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## NEW SOUTH WALES STATE CORONER'S COURT

STATE CORONER: J ABERNETHY

MONDAY 3 APRIL 2000

5/98 EVENT OF THE 1998 SYDNEY TO HOBART YACHT RACE

INQUEST INTO THE DEATHS OF JAMES MICHAEL LAWLER

MICHAEL BANNISTER

BRUCE RAYMOND GUY

PHILLIP RAYMOND CHARLES SKEGGS

JOHN WILLIAM DEAN

GLYN RODERICK CHARLES

Mr A Hill assisting the Coroner

Mr J Harris for the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia

Mr Elsworth for the Australian Yachting Federation

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HILL: Mr Coroner, the situation is that Mr Boyle from the Australian Maritime College, who did the tests on the life rafts that were used by the Winston Churchill, is here to give evidence and he has a 62 page report which we will work our way through. There is also various videos of the demonstrations and some of the other things that were done, such as the training. What Mr Boyle did is he took 10 yachtsmen who had previously been trained in boarding life rafts and righting them and been picked up by helicopters and 10 yachtsmen who had not been trained and he tested on these life rafts and the disparity is quite astounding.

CORONER: This is an important segment of the inquest?

HILL: Yes, because it certainly leads on to a recommendation that you may wish to make about the training of yacht's crews.

CORONER: Before you do that, I would like to comment on today's Herald. "Inquest is stacked," it says yacht club chief. Mr Harris, have you something you want to say about that?

HARRIS: Your Worship, I do. Plainly this article is of extreme concern to my client and they have instructed me to say to your Worship in so far as that article infers less than full support of this club for this inquest, it's categorically denied, that inference is denied.

CORONER: I appreciate that, Mr Harris. I know Mr Kennedy sat through this inquest assiduously and been unfailingly proper in trying to reflect the evidence I think as it's gone through and it really seems to me this might be a sub-editorial headline which doesn't match the article. I don't know but that's what it looks like. What I will say is this, and I put it on the record, Mr Harris, the inquest is attempting to look honestly at the issues and we have