informed us of the apparent cleaning process that had taken place after the Ruby Princess had docked. After checking in at the Princess Cruises Desk, we were directed to wait in a waiting room and boarded around 6.00pm, after clearance of the Ruby Princess by NSW Health. We

Witness:


S. JOHNSON

Signature:

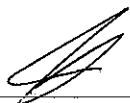


Statement of Laraine FENTON
In the matter of Strike Force BAST

were required to fill in a health clearance form at check inn. This form asked certain questions if we had travelled from a high-risk country and if we had any temperature or flu-like symptoms.

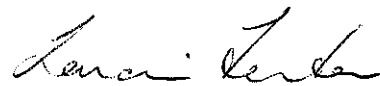
7. At the regular Safety Drill onboard the Ruby Princess ,prior departure, there was an emphasis on hygiene practices by the crew to the passengers. The Ruby Princess departed Sydney Harbour at 11.15pm that night.
8. My husband had recently had a problematic hip replacement but was well. I also, are in good health. Our GP is Dr Anthony SEAGE [REDACTED]
9. Our issued cabin was originally in [REDACTED], level 14 but due to a noise problem in the room, we were transferred to [REDACTED] level 11, forward port side.
10. After a couple of days at sea, the first stop of the Ruby Princess was Dunedin, where we did not get of the ship. We have previously been to New Zealand on other holidays and we heard the Cadbury Chocolate factory was closed, therefore we elected to stay on the Ruby Princess. The next stop was Akaroa, where we had to get a tender to shore. We visited shore only at Akaroa and went on an early harbour tour for approx. 1.5 hours. We then wandered through the town and enjoyed a take-away coffee by the harbour. We then re-joined the Ruby Princess which was anchored in the bay.
11. . The next day my husband had developed a cough and was off colour. We had brought Cold and Flu medication with us, which he ingested and this relieved his symptoms and after a couple of days in which he had stayed in our cabin, he was feeling better. We did advise the Medical Centre onboard but at no time did we suspect anything other than a common cold/flu. He subsequently tested negative upon returning home on 26 March. Unfortunately, I tested positive to Covid-19.
12. We generally had breakfast in the Michelangelo dining room, morning coffee in the International Café and then dinner in the Da Vinci dining room. We had occasional snack lunch on Deck 15 pool area to enjoy the fresh air. We attended the shows in Princess theatre and otherwise enjoyed the music and a drink in Crooners and Wheelhouse bar prior to going to dinner. For breakfast we invariably were on shared tables but at dinner we chose to dine alone.
13. Our cabin steward was Dan and the assistant purser, Godwin were mainly the only staff we had extended conversation with.

Witness:



S. John Sam

Signature:




Laraine FENTON

Statement of Laraine FENTON
In the matter of Strike Force BAST

14. The Safety Drill before departing Sydney, provided all the information regarding availability of ~~medical assistance etc and where to go if you need to evacuate the ship.~~ There was no specific mention of Covid-19.
15. We learnt about the escalation of Covid-19 via the television news broadcasts in our cabin. On 14th March we were notified via ship broadcast that Princess Cruises were pausing operations but that we were continuing the cruise as scheduled. Then 15th March written notice was given to us regarding Australian closure of ports and required self-isolation on return to Sydney. We also received two separate notices from Australian Government Dept of Health regarding Covid-19 guidance's over the following days including the suspension of the cruise and that we were returning to Sydney.
16. Initially we were informed that we would be arriving in port at approx. 1.00am but did not expect to disembark until midday. We were given instructions for meeting points and times the evening prior and it was then announced that we had been given clearance to disembark earlier. We had been able to contact our Shuttle service via email to advise our earlier arrival date and on shore we phoned to say we had disembarked. They were able to pick us up reasonably quickly along with 4 other passengers. As we disembarked and went through Customs everyone was given a sheet of instruction regarding self-isolation.
17. On the morning of 20 March, we received a text message alert from NSW Health informing us of the Covid-19 positive passengers onboard the Ruby Princess cruise I had just completed.
18. Our shuttle service operator rang on March 26th and informed us that one of the passengers who had travelled home with us had tested positive for Covid-19 and that the driver had come down with flu like symptoms and was going for testing that morning. As I had just started to develop a cough, I rang the Hotline and they recommended that we be tested. I got tested for Covid-19, at Westmead Hospital, which came back positive. I have been contacted by, Here and There Coaches who have informed me that 5 out of the 6 passengers that were picked up from the Ruby Princess on 19 March 2020, have all been Covid-19 positive which included the driver who was very ill in hospital for 6 weeks and only released a couple of days ago.
19. At first, we were not worried about joining the cruise as we were going Sydney to Sydney to New Zealand who had only a couple of Covid-19 cases. However, on the first day out we met with several overseas passengers at meal- times who had essentially flown into Sydney on the

Witness:


S. JOHNSON

Signature:


Laraine FENTON

Statement of Laraine FENTON
In the matter of Strike Force BAST

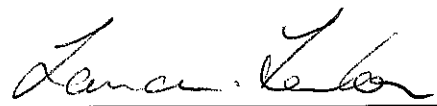
day of departure and became aware of the large numbers of international passengers. We feel
that this could have led to the introduction of the virus.

Witness:



S. JOHNSON
14/05/20

Signature:



Laraine FENTON

14/05/2020

Questionnaire

Edit

Delete

Related Details

Full Name	Laraine W FENTON Robert W FENTON	
Record Type	Passenger	
Date of Birth		
Status	Submitted	
Mobile		
Email		
Landline Number		
Contact Address		
Driver License Number		
Country of Issue	Australia	
Cabin Number		
Passport No.		
Passenger Contact	ROBERT FENTON	

Upload Files

Questionnaire Details

Were you travelling with any family? 1	Yes my husband.	
Did you or anyone contact with COVID? 1	Yes, myself, diagnosed a week after returning.	
Did you or anyone you were travelling? 1	No	
Was there any information passed on? 1	Not especially Covid-19, but general info such as washing hands, using the bathroom in your stateroom rather than the common areas, using hand sanitisers found all over the ship and before entering any eating areas. Over the last 3 days when the cruise had been suspended, there were announcements encouraging any passengers feeling unwell to report to the medical centre.	
Did you see extra cleaning taking place? 1	There was always staff wiping down bannisters, lift buttons, inside and out, bathrooms, tables etc. but this seemed normal, rather than extra.	
Did you see passengers or crews separate? 1	No. I only saw one man on the last day at sea, coming out of the lift wearing a mask.	
What ports did you travel to? 1	Akaroa	
Did you book any offshore tours? 1	We went on a harbour tour then wandered around the town and had a cup of coffee takeaway by the water.	
Where did you commonly go on the ship? 1	Michaelangelo dining room for breakfast and Da Vinci dining room for dinner most days. International cafe for morning tea/cappuccino. Pool area to read and enjoy fresh air and have a little lunch. Crooners bar for a predinner drink. Princess theatre for the show after dinner.	
Did you have a set dining time/table? 1	No	
Have you travelled on a cruise ship? 1	Yes. Everything seemed normal.	
Did you take any photographs or videos? 1	Just a few scenery snaps.	