

Our ref: GHK:980966

STATEMENT MADE BY MERVYN VICTOR PATTEMORE

AT REDACTED

ON 21 May, 1998

I MERVYN VICTOR PATTEMORE

of REDACTED do hereby declare
as follows:

1. I was born at Ulmarra, New South Wales North Coast, on REDACTED 1922 and I am now 76 years of age.
2. I worked as a farm labourer after leaving school, until I joined the Australian Infantry Forces in World War II where I served in the Armoured Division in Western Australia. I was in the Army for 4 years, in which time I became an instructor in small arms and undertook other specific training courses. I left the Army at the end of 1944.
3. I then attended the Melbourne Bible Institute for 2 years, training as a Missionary. I then applied to and was accepted by the Australian Inland Mission, as a Missionary, in 1947.
4. In 1947 I spent 3 months at Fingal (N.S.W. North Coast) where I met my future wife Lelean and then spent 3 months at Cherbourg Mission in Queensland.
5. In January, 1948 I was assigned to a missionary position with Aborigines Inland Mission (A.I.M.) at Phillip Creek Mission Settlement near Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory.
6. I spent a year at Phillip Creek Missionary Settlement then I moved to a mission at Newcastle Waters Station in the Northern Territory where I spent approximately 2 years, including some time away doing itineration work with Dick Stretton, another A.I.M. missionary, around Northern Territory cattle stations.
7. In that time Dick Stretton and I also built a mission house at Delissaville, south west of Darwin.
8. In 1951 I went south to marry, then returned with my wife Lelean where we worked together as missionaries at Delissaville for about eighteen months from the end of 1951 to 1953.

I declare that I have read the above and that it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge or belief.

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9. We were then posted to Borrooloola in the Gulf of Carpentaria, to establish an A.I.M. mission. The Aboriginal people there had asked for a missionary to work at Borrooloola on a permanent basis and we were given the position.
 10. When we started at Borrooloola we were living in a tent and built our own house from anything we could scrounge. It was built of cyprus pine poles with bits of iron left over from army camps and any other material we could get. At first we just had a dirt floor. However, we were very happy in our work at Borrooloola.
 11. The Aboriginal people wanted their kids to learn to read and write. This caused a bit of contention with the people from Aboriginal Affairs because I wasn't a qualified teacher but there was no-one else to teach the children. I had done various training courses in the A.I.F., I was a qualified small arms instructor, and I had received some training in how to teach so I managed from that experience.
 12. My wife and I remained at the mission at Borrooloola until I was appointed as Superintendent of the new Retta Dixon Home (after it had been relocated from the Bagot Reserve to its final location on Bagot Road and Totem Road. My wife was not working in a formal or active capacity on the staff while we were at Retta Dixon Home.
 13. We remained at Retta Dixon Home, in my position as Superintendent, until 1980 when it was finally closed down.
 14. I still have a very clear memory of my time at Phillip Creek mission settlement north of Tennant Creek. I remember that I got a ride into Phillip Creek settlement on the back of a truck load of windmill heads in January 1948. There was no public transport in those days. In fact, there was very little transport of any nature and travel was extremely difficult. My only means of transport was a push bike.
 15. While I was there, Phillip Creek mission settlement was a ration depot, located on a big waterhole known by the Aboriginal people as Manga Manda. By the end of the dry season the waterhole was dry and we had to truck in water in 44 gallon drums, from Attack Creek up near Banka Banka Station. There was a bore at Phillip Creek settlement but the Aboriginal people didn't like the water. It had a high mineral content and tasted salty. I found that when you got used to it, it was quite alright, quite good water but the Aboriginal people never liked it. They would collect and drink
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water from the cattle pug holes in the drying water hole in preference to the bore water.

16. The main settlement buildings were located near Manga Manda waterhole, in an area of about an acre, with a low wire fence around it. Within this fenced area was the superintendent's cottage where Ivor Thomas lived, the workers' cottage which I was in, a garage and the store room. Just outside the fence was what we called the butcher shop and a little further away from the fenced enclosure, the boys and girls dormitory houses, the kitchen/dining room which also doubled as the school room and boys and girls toilets, each behind the dormitory buildings.
17. Further away from these again were two small huts where two of the Aboriginal head men who I knew as "Nat" and "Engineer", lived. About half a mile from the settlement buildings, further along Phillip Creek on another water hole, was the Aboriginal camp.
18. The buildings themselves were just very primitive corrugated iron huts built on a bush pole frame, very basic, unlined, very hot in the summer and very cold in the winter.
19. The fence around the mission buildings was just a low wire fence. It was in no way a barrier which could have prevented entry or exit by anyone who wanted to go through it. It was really there just to keep stock which came down to water, from wandering through the buildings.
20. The dormitory buildings housing the Aboriginal boys and girls were in no way fenced off or isolated by any other means, and there was free movement by the children and the older Aboriginal people, between the mission settlement itself and the Aboriginal camp.
21. The people working at the mission at the time were the Superintendent Ivor Thomas and his wife, and the missionary, Ken Colley, who was running a school there. Ken really didn't have much idea about teaching but he was doing what he could. Ken was to go on furlough and I was sent out to take his place while he was away.
22. Unfortunately, sadly enough, a couple of years later Ivor Thomas went out in some disgrace. He had an association with one of the Aboriginal girls. Some have said it was a real set-up. The missionary there, Eunice Holley, said it was a set-up. Anyway, he defaulted, that's all there was to it. I'm not making any excuses. It's one of those things which shouldn't have happened. He was there on his own, his wife was away

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on holidays, and he had an association with one of the young Aboriginal girls. As a result, he was sent out of the place.

23. In 1948 and after that time there were no Aboriginal Affairs people or other government people working at Phillip Creek settlement. They just didn't have the numbers of staff. When Ivor Thomas was sent out, the government put in one of their own men to run the settlement and manage the ration depot but A.I.M. continued to operate the mission.
24. To my knowledge, Phillip Creek settlement never developed beyond what I have already described because there was no permanent water. This was always a problem and although some effort was made to find a more suitable site in the locality, nothing eventuated for several years. However, because of the water problem, it was always just a temporary place and no development was ever done on it.
25. Phillip Creek settlement was only started when the older Six Mile Depot and settlement had to be moved for the same reason - lack of permanent water. My understanding is that the old Six Mile settlement was moved to Phillip Creek straight after the end of the Second World War.
26. While I was at Phillip Creek, Gordon Sweeney (who was a trained surveyor and had his own truck) drove around through the scrub looking for a suitable site but nothing was ever found. Years later, Phillip Creek settlement was closed down and moved to Ali Curung (also known as Warrabri) on the Stuart Highway south of Tennant Creek.
27. The children living at the mission settlement, in the dormitory buildings, were of school age, from about 5 up to around 14 to 15 years. There were only children living in the settlement, apart from the two old men, Nat and Engineer. They were there with the full consent of their parents and had full liberty to come and go to and from the camp which was about half a mile away, in the mulga scrub. At weekends especially, the children would go down to the camp but they preferred to stay in the missionary buildings where they had shelter and were properly fed, three meals a day.
28. The only limit to the free movement of the children at the settlement was at night. I have seen reference in Barbara Cummings book "*Take This Child*" to the children being locked up at night. They were locked up at night, at their own request. I clearly remember that the children would come over to Mr. Thomas (it was always Mr. and Mrs. Thomas) and say "It's time to lock up". They wanted the dormitory houses

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locked up, because they felt secure when the place was padlocked. That's all there was to it. It was a matter for the satisfaction of the kids themselves, boys and girls.

29. During the day there was complete freedom of movement between the mission and the camp. The parents and other Aboriginal people would come up to the mission and the children could go down to the camp. It was a free range place. It wasn't a gaol situation or anything like that.
30. There were up to about 20 kids in each dormitory house. There were no beds. They slept in blankets on the floor. They were not crowded, definitely not as compared to how they would have lived in the camp.
31. As they lived in the camp, they just had rough humpies and windbreaks made of boughs, leaves, bits of flattened out flour tins, whatever they could find to stop the desert wind coming in. It was cold down there in winter time, and dirty and dusty. In the camp at night, there'd be a fire then a body, then another fire, then another body, just behind the wind break. That's the way they slept. Then there were the "blanket dogs". It was a common thing that they'd have particular dogs that were called blanket dogs and they'd sleep with them at night, to keep them warm.
32. Toilet facilities for the children in the dormitories at night time were just a kerosene tin on the floor, the same for the boys and girls. That's all that was needed. In the native camps, they just had a little hole in the ground at the end of where each person slept to relieve themselves in the night.
33. There were no showers because of the chronic water shortage.
34. There were outside toilets, one for the boys and one for the girls. These were what we called in those days "Flaming Furies". They were built in the same way as we did while I was serving in the Army, and were used by the children and the mission staff at the settlement. A 44 gallon drum with the bottom cut out of it was sunk into the ground. The top had a hole cut in it to sit on and another smaller hole behind that, with a chimney fitted to it. It would be loaded with sticks on the bottom and periodically, as it started to fill up, you'd stick a bit of kerosene or other fuel in it, burn the whole thing out and start again.
35. This latrine set up was exactly the same set up as the Army used in its camps and as were used at Delissaville and the other mission settlements. That was the toilet system in these sort of places in those days, for everyone.

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36. The children were fed morning, noon and night. We had a good bush cook, an Aboriginal woman named Mary. For breakfast the children had porridge, for lunch damper and beef, similar for tea. They were well fed and were pleased to be there. If they had been down in the bush camp, they would have depended on the weekly Friday government ration (which was sugar, tea, flour and tobacco and if the waterhole was dried up, fresh water), the weekly ration of beef (one beast of about 1000 pounds was butchered each week, I think on Tuesdays) and bush tucker.
37. The Aboriginal women gathered their traditional bush food - lizards, roots, bush oranges or other seasonal fruit or berries, termites, things like that. The men were hunting and brought in things like goannas and kangaroos. I would have to say the camp people were reasonably well fed. It wasn't Christmas day but they had enough food with the subsistence ration from the government and their bush tucker. They were reasonably healthy.
38. The children much preferred the food we provided at the mission. They were certainly much better fed. They had special treats. For example I remember that there was a restaurant in Tennant Creek which saved all the crusts from their bread and sent them out in a bag each week. This was a wonderful treat for the children, yeast bread instead of damper.
39. The general state of health of the camp children, that is the ones who were not living in the mission buildings, was good. They were suckled on the breast until they were about four years old which kept them healthy.
40. We helped with medicines or if someone had to be taken into the doctor but it was more to do with injury than illness, if there had been a fight or something like that.
41. While I was a Phillip Creek settlement, all the children were full blood except for one child of Old Nat, a head man who had a coloured wife. That child was what we would have called in those days a three-quarter caste (i.e. three-quarters Aboriginal blood).
42. I am now aware of course that sixteen half-caste children were taken from Phillip Creek settlement to the Retta Dixon Home in 1947. Apart from the child I have referred to, that group were all the half-caste children living in the Phillip Creek settlement. I was familiar with the people living in the camp. I went down there at least a couple of times a week and I am almost certain there were no other half-caste children living in the camp at that time.
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43. When I started at Phillip Creek settlement I knew absolutely nothing about any children being taken away from Phillip Creek. I was only a young missionary of course, and I didn't ask about these things but I had no reason to do so.
44. I didn't hear anything about these children, nothing about them at all, not from the mission staff, not from any of the Aboriginal people in the mission or at the settlement, nor from any of the children, until only a month or so before I left, a year later. I can say emphatically that although I visited the camp at least twice a week, never once did anyone say anything to me about that, never once did I hear anyone speaking of it or hear a complaint.
45. I have read the description of the children being taken away from Phillip Creek settlement in Barbara Cummings book "*Take This Child*" in which she describes the mothers running after the children in the truck. I can understand that. I don't disbelieve that. If you go into the Darwin Airport you see parents farewelling their kids, they're just as emotional, they shed a few tears, they don't run down the tarmac after the plane but perhaps they would if they could. It's a natural human emotional reaction.
46. The only contact I had with the people living on Banka Banka Station at that time was when I occasionally went up to the station on the meat truck, to get our weekly ration of one bullock. As well, there was free movement of the Aboriginal people between the Phillip Creek camp and the camp at Banka Banka.
47. From memory there were only about 30 people, maybe only 20, living in the native camp at Banka Banka Station.
48. Mr. and Mrs. Ward were the owners of Banka Banka Station in those days and they were very good. It was a well run property. The Aboriginal people there were very well fed and looked after. The Aboriginal people were a credit to Mrs. Ward. She really mothered them.
49. The Banka Banka Station area was the tribal area of the Warramunga people who made up about half the number of the people who were living in the Phillip Creek settlement. The other tribal group a Phillip Creek settlement were the Warrlbris.
50. There were no other tribal or native communities living on Banka Banka Station at that time. They had all drifted down to Phillip Creek. I would say by 1948 when I was at Phillip Creek, apart from the 30 or so people still living in the community at Banka
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Banka Station, all the Warramunga people from that area had gravitated to Phillip Creek where they knew there was a ration depot and they would be able to get water.

51. The people living on Banka Banka Station had huts which were provided by the owners of the station so their living conditions were different to the people living in the camp at Phillip Creek.
52. The Aboriginals there were very primitive people. They came to church with half a dozen boomerangs in their arms. There'd be a whole rattle of boomerangs as they'd sit down and stuff them under their seats.
53. The whole Aboriginal community, both at Banka Banka and at Phillip Creek, still maintained their tribal law and tribal traditions. They hunted and gathered bush tucker as they always had done and they still had their tribal ceremonies, their corroborees and their tribal practices.
54. The tribal traditions were still very strong. There were some who were leaving it. I remember one old fellow, "Blind Alec", who became a Christian. One day he came up to me and he said "I bin gibin away all my boomerang". But he said "I bin keepin one, I bin keepin one for company."
55. Those people were tribal people. They didn't know when someone was going to come out and whack them so they carried their boomerangs, for protection and for food gathering. No-one told old Alec he had to give away his boomerangs. It was something he did when he decided to become a Christian.
56. There were not a lot of fights down in the camp but they were always aware of that kind of thing. The kids living at the mission would have an occasional scrap, especially the girls and I had to break up their fights. I remember a couple of occasions when I went down to the camp when there was a fight. Just my presence, as one of the missionaries, would usually stop the fight. I didn't actually have to do anything or get involved.
57. Although there were two tribal communities living in the Phillip Creek camp, this did not seem to cause any trouble and there were no fights between the tribal groups as far as I knew.
58. I remember once, when Ivor Thomas was away for a few weeks and I was in charge, the kids ran over to me and said "Mr. Pattemore, they're fighting over there". Two of the older girls, about 12 or 14, were going at each other with nulla nullas. They went

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at it pretty seriously. They used these big sticks with knobs on the end. I was just about to go into town, I had to go and I knew that as soon as I left these girls would start fighting again if I stopped them. So I let them go. The bigger girl, Connie, only had a short nulla nulla. She threw it down on the ground in disgust and turned around to walk away and the other girl straight away whacked her across the side of the ear with a boomerang and it was over. The girls were certainly very willing when they got into a fight and I had to stop them at other times.

59. The younger kids had a game about this situation. You'd see them down near the waterhole, two of them fighting in a pretend fight and another one would march down, acting to be the missionary, and the pretend fight would stop. All the kids would be standing around laughing at this.
60. The people used to fight, the same as at the mission at Borrooloola and they would look to the missionary to stop it. Someone would run up and say there was a fight, to get me to come down to stop it.
61. I remember another time when there was a dispute because a young man had been "sweethearting" a young woman who was the traditional bride of an older man. The only way they could marry was to run away, which they did. I walked down to the camp and the old man, Jerry, was sitting down while the other men were gathering up boomerangs and spears for a traditional pay back of the young man who had run away with the woman. This all stopped when I came down to the camp. Just by my being there this fight was stopped. The old man said to me "Mr. Pattemore, it's a man's camp now." By which he meant he had done the right thing by tribal law, arranging for the pay back to the younger man but no-one was really worried, neither the old man or the other people in the camp and the whole thing was then forgotten.
62. In my time, working at the remote missions such as Phillip Creek, Delissaville and Borrooloola, there really weren't any half-caste children living in the full blood Aboriginal communities. I didn't have that experience.
63. While I was at Phillip Creek, no children were taken away from the community.
64. In the years before 1962 before I was appointed superintendent at Retta Dixon Home, I had occasional contact with the place.
65. Every year we had an Easter meeting, where all the missionaries from the various mission settlements in the Territory would attend at Retta Dixon Home. I remember I

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went up to Retta Dixon Home for the Easter meeting, on the back of a truck from Phillip Creek settlement. That was the only way we could get around in those days. It took two days to drive to Darwin from Phillip Creek.

66. One of the things which is forgotten these days, when we hear complaints that the children did not see their families after they were taken from the native settlements and camps to hostels like Retta Dixon Home, is the lack of access and transport in that time. There were very few vehicles, few roads and what there were, were very rough and in the wet season, often impassable for months. In those days you could spend a day on the Stuart Highway and only see 4 or 5 cars. It was very difficult to get around at any time, almost impossible in many parts, in the wet season. Personally, my only transport was a push bike at that time.
67. My next contact with Retta Dixon Home would have been around 1950 when I went up there with Dick Stretton, before we went to Delissaville to build the mission house.
68. On these visits to Retta Dixon Home all the children were still there. The first time, it was a new experience for me. I'd heard about the place. My impression was that it seemed to be going okay. The children were well looked after. As a visitor, the kids would flock around me, they seemed happy. They had their own football team and excelled at that. They went out for picnics on the weekend. I know that before my time at Retta Dixon Home, they acquired some land at Lee Point which they'd take the kids out to, camping and for picnics. Prior to that they had a similar situation at a place called Casuarina Beach, which had an old army hut on it and the kids would go out there camping.
69. In later years, we acquired another property 50 or 60 miles south of Darwin where we'd take the kids away camping and so on.
70. My impression of Retta Dixon Home during my occasional contact visits in the 1950's, was that things were running smoothly, it was well organised, and everyone was happy.
71. Miss Shankleton was a good organiser and I would have no hesitation in saying she had a great love for the children and they for her. They knew her as "Lely" which came about because one of the young children couldn't pronounce "Lady".
72. I know that when Miss Shankleton finally left Retta Dixon Home to move down south to look after her ageing mother, the people from the Retta Dixon community presented

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her with an easy chair and when she died, they made the arrangements to bring her body back up to Darwin and bury her with a memorial ceremony.

73. Prior to my contact and early exposure to Retta Dixon Home I had no previous experience with any such place, with any kind of children's home. To me, there was nothing out of place at all.
74. My impression of RDH on my visits in the fifties, as far as discipline was concerned, was that the place was well run. There was discipline. There had to be discipline. I am a firm believer in discipline. I was disciplined firmly by my father when I was young. He had a big strap and he used it. I don't have any umbrage towards my dad. He did what he thought was right. RDH had rules and they had to be enforced. I know the kids got away with a lot that the staff knew nothing about. If they were caught, they knew what to expect.
75. I know there was one occasion when one of the missionary staff, a man named Matthews, did something wrong and he was shunted out. It wasn't anything too outlandish. There were some kids who had been where they shouldn't have been, or something like that. As he was walking over to them there was a garden hose and he picked up a bit of the garden hose and gave them a whack. A garden hose is not going to kill anyone. It would have been different if it was a piece of wire or something. But a welfare officer or someone like that witnessed this and Matthews was sent out of the place.
76. This sort of thing wasn't the usual punishment. This was usually a strap, mostly from Miss Shankleton or if it was one of the boys, maybe from one of the male workers there.
77. I knew Des Walters but I never heard anything about him in the way of doing anything wrong, discipline or anything else, until very recently when I read about the allegation of assault against Lorna Cubillo in the book by Barbara Cummings "*Take This Child*". The episode is written about in that book although Des Walters is not named as such. After reading that account I later learned that it was apparently Des Walters who was described in that episode.
78. I knew Des Walters as a young fella but he was a nice bloke. I didn't know very much about his background. He was married and had come up from Brisbane. He seemed a reasonable, ordinary normal fella.

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79. Ultimately Des Walters resigned from the place. He had some sort of contention with the mission, I don't know what it was, and he went off to do other missionary work. His departure was regarded as a loss.
80. In my contact with Retta Dixon Home through the 1950's and until the time of my appointment as superintendent in 1962, at no time did I have the impression that there was anything untoward in the conduct of the home or the policies or practices of discipline, towards the children. When I became superintendent there was certainly nothing in the character of the home or its staff which suggested that in previous years untoward behaviour or inappropriate disciplinary practices had been a custom at RDH.
81. In making these observations I should note that there was an occasion, in around 1955/56, when I spent about three months working at Retta Dixon Home to fill in for Dick Stretton, who was then on staff at Retta Dixon and lost his eye in an accident, so I had a chance to observe the place more closely in that period.
82. By the time I took up the position as superintendent of Retta Dixon Home in July, 1962, it had been relocated from its old premises in the Bagot Reserve to a new premises on Bagot Road on the corner of Totem Road about a mile along from the old place. From memory, the new buildings were occupied before Christmas 1961.
83. My appointment followed a requirement by the Welfare Branch that a married person be appointed as superintendent.
84. After I was appointed Miss Shankleton continued to work at Retta Dixon Home, providing administrative support, liaison with government authorities where she had long established associations, bookkeeping and so on. She also liaised with parents, adoptive agencies, adoptive parents and generally kept in contact with the children who had been adopted to the south.
85. By the time of my appointment in 1962 of course, Lorna Nelson was no longer at Retta Dixon Home but I had met her while she was still there, during my occasional visits in the 1950's and I knew her from that contact. I remember her as being one of the older girls in the home, around 15 years old, and she impressed me as a nice girl. Apart from those impressions I don't remember her in any particular circumstance and I do not know her personally at this time. I also remember Barbara Cummings, Valerie Day and some of the other older girls from that period.
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86. In the period when Lorna was at Retta Dixon Home, there was only one primary school and one high school in Darwin. She might have reached high school, which would have been available, but I can't say from personal knowledge. In reviewing the old record notes which I had from Retta Dixon Home, I note that Barbara Cummings was born in 1948 and was at Retta Dixon Home until 1963. Valerie Day was around the same age so my recollection of them would have been of a situation well after the time of Lorna Nelson who I understand left in around 1955.
87. I don't know anything of Lorna Nelson's history after she left Retta Dixon Home. I do know she married a Cubillo boy but he was not one of the Retta Dixon children.
88. At one point a few years ago we had a conference up here and we learned from one of the missionaries who was still working with and moving among the old children of the Retta Dixon Home (Elizabeth Ham), that there was a bit of rankling going on. Our director arranged a meeting with the people, including Lorna Cubillo and they all got along very well. Afterwards, Lorna came to our church two or three times which was very pleasing. I understand the man she married was Catholic so she had not continued to be part of our Protestant church community.
89. Apart from this contact, we might see her occasionally in the supermarket and she will always say hello and is friendly. When our son died last year (his name also being Mervyn) she telephoned us, and spoke to my wife. She thought it must have been me and was quite upset. She told my wife that she had always respected me.
90. At Christmas time 1974 Retta Dixon Home was largely destroyed by Cyclone Tracy. Most of the records were destroyed although a few, including the personal history records which I kept after I became superintendent, were saved. We were able to reconstitute about half the buildings but the remainder were never replaced.
91. At that time we had about sixty children, possibly a few more, but there had already been a decline in the numbers and in the applications for children to come into Retta Dixon Home. Policies had been changed and by then, the policy was to place children into private homes rather than an institutional environment such as Retta Dixon Home. Even before Cyclone Tracy, one of the cottages had been closed down and we weren't crowded in the remainder by any means.
92. As the earlier children were growing older we still had some younger ones coming through but not as many. I was getting applications direct from parents of young
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children, asking me if they could come into Retta Dixon Home so they could get schooling. In fact, one of my biggest responsibilities as Superintendent was to keep children out of the homes. I received so many applications from parents, usually the mother, of young children asking if they could come into the home for care, and I spent hours explaining that it was the responsibility of the family to care for their own children, not simply to place them in a place such as RDH.

93. Fortunately, at the time Cyclone Tracy actually struck, most of the children had gone home to their families or relatives and we didn't have as many children as we would normally have, at the premises.

94. I would certainly say that by the time of Cyclone Tracy, we were already on the decline.

95. In my time at Retta Dixon Home the children resided in cottages with a staff member acting as a "house parent". Each house parent kept a small exercise book in which a record was entered of anything noteworthy about a particular child and I reviewed these books each week. In retrospect, I am almost embarrassed by how little was entered but as I explained to the Human Rights Commission in my submission, we were a home, not an institution, and every child was an individual. I had eight children of my own and didn't keep any records of my kids. I treated the kids at Retta Dixon Home in the same way, with the same attitude. In any event, all those records were destroyed in the cyclone.

96. After Cyclone Tracy the children were sent down to Batchelor and later to a guest house in the Blue Mountains out from Sydney. They returned to Darwin but it was twelve months after the cyclone before they came back to Retta Dixon Home.

97. In the meantime the government authorities had decided that as many of the Retta Dixon children as practical should be returned to their families or home communities rather than to Retta Dixon Home. In that way, we lost quite a lot of our children at that time.

98. From then on, the place was generally wound down and underwent a total change of character. We still had a small number of children, enough for one cottage I think, who were there to attend school. The premises was renamed the Retta Dixon Centre. Ultimately it became a bible college, from around 1980.

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99. In later years, the premises was deemed unsuitable even for that purpose because of aircraft traffic noise from the adjacent Darwin Airport and other such problems.

100. The bible college was relocated to Humpty Doo and the buildings were sold off.

101. I personally retired from Retta Dixon Home in 1980 although one or two of the missionary staff who were there with me continued on for a time afterwards.

102. I am aware that Valerie Day, who I have mentioned was a girl at Retta Dixon Home from the fifties through the early 1960's, and had a close relationship with Amelia Shankleton, holds a large collection of photographs of the Retta Dixon Home probably covering its full history. These include the whole collection of Miss Shankleton's personal photographs. I am unaware of a collection formally named "The Retta Dixon Collection" referred to in Barbara Cummings book but I believe it would probably be the collection held by Valerie Day. Valerie Day is one of our church members. I am also aware that Bev Hanson, who wrote a thesis on the history of Retta Dixon Home, also holds a number of photographs, possibly from Valerie Day's collection.

I declare that I have read the above and that it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge or belief.

Signed by:Witness:

Date: