



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

Statement

Name James Albert MCGREGOR

Address REDACTED

Occupation Retired

Date 11 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 James Albert MCGREGOR but I go by the name of Albert or "Bert" MCGREGOR.
4. I was born on REDACTED 1941 at the Royal Infirmary in Aberdeen. My mother's name was Isabella Stuart McIntosh MCGREGOR. My father's name was William MILNE.
5. I was told that when I was about two months old I was taken to Nazareth House in Aberdeen during the war. My uncle Albert had the job of driving me there. I was sent there because my mother wasn't married to my father, and her mother ordered it. My existence was an embarrassment to the family.

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6. I don't have many memories of my time at Nazareth House. However, I remember when I was 5 years old being lined up in a huge dormitory one day as a visiting priest came through with some others. I was 5 at the time. We were told that they wanted volunteers to go to Australia, and they told us stories about the kangaroos and the abundant fruit, and I stepped forward because I thought it sounded good. Australia could have been a park across the road for all I knew.

Transportation to Australia

7. The records I have since obtained show that I was "transported" on the 10th of October 1947 on a ship called the Ormonde. I remember lifeboat drills on the boat.
8. When I arrived in Australia I believe I was initially looked after by the Sisters of Nazareth. I remember them taking me to a morning tea at St Joseph's orphanage so that they could show others my cute Scottish accent. I decided from that day that I would lose my accent. I didn't want to attract attention for being cute or different.

Castledare

9. I was sent to Castledare Junior Orphanage in February 1949 at the age of 7.
10. When I arrived there I was put in grade 2 even though I was really at a pre-grade 1 level. I was very good at maths but I wasn't good at reading or writing. I had Brother MURPHY as a teacher first, although I think I was in his class for 2 years. I then had Brother Irenaeus HARNETTY for grade 3, who I really worshipped because he was a real teacher and a good man, and I was able to catch up a lot.

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11. We also did a lot of farm work at Castledare. We milked the cows, cleaned out the yards, fed the slops to the pigs. I had a great affinity with the animals and also with water, and I remember swimming in the Canning River.
 12. I had a good group of friends. If it wasn't for the beauty of the place, the animals and my group of friends I wouldn't have stayed sane.
 13. I also enjoyed the musical aspect of Castledare, particularly the singing taught by Brother McGEE.

Clontarf

14. I went to Clontarf in February 1953, along with the other grade 3 boys from Castledare.
15. Life at Clontarf was similar to life at Castledare but on a much larger scale. There were many more boys, up to 250 at times. Most of us were child migrants from Britain and Ireland, although there were also Aboriginal children and in the mid-1950s, boys from the Mediterranean islands of Malta and Gozo were sent there too.
16. At Clontarf we also had to do more physical work than we did at Castledare. The work included landscaping of the grounds and sports ovals and some building work. It was hard work, which I didn't enjoy when I first got there, but I enjoyed it by the time I left.

Brother MURPHY

17. I was emotionally, physically and sexually abused by Brother MURPHY at Castledare, and the abuse started again when he transferred to Clontarf in around 1953.

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18. The psychological abuse first started when I was about 8 years old. Brother MURPHY had a group of about 30 of boys who were in his "possession". If one of us acted friendly with another Brother, Brother MURPHY would use words such as "disloyalty" or "traitor" to make it clear that he was to be the only significant adult in our lives. He was very dominant and possessive, and had complete control of us.
19. Brother MURPHY also used to sexually abuse me. I would be woken up with by him in the dead of night and he would whisper, "Come to my room! I want you in my room right away." Often, hours afterwards, I would walk around the verandas of the second story at Clontarf, in the pitch-blackness of a cold winter morning, and I would climb back into bed feeling bewildered and numb. I felt very alone.
20. I also suffered from the fear and threats Brother MURPHY made. He said to me that "the secret had to be kept or else!" I think he sort of grew into paedophilia over the years as he knew he could get away with it.
21. Brother MURPHY was abusive in his possessiveness, verbal quips, emotional blackmail as well as being sexually abusive.

Breakdown

22. When I was 12, in about 1953 or 1954, I became so depressed and fed up with life that I was put in isolation in the infirmary room for some time. It could have been a week or two or even a month – I'm not really sure. There was nothing wrong with my physically. I think I had a nervous breakdown, although they didn't call it that in those days. I couldn't eat, even when the Sister Superior tempted me with biscuits and ice cream. I really didn't care about anything, not even whether I lived or died.

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23. Although I didn't want to continue with life then, I reminded myself that I had religion. I think that my love of God really was my saviour. I surrendered to God at that time and it was a turning point in my life. Around that time I decided to become a Christian Brother, and adopt the mould that shaped my very existence.
24. After I recovered from my breakdown, I was protected from the worst of the congregate care, crowds and the feeling of being a lost individual. I think that someone had twigged to what I had experienced but I never found out who it was. The Brothers always called me Albert after that. I was appointed the personal steward of the Brothers, the sacristan, the head altar boy. I cleaned the chaplain's house, cleaned the Brothers' bathroom and toilets, looked after the sacristy, killed the calf every week or two for the Brothers' meat, and helped cooked the meals for the Brothers. I ate all my meals with the casual staff.

Leaving Clontarf

25. In early 1957 I was due to leave Clontarf to start my training as a Christian Brother. Just before leaving, Brother Bruno DOYLE took me aside and questioned me about sexual abuse. He asked whether we boys were being rude with each other at any time. I became terrified. I thought Brother DOYLE was accusing me of the very things that Brother MURPHY had been doing to me. I was morally sensitive enough to be absolutely horrified at the suggestion, but I was aware that he was threatening me to keep silent about the abuse I had suffered.
26. What Brother DOYLE did was cruel and vicious. He wasn't honest enough to ask whether one of the Brothers was doing something to me and I felt that he was out to bury the truth, knowing that he had this awful authority and could have kept me at Clontarf if he wanted.

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27. At the time I felt too scared and dominated to tell the truth. However, I feel like a coward now and I regret the fact that I didn't speak out, as it may have prevented others suffering the same fate. But I was being accused of being impure and of interfering with other boys, which was shocking enough to stun me into silence.

Christian Brothers training and teaching history

28. In February 1957 I arrived at the Christian Brothers' juniorate in Strathfield, NSW. We were all supposed to be at the Year 10 standard by the time we got there, although I was still unable to read very well. I made great progress at Strathfield. I really loved the education I received, my fellow students and the educational environment. The teachers gave me a love of learning and I flourished.
29. From 1958 I was at the Edmund Rice College in Victoria where I matriculated in 1961.
30. From 1962 to 1964, I underwent full time training in Religion and Teacher Education and I graduated from the teachers' college at Box Hill with a Trained Primary Teacher Certificate.
31. My first posting was as a grade 3 teacher at St Patrick's Primary School, Ballarat in 1965. From the beginning I found the other Brothers to be obsessed with discipline. On leaving the Teachers' College I was handed two things: a hat and a strap. I mainly used the strap for pointing at the board but I will confess that I used it a couples of times at the College on really obnoxious teenagers. I always felt sick and guilty as hell afterwards.
32. I recall one lunch time discussion with other Brothers at Ballarat at which I denounced the sexual abuse of children and said there was nothing worse. After lunch, four senior Brothers approached me on the veranda leading to the chapel. Brother Ray O'KEANE said to me "Bert the world is not a perfect place. Terrible things do happen and we must learn to forgive." I

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responded, "I sometimes wonder if there is forgiveness for child abusers. I would find it nearly impossible to forgive them. The wounds last a lifetime. Every time you recall the abuse, the abuse is repeated. The pain and anger grow with realising what had happened." Brother Linus KELTY, who later became the Superior General of the Orders said "Let's go and pray about it." Unbeknownst to me, I had revealed to those clever men the deeply buried hurt of my childhood. Only years later did the penny drop that I had let slip the dark secret of my childhood. It might have been this outburst which sealed my fate in the Order. I was never posted back to Western Australia as I was promised to be, by 1972.

33. I taught at various schools from 1965 to 1978 and held the position of both Acting Deputy Principal and Acting Principal. I was never ^{given} a position of responsibility, but I was responsible for the position. In 1978 I gained my Bachelor of Arts from the University of Tasmania.

Work overseas

34. In 1979 I was sent to work at St Thomas High School in Fiji. I enjoyed my time in Fiji and was even able to set up a brass band, which was very successful.
35. During the 1980s I went on a number of overseas missions, which is what I wanted to do. However, I didn't have any real control over where I went and I was often brought back to Australia. Every time I was moved it was without input, argument or discussion. One place I went to, without the support of my superiors, was Tanzania in 1984. I volunteered to go there because I wanted to assist the destitute poor and Tanzania had been recommended to me as a place where assistance was needed. After about two years, I was told that I had to return from Tanzania if I wanted to remain a Brother, which I obediently did.

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36. In 1987, I was chosen for a six month study and renewal course in Rome. It was around this time that the lids were about to be lifted on the massive scandals of child migration and institutional abuse.

My family

37. Before I left for Rome, Brother Frank CHAPPELL, one of the leading Brothers in our Province, suggested I should look my family up in Scotland. Before then I had tried to find out about my family, including when I spoke to another Brother, Brother Paul DOYLE in the 1970s. Brother DOYLE mentioned Nazareth House and said he thought I had relations in Aberdeen. However, when I made enquiries, Nazareth House always gave out the usual story that there was no record of relations. Now Brother CHAPPELL was telling me in a roundabout way that I had family in Aberdeen.
38. I was able to find my family relatively quickly through the help of a company in Edinburgh. It cost me only 70 pounds. I experienced many emotions on finding out that I had family all along - shock and disbelief, joy and sadness, anger, despair and wonder. I also felt betrayed, lied to and I felt like I was the world's biggest exploited dupe.
39. On my way to Rome, I travelled to Aberdeen and met various members of my family, including my mother, three sisters, uncles and cousins. I also found out later on that trip that I had a brother called Jimmy who had also been sent to Nazareth House but he was allowed back home when my mother married so he didn't end up in Australia.

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Return to Australia

40. When I returned to Australia later in 1987 I never really settled back into teaching. The first waves of the child abuse scandal were going through the Order and my superiors were entering damage control, which distracted them from helping me. I seemed to be a victim left floating between their inability to act responsibly and an aloofness that comes from a stance recommended by lawyers. Within my Order there was no middle ground for someone who was both a victim and a Brother. I was the embodiment of an abused child.
41. For a few weeks during the period from 1987 to 1990 I saw a counsellor. I think her name was **REDACTED** I never told her about the abuse. I always had the feeling that she lacked professional objectivity. She didn't seem interested in me, and when our sessions ended she said she was going to write a report to my superiors. I was furious.
42. At the end of 1990, the Order gave me \$20,000 and told me to return to Scotland. I felt, once again, that they were trying to push me away.

Scotland

43. While I was in Scotland, the Order stopped communicating with me.
44. I bought a flat in Aberdeen and began working for the Cyrenians at their day centre for street people, the mentally ill and the drug and alcohol dependent. When I was working there I met a person who was known to me. He had been with me at Castledare and Clontarf and had returned to Scotland as a youth. He came to the centre almost every day, and I had long talks with him. He told me of his abuse and how little support he was receiving. I was shocked by this. Up until this time I had carried my secret, thinking I was alone in my experience. Now

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I had met another whose story was the same as mine. He suggested to me that the child abuse was extensive.

45. Around that time I also found out that I had another brother, Alex. Alex had also been sent to Australia when he was a child, in 1953, and he hadn't reunited with our mother. I remember Margaret HUMPHRIES taking me downtown to the House of Fraser to have cups of tea while Alex met mother for the first time. After a few hours, he met me and we hit it off straight away.
46. Alex came to stay in my flat in Aberdeen for a couple of months or so. During that time we frequently talked about the issue of sexual abuse in the Order. I was still dismissive of the extent of it. I thought that perhaps people were taking out their frustrations by attacking the reputation of the Christian Brothers. All the time my own experiences of abuse remained my secret. Until then I never knew anyone well enough to share it with them.
47. Another man also called into the day centre at Aberdeen and told the same story of abuse. He had been in the Australian Army and had just taken early retirement after decades of service. I knew him well as a boy. His story mirrored mine. I had now met three children from my childhood who told the same story. They asked accusingly why I was still a Brother.
48. After that, Alex and I spent weeks coming up with a protocol for the Brothers to respond the allegations of abuse. I wasn't against the Church and I didn't want it to be damaged more than necessary, but at the same time I felt it had a huge responsibility to the victims of abuse. To me, it was important that the Church believed the victims and that it helped them, whether it was through counselling or financial assistance.

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49. I also did a Masters of Education at Kings College from 1991 to 1992 when I was in Scotland. After I completed my Masters I turned down an offer to do a PhD and returned to Western Australia in late 1992.

Mini survey

50. I had decided to carry out a mini survey on my return to Western Australia, in which I would try find out how many children were abused and inform my superiors of the outcome. I was confident that my Order would know what to do with my findings. I also planned to tell the Brothers of my own abuse, which I hoped would cure the dreadful aversion and shame which was taking root in my spirit. I also hoped that my findings would put to rest the conflict within my mind of being a Christian Brother and a victim.
51. It was quite easy to arrange interviews with the old boys for the survey. I introduced myself as MCGREGOR, and gave them the institutional numbers I was given as a fellow inmate at Clontarf and Castledare - 2, 11 and 62. All professed to remember the child I was. All recalled that I had joined the Christian Brothers. I have to confess that I could remember little about a few of them.
52. I spoke with each of them for no more than several hours. Those who had been abused would raise the subject of abuse about 1 or 2 hours into the interview without prompting. I felt that they were happy to talk confidently with one who should understand them, a fellow inmate and a Brother. They then poured forty years of their shame, silence and anger over me. It was like they were saying, "Here is something I want you to take from me. I'll tell you of my abuse and my abuser, then take them away. I have carried this for too long. Now I can dump it on you, Albert."

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53. There were tears, outbursts and wives sprang to comfort their husbands. For several families this was the first time they had heard of what happened to their father. They were very emotional and many were angry at what had happened. They often accused the Brothers and the Church of hypocrisy and of betrayal of true Christianity. They all expressed their strong desire for this abuse to never happen again. I absorbed their anger and I wept. Their families sometimes asked questions. The anger gradually filtered away and a kind of stillness descended, like the stillness after a dreadful battle. The old boys would ask what would happen next. I would say, "I have it all on tape. I'll go away and type up a transcript and make out a report. I will hand the report in to the Brothers. Something will come of it, I assure you." They generally thanked me for taking their story. Often I was invited to return. Most of them apologised for being too hard or for their language but they never retracted the accusations. Nearly all of them professed relief in having unloaded a dark secret.
54. I met one high profile "old boy" in his backyard in a southern suburb of Perth. There were about half a dozen other "old boys" and it was a bit of a drinking session. They had all remained in contact over the past forty years, and the physical and sexual abuse was often raised and discussed. A lot of them had had difficulty coping after leaving institutional care. I decided that this must have been due to the long term effects of abuse. They seemed to have an underlying pain and their feelings of betrayal were often openly expressed. It was not long before I became convinced that their lives had been ruined by their childhood experiences. That afternoon, the "old boys" laughed, got angry, several cried, consoled each other, told ribald jokes, threatened physical violence, threatened going to Court, called the Brothers bastards and professed to be the real Christians who would never again go to a Catholic Church. They let me record the whole thing.

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55. I lived at Clontarf while I conducted the survey. I covered an area from Albany, about 200 miles to the south of Perth, to Geraldton, about 500 miles to the north of Perth to conduct interviews with old boys of Castledare and Clontarf. After each interview, I generally spent half the night or more typing up their stories on my laptop. I was emotionally exhausted after several weeks. The interviews confirmed for me that the abuse was widespread.
56. One of the victims I spoke to was known to me. I didn't know where he lived but Brother DOYLE actually took me to his place which was somewhere up near Geraldton. I think I must have asked him a leading question about the allegations of abuse that had come out and he poured it all out. Brother DOYLE just stood there while I interviewed him. I think he had finally come to the conclusion that the allegations were going to come out. He was old and I think he was smart enough to realise not to resist any more. I also think he was trying to make reparation by being there.
57. I completed my survey before Christmas 1992. The research took about 5 weeks and I documented 16 cases including my own. I drew my conclusions and wrote up my report. It was called "A survey of child abuse among the War Orphans in the Christian Brother orphanages of Western Australia."
58. In early 1993 I went to Westcourt, the headquarters of the Order for Western Australia and South Australia, and handed my report on the survey to Brother FAULKNER, the Provincial. I warned him that my findings were not very encouraging and that something had to be done. Brother FAULKNER said to me, "We have it all under control Bert."
59. After I met with Brother FAULKNER, I was invited to stay for lunch. There were a number of Brothers at the lunch, and an Aquinas College old boy who I think was a lawyer. The lawyer spent the meal condemning the ingratitude of the former child migrants, belittling the so

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called abuse accusations and professing his own gratitude for the work of the Brothers. He proclaimed his loyalty and said, "The reputation of the Church has to be defended, the Brothers have to be defended, the so called paedophiles have to be protected from their lying accusers." I remember thanking God that here was a man who survived unscathed, and no doubt there were hundreds in the same boat. However, whilst I could accept his ignorance of the truth and his gratitude, it struck me that he was ignorant of the experience of at least one Brother at that table and he was so convinced he was in safe company. I also wondered whether his presence had been timed for my benefit.

60. Some of the Brothers at the lunch joined the lawyer in condemning the victims. Other Brothers were aware of my report and remained silent. I sat there waiting for someone to offer some kind of defence for the victims. I thought, "Someone must come up and say something", but no-one did. I didn't want to burst out and say anything because I had just handed in the report. I came away from Westcourt very angry, frustrated and troubled at the dismissive attitude I had encountered.
61. By then I was convinced that sexual and physical abuse was very common at Castledare and Clontarf. I was left with a dreadful moral dilemma – to decide whether my loyalties lay with my Order or with my fellow victims.
62. Based on the dismissive way my report was received, I felt that the Brothers were not listening to one of their ordinary rank and file members and that my report had no effect. I considered myself an authority on institutional abuse from my experience and from my own research. However, the Brothers made me feel completely powerless to contribute to any healing let alone to give constructive advice. Even though I had included my case in the report, it was

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never acknowledged by the Brothers in authority who had received the report. They never inquired about my health.

63. I also concluded that the Brothers were going to suppress the issue. I felt that if I stayed silent it would put me on the side of those who cover up crimes and that I would be as guilty as the abusers. I decided to send out some copies of the report because I felt that nothing was going to become of it amongst the Christian Brothers.
64. After that, I was dismissed back to my Province in Victoria before I was due to go back to Fiji. As I had a week before returning to Fiji, I prepared and sent courtesy copies of my report to the Archbishop of Perth, the Superior General of the Christian Brothers in Rome, the Australian Federal Minister for Immigration and the Premier of Western Australia, Dr Carmen LAWRENCE. A few copies were sent to friends and a copy was also sent to my brother Alex. I was sure there was no more I could do beyond that. The only person in authority who acknowledged the receipt of my report was Dr LAWRENCE. Her office wrote a standard letter acknowledging receipt of the report with thanks and expressions of concern.
65. The Church and my superiors never acknowledged my report, and never responded to my findings, let alone to the revelation of my own abuse. I concluded that the corporate Church was completely self-centred when it came to facing the problem of evil within its ranks. I had surrendered my life to the Church and my Order and it seemed that my message evoked nothing from them. There was no compassion, no reaching out towards me. They turned me into a problem, not a prophet.

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Barry COLDREY

66. Around the time I did my survey I made contact with Doctor Barry COLDREY. Dr COLDREY was a Brother who had established a reputation as a historian and had been asked to write a book about the Christian Brothers in WA. I'm not sure if I sent Dr COLDREY a copy of my report on the survey, but I did send him a letter with details of the old boys I had interviewed, and their childhood experiences at Castledare and Clontarf. The letter also included my own story [CTJH.056.11051.0156].
67. I'm not sure exactly when I first met Dr COLDREY but I remember walking the grounds at Treacy, the Christian Brothers' headquarters in Victoria. We discussed abuse in the Catholic Church, and Dr COLDREY gave me a lot of information about the Western Australian orphanages that I didn't know.
68. I saw Dr COLDREY as being against the campaign against the Brothers, and that his job was to defend the Brothers. He had a case that the Brothers were doing a great job, and had done a great job, and that the allegations were motivated by revenge. I felt like he had no idea what he was walking into.

Return to Fiji

69. I was sent back in Fiji in 1993.
70. I always had the feeling that my life in the Order was manipulated to keep me away from the issue of child abuse. I think they knew about it in the 1950s, and they thought in the 1970s that if I was in Western Australia then "all hell would break loose". I think this is the reason I was sent overseas. I felt like they had really reached the conclusion that the best place for me to be was in the third world.

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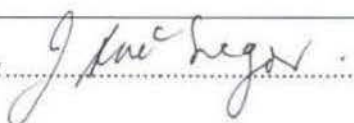
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71. I threw myself back into teaching, took up many of my old duties and was once again involved in co-curricular activities. However, although I had more qualifications than any of the other staff, I was never promoted. After a few months I noticed that I was changing. I began to slow down, to spend hours after work sitting and staring at the TV. I felt exhausted all the time, listless and like nothing mattered any more. I became convinced that I was part of "the enemy", that I was no longer wanted.
72. While I was in Fiji, more stories of child abuse within the Order in Western Australia and elsewhere were being revealed. When I did learn of what was going on I felt shocked more and more by every revelation rather than desensitised. I couldn't cope with the extent of the abuse being revealed.
73. At the time I received letters from my brother and friends containing copies of newspaper reports and videos of current affairs programs that raised the allegations of abuse by the Christian Brothers. The reports of the Christian Brothers' response to the allegations convinced me that the research I had done on child abuse, and my recommendation that priority be given to the victims, was being ignored. It became a rejection of me as a Brother. I became ashamed of being a Brother, and was completely depressed. My own abuse by the Order as a child and now as a Brother loomed large.
74. So after two years in Fiji, I was having a massive breakdown and I experienced tremendous post-traumatic stress. During this depression and confusion I asked to leave the Brothers.

Return to Australia

75. I returned to Melbourne in November 1994 due to my massive breakdown in Fiji. I was sent to the Christian Brothers' community at Lower Plenty in Victoria and I spent three days alone,

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waiting for an interview with my Provincial, Brother Paul NOONAN, who was too busy to see me. Those three days of isolation felt like my final rejection by the Order.

76. It was then that my brother Alex found me and took me away to the Jesuits' place in Parkville. Brother NOONAN was furious because I wasn't where I was supposed to be, but I didn't care at that stage. I was a victim but he was treating me as a rebel. If I hadn't been so tired and depressed I could have fought and argued.
77. Not long after that I returned to Perth. I spent most of the next few weeks with the Smith family, the foster family I had known since I was seven years old. All I did was sleep and rest. My move to Perth infuriated the superiors. They never once considered that I was ill at the time.

Refusal to sign off from Christian Brothers

78. Brother NOONAN eventually followed me to Perth with the papers to sign me off from the Order, to sever my connection with the Brothers permanently. I think that he wanted to get me out of their life. At the time I was experiencing post-traumatic stress.
79. I attended two meetings with my Brothers at Westcourt in Perth. At the first, there was Brother NOONAN and some other Brothers. I became very angry and refused to co-operate and leave the order. I made a firm resolution to myself to never sign off from the Order. I still haven't signed off to this day. I stormed out of the second meeting without signing off from the Order. I should have had a lawyer with me for those two meetings to plead my case. Although I was innocent, I felt as though I was guilty of some dreadful crime. I felt abused by the Order, which had vowed to look after me for better or worse. The Brothers should have tried to help me recover but instead they were pushing me out the door.

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80. Although I wouldn't agree to sign off from the Christian Brothers, the Order paid me about \$100,000 as part of my separation. I used the money to buy a small cottage in Yarloop and a second hand car and to set myself up with the basics for living, after which there wasn't much money left.
81. I had a lot of difficulty getting work. I applied for many teaching positions with the Catholic education system, the Christian Brothers and other independent schools. I was told I was either overqualified, underqualified, inexperienced, too old or not adaptable. I had fallen from my last position as an acting deputy principal of a thousand-pupil high school to begging for any position as a teacher. I did some relief teaching with the state primary and secondary schools on occasions. On two occasions, I helped out at the local Catholic primary school in the next town called Harvey. Otherwise, I remained unemployed.

Meetings with Archbishop of Perth

82. I kept my finger on the pulse of child abuse and wrote letters on occasions when I considered the Church was not being fair to its victims.
83. One day, after more than a year of unemployment, I was called up to Perth for a meeting with Archbishop HICKEY. He said he wanted to know my story so I told him it and he seemed compassionate. He said, "How are you coping?" and I responded, "I'm doing very well on the pension, thank you very much." I was surprised that for the first time I was doing what I always wanted to do with the Brothers: I was communicating what was going on inside my heart and soul. I had never stopped thinking of myself as a servant of the Church.

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84. Around that time I considered entering the priesthood and had even met the Bishop of the local diocese. However, the idea died after I was called for a second meeting with Archbishop HICKEY. At the meeting he asked about my health and how I was going. I told him that I was surviving. I had relegated my health to the cupboard of things that did not matter. At the end of the meeting he said "Oh, we might have the job for you." I parted with the feeling that he was a member of the "official" Church who seemed to care. In contrast, my Brothers had forgotten I ever existed: I was no longer their problem. That I would never accept.

Work in the Kimberley region

85. A couple of days after I met with the Archbishop, there was an advertisement for a teacher urgently needed in a remote Aboriginal community up in the Kimberleys, the far north of Western Australia. I rang in response and was immediately asked to call at a certain house in Perth where I met the principal of Lombadina Catholic School. I was employed immediately and was given four days to arrive in Broome where I would be met and driven up the Dampier Peninsula a couple of hundred kilometres northwest of Broome.
86. I found it impossible to accept that I gained this position through normal channels. What with the Archbishop' assurances still ringing in my ears, the rather cold reception from the school principal and then the slow realisation that I could not have been placed more out of circulation than I was: I was soon convinced that strings had been pulled.
87. Although I was relieved to be working, I was treated as the lowest member of staff. For the next four years I was kept away from any position of authority in that tiny community school. However, I eventually broke down with a heart condition and mental exhaustion four years later, and I resigned in February 2000. It was my last teaching position.

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88. After that I moved to Tasmania. It was the only place in Australia I could afford to buy a house and live.

With God behind the Eight Ball

89. I was spinning like a top and needed to do some healing, so I wrote an autobiography. It wasn't a story about a life of abuse. It was about how I had built up a life after my abuse that was then completely shattered when I discovered the abuse was so widespread. The book was called "With God Behind the Eight Ball". The name represents the clash between church morality and legal law.

90. I provided a copy of the book to the Senate Inquiry in 2004. After that, people started to call me with their own stories and I provided some counselling to others.

Towards Healing

91. Although I had separated from the Order, I continued to seek financial assistance and support for any aged care I would require into the future, as a result of I became involved in Towards Healing in 2005.

92. Sister Majella KELLY was the contact person at the Professional Standards office in Hobart. I was provided with some counselling from a man called Heinz SCHINDLER. I found him helpful and I could tell him how I was feeling.

93. I had a meeting with Brother **REDACTED** and Brother Brian BRANDON, which was facilitated by someone at Centacare in Burnie. I had my brother Alex with me as my spokesperson, and Mr SCHINDLER was also there as support. I told my side of the story and

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they professed sorrow for what happened. The outcome was that the Brothers agreed to cover my medical expenses and pay for my funeral.

94. The process never got into the deeper layers necessary for healing. One meeting, even though it lasted for quite a few hours, was never going to do that. I feel like the Christian Brothers never really owned the situation, and they weren't prepared to walk in my shoes as a victim.

Redress WA

95. I submitted an application form to Redress WA **WA.0010.001.5073**. I have been provided with a copy of the Statement of Assessment Decision **WA.0010.001.5097**. I received \$45,000 from Redress WA.

Hermitage

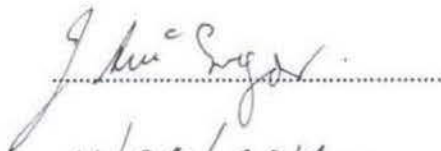
96. I have been living as a hermit in Tasmania for about 14 years now, since I worked in the Kimberley.
97. I have spoken to the Brothers about returning to the Order, but I don't feel like I am able to psychologically.
98. I still have a great belief in God and I am so cemented to the Church that physical separation is difficult. However, it's impossible to be a Brother because I would like to see the Church reformed, and I feel that I have to side with the victims. Living in my hermitage is the only logical way for me to live.
99. In telling my story now, I see this as an opportunity to explain where I stand. I thought I could create a life after my abuse, but the extent of the abuse being perpetrated by the Christian Brothers, and their reaction to my attempts to report it was what brought me down. At the

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time I handed in the findings of my research, the Brothers saw me as irrelevant and thought they could control the scandal. They didn't see me as a victim but saw what I had done as an attack on the Church. It was an honest effort to enlighten them about the steps they should take to face up to reality of what happened. If telling my story in this way helps one victim then it will have been worthwhile.


Signed:



Date:

11/04/2014.

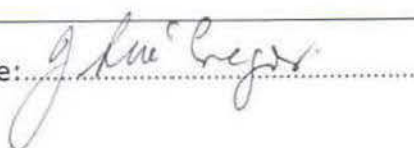
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SARAH BELLCHAMBERS

Date:

11/04/2014

Signature:



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