



Statement (continued) in the matter of: Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race Investigation.  
Name: Rodney James STACEY

5. The first exercise consisted of fifteen persons, all whom had earlier received training in the use of life rafts, participating in several life raft drills. Each person was required to swim fifty metres of the pool, whilst wearing full wet weather gear and a life jacket, and then climb aboard a ten man life raft. Once aboard the life raft, each participant was given the scenario of being in charge of a 'man overboard' situation, with a male person floating unconscious approximately ten metres away from the life raft, requiring assistance. Inside the life raft, to give some assistance, was a second role player, simulating an exhausted survivor, untrained in the use of life rafts and marine rescue. During the exercise Constable PRATT, Constable PEARCE and I played alternating roles of both the unconscious person and life raft survivor. As survivor, assistance was only given upon request and limited to the role of an exhausted and untrained person.
6. Inside the life raft was a 'throw line' which could be used to assist in the recovery of the unconscious person. Most, but certainly not all, persons used the throw line to assist in their recoveries. Some tried to swim the victim back without it, whilst others sent the exhausted survivor to retrieve the victim. Once getting the victim to the life raft, several methods were adopted by each of the fifteen trained persons to get him inside. Most stayed in the water and pushed the victim, proving effective and safe entry into the life raft for the victim, an extremely difficult exercise at times.
7. Once successfully completing this task, each trained person was then required to individually enter a six man life raft and secure its entry, as they would in a real life situation. With the trained individual inside, and light inside the pool darkened, the life raft was then inverted, and the individual tasked to exit the raft. Upon exiting, the individual was then tasked to right the six man life raft.
8. After successfully completing this task, the individual was required to swim to an upturned ten metre life raft located nearby and right it. Whilst most of the fifteen trained persons attempted to right the life raft correctly, some found completing this task difficult due to the raft's size.
9. The fifteen trained individuals were then required to swim to a helicopter sling, hanging just above the water surface, and after placing the sling on themselves, give the appropriate signal to be winched from the water. Most persons, whilst attempting to correctly secure themselves to the sling, did have difficulty in placing the sling over their heads, due to the bulky nature of the life jackets they were wearing.

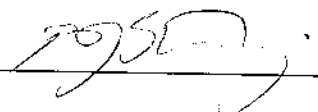
Witness: *[Signature]*

Signature: *[Signature]*

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10. The second exercise took place in the afternoon of Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September 1999 whereby all facets of the first exercise were repeated, only in this case with fifteen untrained persons carrying out each task. Again I played alternating roles of exhausted person and unconscious victim.
11. During this exercise, many of the untrained persons found entering the ten man life raft difficult, incorrectly using the aids on the raft. The untrained participants also generally showed more uncertainty in their decision making, with individuals, in most cases, requiring more time to assess the situation and make use of available resources. Very few individuals made use of the throw line or effective use of the exhausted person available to assist with the rescue. In some cases, either the individual themselves, or the exhausted person, was requested to swim to the victim without the throw line or any other attachment to the life raft. Some of the untrained persons also attempted their recoveries by paddling the life raft to the victim using paddles in the life raft, or in some cases, just their hands.
12. Almost all fifteen untrained persons found getting the victim into the life raft an extremely difficult, and for some, impossible task. Most stayed in the water and pushed the victim, again in many cases, using strength rather than technique to complete their aim. Whilst role playing the unconscious victim, I had to move position several times to avoid risk of neck or back injury, injuries that may have resulted in several of the retrievals had they been real-life situations.
13. Many untrained persons also had difficulties in safely completing the task of exiting the inverted six man life raft. Many individuals became entangled in the cords used to secure the entrance and required assistance from safety divers nearby. Those that exited head first, in particular, may well have drowned without such assistance.
14. During the righting of both life rafts, several persons in the untrained group used incorrect technique and therefore found these tasks extremely difficult and exhausting. Several persons in this group also risked serious injury to themselves by incorrectly righting the ten man life raft with the inflation bottle on the opposite side to them -resulting in the bottle falling toward them as the raft was righted.
15. Further difficulties were encountered by most untrained persons when placing on the helicopter sling in the incorrect manner. Several individuals in this group would have suffered serious injury had the winch operation been continued further.

Witness: OP Bodin

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16. On Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September 1999, an exercise was carried out testing levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in an inverted six man life raft. Constable PRATT, Constable ALLAN, Constable STANLEY, Mr. T. BOYLE and myself entered the inverted life raft, with Constable BIDGOOD and Constable PEARCE acting as safety divers. By using a sensor meter, carbon dioxide levels inside the life raft were measured and in less than four minutes the sensor indicated a dangerous level of carbon dioxide, forcing all persons inside to exit immediately. The same test was repeated three more times with the sensor again, indicating dangerous levels of carbon dioxide within approximately four minutes upon entering the life raft.
17. The next exercise to follow, again on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1999, involved inverting one round and one square, six man life raft. Each test began with one person being inside the life raft as it was inverted, with this number increasing by one until five people were in the raft during an inversion. As one of the persons inside each raft during each inversion, I found the experience more difficult as more persons were added, particularly in the case of four or five persons. Despite having the benefit of being prepared for each inversion, when more than three persons were inside it became extremely uncomfortable and disorientating, with bodies becoming entangled during the inversion causing a real risk of injury occurring. Upon being righted, it was not uncommon for 40cm of water to cover the floor of the life raft and for a person's head to be pinned down beneath the water for a period of time. It was also evident that when there were three persons in the life raft, it was actually more difficult to right than with four or five inside. This may have been due to the extra persons preventing the life raft twisting out of shape.
18. Following this exercise, Constable D. BIDGOOD and myself began the testing of release mechanisms for various safety harnesses and lines. During these tests I was wearing full wet weather clothing. The degree of difficulty in using the equipment for each test was given a rating from zero to five, zero being "impossible to achieve" with five being "easy to achieve".
19. The first equipment tested was a Stormy Seas lanyard no. 1739 (0126) AS2227, and Stormy Seas Harness Yoke. The PFD I was wearing was a Stormy Seas Yoke 0100. To conduct the test, I free dived to approximately two metres and clipped onto a static line anchored to the bottom of the pool. The first task involved inflating the PFD to create strain on the line and lanyard connection. The self release of the lanyard at the chest connection was completed one handed, after using my other hand to pull the line and provide slack. I rated the level of difficulty as an easy to achieve 'four'.

Witness: Al Gordon

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