Witness Name: GRO-B
Statement No: WITN7605001
Exhibits: **Nil**
Dated:

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 15 December 2022.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. My full name is GRO-B and my date of birth is GRO-B 1956. My address is known to the Inquiry, I reside in Australia. I am married and have 3 children who have all left home now. I am a retired nurse. My husband was present during the interview in preparation of this statement to assist me.

2. I wish to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C (HCV) as a result of a transfusion in child birth, where I miscarried.

3. I trained I and worked as a nurse in the UK, until I had to stop due to illness.

4. I confirm that I am not currently legally represented and that I am happy for the Inquiry Team to assist me with my statement.

5. I also confirm that I have had the option to seek anonymity and the Inquiry's statement of approach explained to me. I can confirm that I am not requesting anonymity.

6. The inquiries criticisms procedure and the 'right of reply' has been explained to me.

Section 2: How Infected

7. My 1st child was born in 1979 without any issues. I was in good health until I was about 29 (in 1985) when I was having my 2nd pregnancy (twins) in GRO-B GRO-B, Gynaecological Ward of GRO-B Hospital in GRO-B (which is now part of the GRO-B. Unfortunately, I miscarried with twins I received a DNC after which I was sent home.

8. Two weeks later I haemorrhaged whilst out and returned to GRO-B where I received emergency surgery and the blood transfusions.

9. I was rushed straight into theatre as I was losing so much blood, I was given the transfusion of blood. I had a bad reaction to the 1st transfusion, I came out in wheels and was swelling up immediately after the transfusion. The hospital then gave me an injection in my stomach (I don't know what this was), the reaction then went down. I was given a 2nd blood transfusion, which I did not react to.

10. After the transfusions, I had a few days in hospital. On being discharged, I told the staff that I was feeling ill, they simply said that was normal after a miscarriage. Obviously, I believed this but the illness continued, I always felt ill.

11. After my miscarriage, I have had 2 further sons. GRO-C GRO-C

12. I moved around the South of England, over the years I lived in GRO-B GRO-B and GRO-B and often mentioned to my GP's that I was always tired and felt ill but nothing was done.

13. Eventually a new GP in the GRO-B sent me for tests at GRO-B GRO-B they diagnosed Neutropenia which a condition where you have a low number of white blood cells called neutrophils in your blood. When you have low levels of neutrophils in your blood, your immune system is weakened, making it harder for your body to fight infection. A member of staff when they told me the diagnosis said "get on with your life as best you can, you will have to live with the Neutropenia".

14. Over the years I had repeated dizzy spells, viruses, infections and long-term fatigue. I had blood tests for 20 years. I even had liver tests which showed raised levels but there was never any follow-up or HCV tests done. It was always put down to Neutropenia and I was simply given antibiotics, every time.

15. Over the years, I lost most of my teeth, my stomach was regularly bloated and I was put on a low fodmap diet (which is part of the therapy for those people with IBS). I had always eaten a healthy diet, drunk little alcohol and avoided processed foods but still the stomach problems persisted.

16. I also had to have an ablation of the heart, due to cardiovascular issues.

17. In 2005, as a direct result of the repeated illnesses, I decided to emigrate with my family to Victoria, Australia for a different climate. 2 or 3 years ago, I moved again to Queensland for an even warmer climate.

18. About a year ago, a young GP at my doctors in Queensland, thought that my blood "was not right", so sent me for tests. I then got a call from the GP saying "I need to see you straight away". I was told that I was HCV+. I given good advice and put on a medication called Maveret.

19. I was on the drug for 12 weeks then I had to wait for a further 12 weeks for the result. The further test showed me to be HCV-, but with the antibodies. I have been given a certificate to show this. I had limited side effects to the Maveret, I was nauseous and felt odd. Apparently the Maveret costs A$40,000 (approx. £23,000) per course of treatment.

20. I have never had any other transfusions, I have had my ears pierced but this were done at a reputable pharmacy. I don't have tattoos. GRO-B GRO-B GRO-B

Section 3: Other Infections

21. As far as I'm aware I have not contracted any other infections, than HCV.

Section 4: Consent

22. I don't know that I have been tested without my knowledge or consent or used

for research purposes.

23. I do believe I was provided with adequate information about my infection and how to deal with it in Australia, when the infection was eventually identified.

Section 5: Impact

24. The impact of the HCV infection, prior to my long overdue diagnosis last year, has had a devastating on my and my family. I had to give up a job that I loved (nursing) because it was too hard to cope with. There were numerous other jobs that I started but had to give up as I was always too unwell and fatigued. I had to retrain as an Aromatherapist, which I did from home.

25. We had to emigrate as a family to Australia, because we had found that the warmer climate is more beneficially to my health.

26. My children have suffered over the years because I have not had the energy to do the things that I should have with them.

27. Over the years, I have spent a fortune on natural therapy, to try to alleviate the medical issue's that I have had since the blood transfusion.

Section 6: Treatment/Care/Support

28. No counselling or psychological support was made available to me.

Section 7: Financial Support

29. I have made an application to the English Infected Blood Support Scheme (EIBSS) which was rejected because it is not signed by a doctor registered with the General Medical Council (GMC) of the UK.

30. I have been in contact with Hep C Trust and they have established that EIBSS were wrong to decline my application, the doctor signing the form does not have to be a member of the British GMC. I will be appealing their initial decision.

31. I applied to the medical records office for all my medical records from when I left the UK in 2005, back to when this incident happened in 1985. I was only supplied with records back until approximately 1990 as they informed me that the records were illegible prior to this and so could not be released.

Section 8: Other Issues

32. I would add that in my considerable experience the health care system in Australia is far superior to the United Kingdom.

33. From being diagnosed with HCV to seeing a specialist in that field took less than two weeks. Blood tests and results were given promptly after the twelve-week course of drugs and required waiting period. I was so relieved to receive the all clear. I will always have Hep C with in my body but have a certificate to say i am not infectious.

34. I am still suffering mentally and also have ongoing medical conditions linked to the virus.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed GRO-B ________________

Dated _19/03/ 2023____________________