



Statement

Name John Michael Patrick HENNESSEY

Address REDACTED

Date 9 April 2014

1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I am prepared to give to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
2. Where direct speech is referred to in this statement, it is provided in words or words to the effect of those which were used, to the best of my recollection.

Background

3. My full name is John Michael Patrick HENNESSEY and my date of birth is REDACTED 1936. My mother named me 'Michael John HENNESSEY'. As I explain below, the Christian Brothers changed my name, date of birth, and place of birth. I now go by the first name John.
4. I was born in England and 'deported' to Australia aged 11, in 1947. I have a copy of the Indenture signed by the Custodian acknowledging my arrival at Bindoon [CTJH.056.11085.0049].
5. I was sent by the Sisters of Nazareth from an institution called Nazareth House, located in Bristol, England. I lived at Nazareth House from birth, up until I went to Australia.
6. I was born out of wedlock. My mother conceived me in Ireland and was banished by the Church in Ireland because she was a single mother. My mother went to England, to give birth to me.

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She was aged 24 when I was born. I have seen my baptismal certificate and it says 'Michael John Hennessy. Not expected to live'. I believe that the Nuns at the convent told my mother that I had died, after I was born. My mother also told me that when she was courting Patrick, who later became my step-father, that a Priest had made her swear on the Bible that she would never tell anyone that I was born.

7. I was illegally taken to Australia without the consent or knowledge of my mother. I was told very little about going to Australia. In those days, I believed the Nuns and the Brothers. I never questioned them. What they told me was the Gospel truth.
8. I remember that I and other children lined up in the hall at Nazareth House. There were two or three Christian Brothers on the stage. They were dressed in their black robes. The Sisters introduced us to the Brothers, and said 'the Brothers are looking for boys and girls to go to Australia'. I remember the Brothers telling us about kangaroos and fruit. I had no idea where Australia was. The Sisters said to us that the children who want to go to Australia should form one queue, and the children who do not want to go to Australia form another queue. The queue for Australia was the longer queue. It made no difference, anyway, because we all went to Australia. I was very excited. This was an adventure, for me, and it sounded good.

My journey to Australia and arriving at Boys Town Bindoon

9. I remember when we left for Australia, we were all dressed in our suits. We were allowed to take our toys with us. We left with great fanfare. We boarded the ship the Asturias. I was very happy. I felt comfortable on the ship because there were Nuns who came with us. The Nuns were like our mothers. They gave me a sense of security. On the ship, I had a good time. I was excited. I remember that the crew were good to us. The Nuns wanted us to go to school five

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days a week, on board the ship. But the crew used to hide us, when they saw the Nuns on deck, so that we did not have to go to school. The food on the ship was the best I had ever had.

10. We landed at Fremantle. I now know this was in November 1947. It was a stinking hot day. We all had white Pommy skins and were wearing our suits. There was a band to greet us. I remember feeling a sense of great excitement. We were all taken to a big shed. It had been done up with flags. One of the people who greeted us was Federal Immigration Minister, Arthur CALDWELL. The Archbishop of Perth was also there. It was a great welcome. I felt excited about the fuss that was made of us. I will never forget the Archbishop said 'welcome to Australia, we are looking for good white stock to populate Australia because we are worried and afraid of the Asian hordes'. At the time, this meant nothing to me.

11. When it hit me that things were not right was when the Brothers separated the brothers and sisters into two queues. I can still hear the screams of these kids being separated. It then hit me, there was something wrong here. I felt frightened and confused. The Brothers had taken control, the Nuns were gone, and I had nobody to turn to. The Brothers came across as very harsh and hard.

12. I remember being herded, together with other children, onto trucks from various institutions. We travelled for at least one and a half hours, to Boys Town Bindoon. I was still wearing my English woollen suit. The weather was stifling. I was very thirsty. The truck was similar to a cattle truck. It had sides and no cover. Other boys on the truck with me were crying. I knew there was something amiss. I did not have a hat and I got sunburned. I still had my suitcase, with me.

13. When I arrived at Boys Town Bindoon, I and the other boys were taken to the parade ground and were paraded in front of the buildings. Brother KEANEY, the Superior of Boys Town Bindoon,

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said, 'we don't want you to grow up as soft little girls. We want to make men out of you'. Some older boys that already lived there stood behind us on the parade ground. This made me feel intimidated. The older boys were all dressed in khaki.

14. Brother KEANEY was a big man with white hair and an authoritative voice. He said to the older boys, 'get them to take their suits off', and to put on khaki shorts and shirts. I felt terrified by Brother KEANEY. All my possessions were taken from me. I and the other boys were stripped naked in the courtyard and given rough khaki shorts and a shirt to wear. I was given no shoes and no underwear. From that day onwards, I never had shoes for seven years, summer or winter.

15. I remember the 'sound of silence' of the Australian bush. I was so used to excitement and noise. I realised there were no kangaroos and there was no fruit. I felt like I had been betrayed. From the time I arrived at Bindoon, there was no love. We received no welcome, and we did not get any drinks. I was very thirsty but too frightened to say anything. I knew I was on my own. I cried myself to sleep every night for months.

16. For the first 12 months, there were no buildings for us to sleep in at Bindoon. We slept on outdoor concrete verandas. We were exposed to the rain and to the heat. Dirt used to blow into our beds. It was bloody awful.

17. I believe the Brothers felt we were children of the Devil. We were not children of God. Because we were born out of wedlock. We were not normal children.

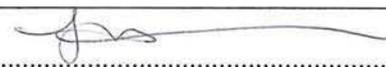
FINDING MY MOTHER AND LOSS OF MY IDENTITY

18. It has taken me 57 years to find my mother, through the help of the Child Migrants Trust. I have been deceived by the State Government of Western Australia and by the Catholic Church. They

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informed me that I was an orphan. That was a lie. I found my mother through the Child Migrants Trust. The Catholic Church and the Federal Government did not help me to find her. My mother and I were able to spend only six years together before she passed away. I never told her of my experiences. I did not want to hurt her.

19. My mother never had any other living children. She had three children who were stillborn. Doctors believe that she was subconsciously afraid, because she had 'lost' me already, and did not want to lose another child.
20. During my return to the United Kingdom, I also went to Nazareth House. I asked for copies of my records, of my eleven years at the institution. I was told I was never there. The Nuns had no record of me, at all.
21. When I arrived in Australia I had no birth certificate. My name and date of birth were recorded incorrectly: the name 'Michael' was removed, I was incorrectly recorded as being born in Belfast (I was born in Chelsea, London), and I was made three years younger. Information that might have assisted my search for my family and identity was withheld from me, for decades. Margaret HUMPHRIES of the Child Migrants Trust tried to get my records from Bindoon, for me. She got given half a page.
22. Not having an identity has caused me excruciating pain and, for me, I consider this to be unforgivable. I feel I have lost decades of my life. This lack of an identity gives context to the vulnerable situation I was in, at Bindoon.

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ABUSE AT BOYS TOWN BINDOON

Physical assault

23. I suffered severe physical violence by both the Christian Brothers and older boys.
24. Brother KEANEY would walk around with his walking stick, which had a pointed metal end, and would strike and poke boys at random. Brother KEANEY had a ferocious Irish temper. If anybody got in his way, God help you. All that Brother KEANEY cared about was building the big grand buildings. Anything that got in the way of his plans, he swept aside. Building work was given priority, including over the boys' education. Brother KEANEY had a split personality. He could be very charming, especially to visitors and officials.
25. I lived in constant terror of physical violence. Punishments, by way of floggings with canes and straps, were frequently carried out as public spectacles. The straps were specially made and they had metal things embedded in them. I witnessed boys wet themselves in fear. I was publicly flogged many times. Punishments were carried out not only by Brother KEANEY but by other Brothers. If they could not get you during the day, Brothers would get you at night when you were in bed. Violence at Bindoon was a way of life and love was a dirty word. You had to fend for yourself.
26. On one occasion, I was really hungry, and not for the first time! I was the leader of a group of boys who decided to raid the vineyard at night. We had a good feed of Brother KEANEY'S grapes. The morning after we pinched the grapes, after Mass, Brother KEANEY came raging into the dining room in a fit. He yelled 'HENNESSEY come up here', for me to come out the front. He said, 'I heard you were the leader of the raid on the grape vines'. I said, 'yeah'. He said, 'why did you go there?' I said 'I was hungry'. Brother KEANEY belted me over the head with his walking

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stick. In front of all the boys, he stripped off all my clothes. Brother KEANEY beat me with his fists and stick, leaving me bleeding on the floor and in pain. He nearly flogged me to death. I was terrified. Then, with his big boots, Brother KEANEY booted me out of the dining room. He left me bleeding and bruised.

27. Nobody came to my aid. I received no medical attention. This assault stands out for me, above all others. I was left with a stutter, which I still have today and which has caused me to suffer much bullying and humiliation over the years. Medical advice has told me that Brother KEANEY'S assault is the reason for my stutter.

28. I have been psychologically affected by Brother KEANEY'S assault. I could not believe that this man, who I looked to as a father, would behave like this. He had broken my will. He had broken me. Other Brothers would have seen the results of this attack, on me. Nobody did anything. Some of the other boys came and comforted me, afterwards.

Sexual assault

29. Most of the Christian Brothers at Bindoon when I was there were paedophiles. The remainder were sadistic and violent brutes.

30. In those days, I had no idea what a paedophile was. I know now. I believe the Brothers did not think they were doing anything wrong. There was a complex network of gangs at Bindoon. Brothers' 'pets' and bullying older boys meant I was never safe. Every day was about survival. Boys were blamed for crimes, both real and imagined, simply by pointing a finger or being associated with the wrong boy at the wrong time.

31. The Brothers endlessly questioned us about which boy were fiddling with whom. The torment and belting would continue until a confession was beaten out of us. Information would be used

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from the confessional, by Father WILLIAM. Father WILLIAM was a paedophile. We would tell him, at confession, what was going on. He would relate this to the Brothers. The Brothers got most of their information from Father WILLIAM. The Brothers would put boy against boy, and accuse one boy of something. They would try to make us not trust each other.

32. When we were showering, the Brothers would inspect us closely. I remember the Brothers would 'help' the boys, including me, to wash properly, commenting on our genitals, and lifting our testicles with their fingers or a cane.

33. Each night, the dormitory would be visited by the Brothers who either took individual boys into their room for the night, or molested them in front of us. I personally witnessed and experienced this. The Brothers who did this include O'SULLIVAN, O'NEILL, PARKER, WISE, ANGUS, MURPHY, TUPPIN, MOORE, O'DOHERTY and KEANEY.

34. There was no one to question the Brothers, and no one to tell them it was wrong. If a boy was taken to a Brother's room, no other Brother would say, 'you should not be doing that'.

35. I was sexually abused by Brother KEANEY for five years, from the ages of 11-16. I was 16 when I left Bindoon.

36. Brother KEANEY kept a small pool of 'pets', who were boys he used for sexual gratification and who he kept around him, all the time. I was one of those boys. At the time, I did not understand what Brother KEANEY was doing to me, and thought I was somehow privileged because he would take me into his bed, and would sometimes tell me I was 'a very special boy'.

37. One of my jobs was to massage oil into Brother KEANEY'S thick white hair. This was part of his daily routine; he was afraid he would go bald. While I massaged his scalp, Brother KEANEY would slip his hand up my shorts and fondle my genitals. He would tell me I was growing into a big boy.

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38. After a while, this behaviour developed into Brother KEANEY masturbating me, and then telling me to do the same to him. Then, Brother KEANEY began making me perform oral sex on him. I remember thinking that if I did what he wanted, he would be pleased with me and I might get extra treats. Sometimes Brother KEANEY would ejaculate into my mouth, and when I tried to pull away as he was building to a climax, he would grab my head and stop me moving away. Many times that happened and, although mostly I gave in, that part was horrible.
39. Brother KEANEY would often cuddle me, and tell me I was a very good boy. For a child who was otherwise living in a situation of brutality and deprivation, I came to experience this as tender and loving. It is only now I can see the appalling exploitation of his criminal behaviour.
40. Brother KEANEY would spend a long time playing with my genitals and laughing when I became erect, masturbating me, and then making me satisfy him. Perversely, this gave me status. I knew how to please the boss. I used to say that I knew him better than anyone. I explained away his violent temper, but this made the assault concerning the grape stealing incident when I was 12 all the more traumatic for me.
41. By the time I was 14 or 15, Brother KEANEY had fully groomed me into a willing sexual partner. Other boys came and went. I knew Brother KEANEY molested those other boys, but somehow I convinced myself that he felt something special for me. I used to tell myself he was like a father to me, but as I grew older I remember fantasising that he was more of a partner. Being in Brother KEANEY'S room, I felt like I was somehow away from all the horror and pain. Like I had won over my gaoler and the price to pay was worth it.
42. I became a sexual target for many others, both Brothers and older boys. If there was no violence involved, I did not see it as abuse. Sexual activity with anyone was the norm, but sexual activity with those in power made you safer and gave you power over some of the lower grade bullies.

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43. One of the Brothers was particularly violent. His name was Brother ANGUS. Twice he raped me: full anal penetration, down at the piggery. Brother ANGUS just grabbed me, bent me over a hay bale, pulled down my shorts, and shoved his erect penis into my backside. I screamed in pain and he belted me across the head, telling me to 'shut up and take it like a man'. I was 13. Brother KEANEY seemed to me to know about what had happened, and I thought he was angry and jealous that I had been with someone else.
44. Soon after the above incidents, Brother WISE, who was in his twenties or early thirties at the time, started sexually abusing me, down in the vineyards. I did not see this behaviour as abuse, at the time. I was 14. He did not belt or rape me like Brother ANGUS and so I went along willingly, even feeling like I was cheating on Brother KEANEY. Brother WISE was into quick mutual masturbation. This was the kind of thing many of the boys did with each other. At around the same time, I became sexually involved with another boy my own age. I remember Brother KEANEY getting angry about this, because I was 'his'.
45. The other main adult predator toward me was Father WILLIAM. He was a Benedictine monk. He was well known for groping the boys. Nobody got out of the vestry without having Father WILLIAM stick his hand into your shorts. Father WILLIAM was always playing with your balls and trying to make you get hard. With me, he was more determined. Soon after I arrived, aged 11, I was put in charge of Father WILLIAM'S garden, outside his little flat and away from the main building. I would be working in his garden and he would tell me to come inside and have a drink. He gave me communion wine and many times I staggered out of his flat completely drunk.
46. I remember the first time Father WILLIAM assaulted me. He had given me a couple of drinks, and I was groggy. He started talking about the garden and then asked me if I knew about the birds and the bees. He said I would look 'very nice with no clothes on', and told me to take off my

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shorts and shirt. It felt weird but he was the priest so I did it. On that first occasion, Father WILLIAM just played with my genitals. This happened often, at least once a week over the next two years. I remember Father WILLIAM pointing out when I began to grow pubic hair and making me touch him. Over time, Father WILLIAM made me masturbate him and when he tried to get me to give him oral sex, I usually resisted. I was already doing the same for Brother KEANEY but Father WILLIAM did not have the same power over me. I pretty much went along with everything else.

47. I was also frequently raped by another boy, about my age but much bigger, called [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] had told me he had been sexually molested all the time by almost every one of the Brothers, because he had very large genitals. My involvement with [REDACTED] started off as mutual masturbation but he was rough, and I shied away from him. [REDACTED] usually got me on Sundays, when we would clear off into the bush after church before any of the Brothers could grab us for hard manual labour. [REDACTED] would often track me down in the bush and would hold me down and then force himself into me, penetrating me very painfully. [REDACTED] later died [REDACTED]. Although I came to hate him when he was raping me at age 14/15, I always felt bad about his death because he had such a bad time at Bindoon.

48. I recall on one occasion I went to Brother KEANEY'S office with a friend who alleged he had been sexually abused by one of the Brothers. Brother KEANEY stood up with his cane and bashed my friend over the head and said, 'I don't want to hear that dirt anymore'.

49. I never reported the sexual abuse I suffered. I was never interviewed by child welfare and I never went to the police. I have also never received any counselling.

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LABOUR AND VISITORS

50. We were forced to build our own institution. We worked without shoes, and without sufficient food, many hours a day when we should have been in school. The educational deprivation left me and others barely able to read and write. I am self-taught, now.

51. The labouring work I had to do was dangerous and I suffered injuries, including lime burns on my feet from mixing cement. I did not have modern equipment and there was no safety equipment. Some boys fell from the roof, and many of us had rocks dropped on us.

52. I feel as though this work was all done for Brother KEANEY'S personal glory. Because of my privileged position as one of KEANEY'S pets, I was often present when important visitors came to see Brother KEANEY'S 'wonderful work with the orphans.' Federal and State politicians, and senior police officers from Perth visited. They must have seen the terrible state of the boys but nothing was ever done to improve our living conditions, reduce the violence and assaults, or even make sure that we had decent food.

53. It is clear to me that the State Government and institutions such as the police force were all in collusive relations with the Church. Very often, visitors would leave in an intoxicated state courtesy of Brother KEANEY'S well-stocked wine cellar. I know this because I often served the drinks. I specifically remember serving wine and food to Sir Paul HASLUCK, the future Governor General of Australia, Senator O'SULLIVAN, Senator Dorothy TAGNEY, Australia's first female senator, and the Police Commissioner.

54. Bindoon became somewhat of a tourist attraction. Busloads of people used to come and see Bindoon. Brother KEANEY used to tell the boys after breakfast Sunday morning, 'I want you all to go into the bush'. We all would go into the bush, and disappear. He would tell us not to come

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back until 4 or 5 o'clock. We had to fend for ourselves in the bush. I felt that Brother KEANEY was seen as someone who was put on a pedestal. No matter what we said about him, no one would believe us. Brother KEANEY would go to Mass in the morning, go to communion, and go out and flog little kids.

AFTER I LEFT BINDOON

55. After I left Bindoon I did not stay in Western Australia. I went to Melbourne, where I was for about five years. I left Western Australia because I wanted the chains taken off me. Boys in Western Australia told me they still felt the pull of the Brothers. The Brothers still own them.

56. The Brothers are very powerful. They had the biggest colleges, in those days. Judges and politicians were taught by the Christian Brothers. There was a perceived loyalty to the Brothers. As I explain above, they were very well-connected.

57. After I left Melbourne, I moved to Campbelltown in New South Wales. That was around 35 years ago. I was a very active environmentalist, including environmental fights with the Catholic Church.

Brother KEANEY'S death

58. I remember when Brother KEANEY died. I remember walking through the streets of Perth and I saw that the newspaper headline that a good man had died. So I bought a newspaper to see who the good man was. I was shocked and devastated to read that it was Brother KEANEY. I felt awful. I went to a theatre and bawled my eyes out in the darkness. That was the kind of hold he had on me.

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59. A week before KEANEY died, I'd visited Bindoon for the weekend. I remember sitting on a garden seat out the front of the building. He loved to see the old boys back, and the buildings had all finished, so he was very content. A week later, we were burying him at the same spot under the seat. When I saw him in the casket I couldn't believe how still he was. I'll never forget that.

TRAINING TO BE A CHRISTIAN BROTHER

60. In the late 1960s I was training to become a Christian Brother. I knew there was wrong in the Christian Brothers. That is why I wanted to join. However I felt like the Christian Brothers wanted to control me. I had to do everything they said. It was like going back to my school days. I was there for nearly 12 months.

61. I was the oldest candidate there. I was about 24 and the rest were about 17 or 18. They had just left school. I was telling them about the sexual abuse and the cruelty at Boys Town Bindoon. I think the other Brothers felt I was a bad influence. I was telling the younger students too much. The Brothers came to me one day and said that I had to leave. I asked why. They said I owed money to the Tax Office. This was not true. I did not owe a penny. It made me feel like they didn't trust me. I felt like it was an excuse, but it was a blessing from God that I didn't become a Christian Brother.

62. When I was in training, I was training to become a teacher. The sorts of things I learned were about the Christian Brothers' history, the Church, and other religious things. I learned a bit of gardening and building repair.

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LIFELONG CONSEQUENCES

Relationships with women

63. I recall, at Bindoon, seeing that the Brothers were embarrassed talking to women. The Brothers and the Priests were also not particularly respectful to the Nuns. The Brothers had their own social structure and standing, like their own world. Sometimes, we would watch movies in the courtyard. If a love scene came onto the screen, the Brother would put his hand up in front of the projector so we could not see it. The Brothers were very uncomfortable in the presence of women, whether they were Nuns or other visitors.

64. We were taught by the Brothers that the opposite sex was evil. It was almost like, we should keep away from them. I left Bindoon with a poisoned attitude to the opposite sex. I tried to get on with women, but I was never comfortable. I regret now that I have no children of my own. I am the last of my family now. It is unforgivable. I will go to the grave a tormented person.

65. I have basically lived alone all my life. I have never had a committed relationship. I do not trust people. The issue of sexuality is a minefield for me. I lock my doors and keep people out.

Stigma and shame

66. Brother KEANEY would eat his meals in front of us. While we ate tasteless porridge and stale bread dipped in dripping, the Brothers ate bacon, eggs and toast, and drank coffee. This was so we knew our place. We were nothing. This also made food into a currency. I would do anything, and let anyone do anything to me, just for a decent feed. It made me steal. It made me feel angry and ashamed. By the time I left Bindoon, I felt nothing unless I had a strong protector at my side. Within myself, I was nobody. I have lost my dignity and my self-respect. I have lived a life of pain, confusion, and terrible loneliness.

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67. As a child, I was programmed into the most distorted, twisted patterns of sexual and social behaviour. I left Bindoon without an identity or useful skills. Barely literate, and with the knowledge that selling your body was the only way to get your basic needs met, launched me on a terrible course for my adult life.
68. In later life, I have at times had a public profile in local government and my background at Bindoon has been used against me. Without any basis in reality, I have been accused of being a child molester just because I was at Bindoon. I have been interviewed by the police, beaten up, and harassed. I never have children at my home without their parents in case I am accused of molesting them. I feel very vulnerable. Nobody has ever stuck up for me and even in my older age I feel the same stigma I felt as a child. At times I have felt suicidal, in such loneliness and despair.
69. Until I was in my fifties, I had no words or real understanding of what was done to me at Bindoon. It is painfully confronting to realise there was nothing special about me. I was simply exploited and abused by criminals who could relax in the knowledge that the State Government were my legal guardians and would never bother to meet their responsibilities.

My mother

70. I cannot put a price on being deprived of my mother for 57 years. I also cannot put a price on the harm that she suffered. I think she is also a victim. There are two sides to this story. The John HENNESSEY side and the May Mary HENNESSY side.
71. In my adult life, I have been the Deputy Mayor of Campbelltown and I have led in the efforts from the Granville train disaster. It is still Australia's worst train disaster. I wanted to help people, for my mother's sake. I did not want to be a nobody. I have picked myself up out of the

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gutter and I have tried to serve society. I could so easily have locked myself away for the rest of my life. Everything I have done, I have done on behalf of my mother. I take her picture with me, everywhere.

72. The Order of Australia Medal was awarded to me, for community service. However it is my mother's award. I received it in 1999. It was approved by her Majesty the Queen of England. In my lifetime, I have met people including Tony BLAIR, former Prime Minister Julia GILLARD, former Prime Minister Kevin RUDD, and the former British Prime Minister Gordon BROWN.

DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE I SUFFERED

73. The first time I ever disclosed the sexual abuse I suffered was to a group of friends. Nothing came of that disclosure. The first person I disclosed to who I felt believed me was the ABC journalist Andrew OLLE, who interviewed me in the 1970s. I appeared on his morning program. Following this, I was also interviewed by Quentin DEMPSTER for a television program 'This Day Tonight'. I recall my interview with Quentin DEMPSTER was after I had made contact with Margaret HUMPHRIES of the Child Migrants Trust.

74. After my appearances with OLLE and DEMPSTER, I was treated like a leper in the Campbelltown community. The attitude was, how dare you speak about the Christian Brothers and officials like that? People thought I was trying to big note myself. I had a terrible time. I was thinking about packing my bags and leaving. I lived alone and I had no family to support me. I decided to lay low for a while. I was not giving up.

75. The best thing that ever happened to me was when I got in contact with the Child Migrants Trust, in the mid-1980s. I contacted Margaret HUMPHRIES who had a few articles in the paper. They believed me from day one, when I felt that no-one would believe me. They trusted me and I

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trusted them. I felt like there was light at the end of the tunnel. To this day, the Child Migrants Trust have never asked for one cent from me for their services, although I have offered to pay. Margaret HUMPHRIES has inspired me. She is like my second mother. The Child Migrants Trust emboldened me.

76. I also appeared on 60 Minutes in the United States, in the early 1990s.

APOLOGY BY THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

77. The 1993 apology by the Christian Brothers was not a personal apology. It was all done through the media, not to us personally. I did not get a letter or any personal contact. It made me feel cold. They still believed that we were nobodies. The only reason they made the apology was public pressure. It had nothing to do with the victims at all and it cost them no money. They just wanted to wash their hands and feel good.

MY LETTERS TO THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

78. Up until 1993, I hadn't been involved in anything to do with seeking compensation or anything like that. However, in 1993 I wrote to Brother FAULKNER to get my records and ask for financial assistance to travel to England [CTJH.056.17039.0033]. In part of my letter, I wrote:

'... Brother Faulkner, would it be possible to get a copy of all my records from the time I went to Boys Town Bindoon till the time I left. Also, is it possible to get a return air fare ticket to England so I can find my family. I would like to go over there as soon as possible before the cold sets in.

I find it very embarrassing to ask for the air fares, but I have been out of work for some time and the Media wanted to pay, but I thought it better to ask you first. ...'

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79. I got no records and no assistance. I felt like there was no appreciation for all the work I did as a child.

80. In August 2009, I wrote to the Provincial of the Holy Spirit Province [CTJH.056.17039.0009]. I was desperate to visit my step-father Patrick, who was unwell. I wrote:

'Dear Rev Brother

I am one of the ex-Bindoon boys who was so horrifically sexually abused and physically assaulted under the care of the late Brother Paul Keaney and one who has never made a claim on the Order of Christian Brothers. In the meantime I have tried throughout my life to pick up the pieces in helping the community at large.

I now, under the names of Mary MacKillop and Edmond Rice, two wonderful people who dedicated their lives helping people like us, am now seeking your help. I need to see my sick dad in England.

Due to my stay at Bindoon, I need a helping hand with my health and the needs that a person of my age cannot afford to have.

I would appreciate any help that would be forthcoming. In the spirit of reconciliation, I would be prepared to sign a Deed of Release of any claims on the Christian Brothers Order if you need it.
...'

81. I got a letter in reply, dated 16 September 2009 [ROI.0011.001.0001]. It was signed by Brian BRANDON. It said:

'... I acknowledge receipt of your letter of 27 August 2009 in which you asked about the possibility of financial assistance to visit your father in England.

Signature:.....

Witness:.....

I notice that you appear to have declined to accept an offer (in late 1997) from the West Australian Institutes Reconciliation Trust, which body is, of course, now no longer in existence.

I am not aware whether you have made an application to Redress WA, for which applications have now closed, but I feel confident that, if your circumstances warranted it, you would have done so.

If, in fact, you have not taken up either of these opportunities then I have to indicate that the Christian Brothers are not now in a position to provide financial assistance to you.

I am, of course, sympathetic to your need to visit your ailing father and encourage you to do so, even though I'm not able to provide financial resources to assist you. ...'

82. I feel the letter I got showed how the vindictiveness was still carried on. There was no appreciation for all the work I did, labouring at Bindoon. The Brothers did not take this into account. They were not there, when I needed them. There was no compassion, and no Christian values, and no gratitude. I had never previously asked for any compensation. The September 2009 letter made me feel devastated. I did not want to ask the Child Migrants Trust to help me again because they had been so good to me, and would not take payment from me.

83. I did not respond to the September 2009 letter.

SLATER AND GORDON

84. Just before Christmas in 1997 I was contacted about a meeting to do with getting compensation from the Christian Brothers. I went to the meeting about a week later, just two days before Christmas. There were about 20 of us sitting in a room. Most of them were excited about getting some money. I didn't know what to expect but I went with an open mind.

Signature:.....

Witness:.....

85. A man called Hayden STEPHENS met each of us individually. I didn't really understand what he was saying because of the legal jargon that he was giving to me but he showed me a document, which he asked me to sign, and explained to me that I would be paid \$2,000 [ROI.0011.001.0003]. The document was with a letter on a Slater & Gordon letterhead that was incorrectly addressed to me at Campbellfield instead of Campbelltown [CTJH.056.17039.0010].
86. I didn't feel right signing the document, because of how hasty it all was. I felt like I was being pressured to sign the document when I didn't really understand it. This was the first time I had ever been with a solicitor. I got no chance to ask any questions about the documents. I wanted to take them home with me, but Mr STEPHENS said it had to be signed today. So, when Mr STEPHENS was busy talking to one of the others, I put the document in my bag and left. I was never contacted about it after that, and I didn't look at the document again for many years.
87. Later on, I found out from Margaret HUMPHRIES that Slater & Gordon's bills had been paid for by the Christian Brothers. No-one had ever explained to me why that was the case. I felt betrayed again.

REDRESS WA

88. I submitted an application form to Redress WAWA.0010.001.2505 and a statement in support of my application WA.0010.001.2527. I have been provided with a copy of the Notice of Assessment Decision WA.0010.001.2523.
89. Redress WA was traumatic. It was the hardest experience I had. This was because I had to tell more than I wanted, about private things, and go into specifics. I was disappointed when the new Government came in and halved the money available to be paid. The previous Government had committed to it. This was another betrayal.

Signature:

Witness:

90. The money I got was not adequate. My greatest pain was needing money to be able to visit my mother and Patrick, at will. That is why I wrote to the Christian Brothers, in desperation. I do not have a lot of money, myself. It is embarrassing to have to ask them for money. If it were not for the Child Migrants Trust I would not have had the money to go to my mother's funeral.
91. I received \$45,000 from Redress WA. That was around ten years ago.

OTHER INQUIRIES

92. I have given evidence to the Senate Inquiry and to the House of Commons. At the House of Commons, they all broke down when I gave my story. I felt like it had been recognised, in high places, that this had happened. I felt believed and vindicated. I was never questioned, 'did it happen?' I felt the same way about the Senate Inquiry.
93. I feel exhausted telling my story to ineffectual parliamentary inquiries. Senators listen and weep at the account of a lost child, beaten and raped, but what has changed? I feel there is no real justice.

Signature:

Witness:

ROYAL COMMISSION

94. I would like to say to this Royal Commission that we all need to be treated as equals. The courts and the judiciary and the politicians should not treat some people better than others because of their position. The 'us and them' mentality must go. The influence of institutions needs to be questioned. We the victims must be treated as individuals with tortured souls. We are shattered. We must not be treated as numbers.

Signed: John Hennessey OAM
Date: 09.04.2014

Witness: John
KATHERINE NICOLE HOOPER

Date: 09.04.2014