

**STATEMENT in the matter of:**  
Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race 1998

**Place:** Bega  
Police Station  
**Date :** 11 June 1999

**Name:** Stewart GRAY

**Address:** Bega Police Station

**Tel. No.:** 02 64 929999

**Occupation:** Detective Senior Constable of Police

**STATES:-**

1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence which 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 shall be liable for prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

2. I am 35 years of age.

3. About 10.30am on Monday the 28th December, 1998 I recieved a call from Constable STEVENSON in relation to a number of persons who were missing from Yachts in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht race.

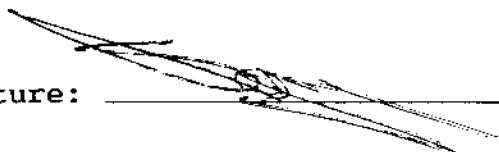
4. In company with Constable STEVENSON, we attended the Merimbula Airport and we spoke to Sergeant WELSBY in relation to the rescue operation that had commenced. Sergeant WELSBY informed us a number of yachtsmen and yachts were missing at sea. Constable STEVENSON and I then attened the Eden Police Station.

5. As a result of a number of inquiries which were conducted on Monday 28th December, 1998 I was informed Mr Bruce GUY and Mr Phillip SKEGGS died on the yacht 'Business Post Naiad.'  
I interviewed the crew of the Business Post Naiad on Monday 28th December, 98. As a result of the interviews it has been

**Witness:**



**Signature:**



STATEMENT (continued) in the matter of: Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race  
1998

Name: Stewart GRAY

determined about 5.30pm on Sunday 27th December, 1998 the yacht rolled through 360 degrees. The yacht was dismasted and continued. About 10.55pm on Sunday 27th December, 1999 Mr Phillip SKEGGS and Mr MATTHEWS were on deck at the time. The Yacht remained inverted for 4 to 6 minutes. At this stage Mr Bruce GUY suffered what appeared to be a heart attack below decks.

6. At the time Mr SKEGGS died, he was wearing a safety harness fixed to the port side of the yacht. He was pulled up when the yacht righted, and members of the crew commenced Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation unsuccessfully.

The crew of the Naiad were subsequently airlifted on Monday 28th December, 1998. The bodies of SKEGGS and GUY were left on the yacht. The yacht was towed to Eden by NSW Water Police.

The approximate position of the Naiad when it rolled on the second occasion was approximately 37 deg 16.5 min south and 150 deg 11.2 min east.

7. Life was pronounced extinct by Dr NELSON at the Pambula Hospital. The bodies of Mr SKEGGS and Mr GUY were subsequently taken to the Glebe Morgue where a post Mortem examination was carried out.

8. The last person to see Mr SKEGGS alive was Mr MATTHEWS. The last person to see Mr GUY alive was Mr WALKER.

9. On the 2nd of January, 1999 I interviewed Mr Robert KOTHE, skipper of the yacht, 'Sword of Orion.' I also interviewed Mr Carl WATSON from the same yacht. I was informed Mr Glyn CHARLES an English Olympic Yachtsman was helming the Sword of Orion when

Witness:



Signature:



STATEMENT (continued) in the matter of: Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race  
1998

Name: Stewart GRAY

she was hit by a wave which caused her to roll through 360 degrees. The yacht rolled at approximately 5.10pm on Sunday 27th December,1998.

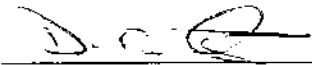
10. The approximate position of the yacht at the time Mr CHARLES was washed over was approximately 38deg.15min.south and 150deg.19min.east. At the time Mr CHARLES was fixed to the yacht in a harness and he was tethered to the yacht. It appears from preliminary inquiries the webbing stitching the safety line closest to his body failed. The lifeline was recovered. It was still fixed to the cockpit.

The body of Mr CHARLES has never been recovered to my knowledge, and I am of the opinion he is dead.

11. The last person to see Mr CHARLES alive was Mr Darren SENNOGLES. I interviewed Mr SENNOGLES on 7th January,1999.

12. On Monday 28th December,1998 I spoke to Sergeant MOSTARD, Victorian Water Police. I arranged for him to interview crew survivors from the yacht 'Winston Churchill.'

13. On the 21st of January,1999 I attended the Cruising yacht Club of Australia at Rushcutters Bay, Sydney. There I interviewed Mr John GIBSON. Mr GIBSON informed me around 5.00pm on Sunday 27th December,1998 a large wave hit the yacht and this caused unknown damage. The vessel began to sink and two life rafts were deployed. The Winston Churchill was approximately 37 deg. 15min south, 150 deg 15 min east when the yacht sank.

Witness: 

Signature: 

STATEMENT (continued) in the matter of: Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race  
1998

Name: Stewart GRAY


14. The crew left the yacht and entered the life rafts. GIBSON, DEAN, LAWLER, STANLEY and BANNISTER entered one raft. The rafts were tethered before coming apart due to the conditions. Within a short time the life raft drogue broke free. The raft was thrown about badly by the sea conditions.

15. A short time later the raft became inverted and this was the way it remained for sometime. Injuries were suffered by a crew member due to the bodies being intertwined. The raft was continually hit by rogue waves before becoming inverted. Whilst inverted discussions were held in relation to whether the raft should be righted, it was decided to remain inside. It was discussed oxygen may become limited, as a result a five inch slit was made in the floor (now the roof) of the raft.

16. As a result of the sea conditions the raft was rolled over several times. BANNISTER, DEAN and LAWLER were washed out of the raft.

17. The bodies of Mr Jim LAWLER and Mr Mike BANNISTER were recovered by Navy Helicopter on Monday 28th december, 1998. Mr BANNISTER was located at a position 37 deg 23 min 07 sec south 151 deg 27 min 23sec east. Mr LAWLER was located at a position 37 deg 23 min 50 sec south and 151 deg 24 min 45 sec east. The bodies were flown to Merimbula where they were transported to Pambula Hospital and where life was pronounced extinct by Dr SIMONSON, the bodies were then transferred to The Glebe Morgue where a Post Mortem was carried out.

Witness: D. C. E.

Signature: 

STATEMENT (continued) in the matter of: Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race  
1998

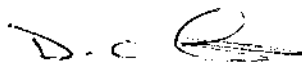
Name: Stewart GRAY

18. The body of Mr DEAN to my knowledge has never been recovered. I am of the opinion he is dead. There has been nothing to suggest to me that he is alive.

19. The last person to see Mr DEAN, Mr BANNISTER, and Mr LAWLER alive were Mr John GIBSON and Mr John STANLEY.

20. The investigation into the 1998 Sydney to Hobart Yacht race is still continuing.

Witness:



Signature:

