1.0 BACKGROUND DATA:

1.1 Clontarf: 1901-1983 Senior Orphanage 1901-1967 (Ages c.13-16)
    Special School 1968-1983 (Ages c.13-16)
Castledare: 1926-1983 Junior Orphanage 1926-1967 (Ages c. 6-12)
    Special School 1967-1983 (Ages c. 6-12)
Tardun: 1928-1967 Orphanage/Boys Town (Ages c.13-16)
Bindoon: 1936-1967 Orphanage/Boys Town (Ages c.13-16)

Since 1967 Tardun and Bindoon have been Agricultural Colleges for Years 8-11.

1.2 Over 4,000 boys lived in these Institutions;
    175 Brothers served from 1901 - 1983.

1.3 Almost 800 boys were child migrants brought from the U.K. and Ireland
    under an agreement between the British and Australian Governments in
    1938 and 1947-67. Of the remainder of the residents, approximately 50%
    were State wards.

1.4 The Commonwealth Minister for Immigration delegated his responsibility for
    Child Migrants to the W.A. Government. The Under-Secretary for Lands
    and Immigration was the Legal Guardian of child migrants in W.A. until they
    turned 18.

1.5 Regular inspections of all four Institutions were made by different
    Government Departments (Welfare, Health, Education) and Reports are
    available.

2.0 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE:

2.1 The C.I.B. sent me (30/7/93) a list of 19 names presumably against whom
    complaints had been made. Of these:

    6 are Brothers still living
    6 are now dead
    6 are ex-Brothers still living
    1 is an ex-Brother unknown since 1941

    I have provided (2.8/93) the C.I.B. with available information on all 19
    names as requested on 30/7/93.
2.2 VOICES claim to have on file numerous sworn affidavits alleging abuse. No details have been provided to me.

2.3 Complaints of ill-treatment have also been made to the Christian Brothers by letter, by telephone, and in conversation. In these instances it is difficult to determine the reliability of the complaints.

2.4 Our own enquiries have, of necessity, relied on a variety of allegations from former students and on information from Congregational archives. Based on these limited sources of evidence, our best estimates are:

i) Strong evidence of 5 Brothers being multiple offenders; 3 of these are now dead and 2 have left the Order.

ii) 4 Brothers who admitted offences when confronted by Superiors. To the best of our knowledge, these men did not re-offend.

iii) Some others have been named in allegations but there is no conclusive evidence to substantiate those claims.

3.0 HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS BY SUPERIORS AT THE TIME:

3.1 Congregational Superiors (based in Sydney until 1953, in Melbourne 1953-1967, and in Perth thereafter), always regarded child sexual abuse, alleged or proven, as a very serious matter. In keeping with conventional understanding of the day, child abuse was viewed primarily as "corrupting" children, exposing them to "moral depravity". There was limited grasp of the psychological and emotional impact of sexual abuse.

3.2 Likewise, there was little understanding of the nature of the repeat offender, the paedophile, or of the likelihood of offences being repeated in other settings. Offences were viewed primarily as moral offences, and therefore moral exhortations, rebukes, canonical warning (as prescribed in Canon Law), and transfers to other schools were employed as responses to offences. Offenders who were not yet under final vows in the Congregation were dismissed. In the rare case of a serious offence being proven against a finally professed Brother, he was dismissed.

3.3 While all complaints were investigated by Superiors, denial by a Brother accused usually meant his word against that of a boy. This usually resulted in warnings to the Brother and no further action. Occasional episodes of malicious accusations, and suspicion of the reliability of "orphanage boys" tended to count against taking a boy’s word against that of a Brother when there was no further evidence.

3.4 While approaches outlined above are clearly deficient in the light of modern knowledge of the phenomenon of sexual abuse, they seem to have been more or less conventional responses by the standards of the day.
4.0 PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY CHRISTIAN BROTHERS:

4.1 i) The Christian Brothers Executive has engaged in dialogue over the past several years with the Child Migrant Friendship Society Inc. We financed the establishment of their office and drop-in centre at Maylands and paid their rent for the c. 4 years of their time there.

ii) We have given personal support and various forms of practical assistance to an active self help group called Children from Catholic Institutions.

iii) We pay for the services of a qualified "search-worker" in the U.K. to assist former child migrants trace families. He has worked since early 1992 under the supervision of the Catholic Child Welfare Council (UK).

iv) From July 1993, we pay for a qualified social worker in Perth, working through the Catholic Migrant Centre, to assist former child migrants with counselling and tracing family.

4.2 We have always been available to listen to the experience, including complaints, of former residents of our Institutions. All letters received are replied to.

5. FURTHER MOVEMENTS TOWARDS RECONCILIATION:

5.1 Regular meetings from 1992 to May 1993 with VOICES Executive aiming towards mutual understanding and solution to problems.

5.2 Appointment (in late 1990) of professional historian (Dr. Barry Coldrey) to research and write history of Christian Brothers and Child-care (publication due in late 1993).

5.3 Publication July 3rd in the "West Australian" and "The Australian" of a formal Statement from the Christian Brothers (copy attached).

5.4 Announcement of provisional plans to establish a scheme of service to assist former residents of Catholic Institutions (WA) who are presently suffering and in need. These services will include counselling, therapy, travel assistance for family reunions and other areas of need. The proposed Fund will be controlled by independent Trustees.

5.5 The Christian Brothers accept a moral obligation to offer assistance as outlined in 5.4 above.

5.6 We are therefore engaged in consultation with other interested groups with a view to:

a) negotiating reconciliation
b) contributing help by payment of needed services, probably by means of a Fund established for that purpose.
5.7 We believe that a public enquiry is not an appropriate way of promoting reconciliation or of assisting those who are presently suffering.

6. ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

6.1 The Christian Brothers have established an Advisory Committee to assist them in working towards reconciliation:

Mrs. Anne Fox: Lecturer in Theology at Edith Cowan University; Consultant with family company - Fox Associates (Organizational Development and Strategic Planning).

Mr. Gus Irdi: Barrister and Solicitor; Principal of his own legal practice, Irdi & Associates; involved as a member of school boards for a number of years.

Mr. Bill Quin: Director of his own public relations and marketing organisation, Quin Argo, since 1970, consulting to a wide range of businesses throughout Australia.

It is hoped all three members will attend the meeting with the Attorney General together with Br. Gerald Faulkner (Provincial Superior and Chairman of Trustees - WA/SA), Br. Tony Shanahan (Deputy Provincial and Trustee), and Br. John Baldwin (Consultor and Trustee).

7.0 THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT:

7.1 We request Government assistance in -

a) establishing an appropriate medium of reconciliation with the aggrieved

b) establishing a means of identification of needs

c) establishing and managing a Fund to service needs as identified

d) contributing towards the travel costs of former child migrants desirous of returning to the U.K. or Ireland for family purposes.

Br. G.T. Faulkner, cfc
Provincial
August 6, 1993