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**STATEMENT OF MRS SUZANNE GAGE DIXON
TAKEN ON 13 MARCH 1997**

I reside at REDACTED, Enmore, NSW 2042.

I am Principal at the Mater Dei Special School, which is a school conducted under the auspices of The Good Samaritan Sisters at 229 Macquarie Grove Road, Camden, NSW 2570. This is a non-systemic school which is the responsibility of the Order. It is also an incorporated college with its own independent board, currently chaired by Mr Peter Fitzgerald.

The position is that there was a residential worker, CID, who was employed at the school initially on 20 July 1986. He was employed as a resident social educator. At the time of the employment I think the Principal at the school was Sister Gwen Bade. Thereafter Sister Joan Nolan was Principal for about two years. I was employed as Principal in early 1991.

You will note from the records that CID was absent on leave for two periods during his time at the school. He had come back from leave in March 1991 which was not too long after I had been appointed as principal.

CID was employed on a live-in basis.

CIB was at that time a 14 year old. She was living in the same house as CID. Sister Marie Casamento became aware of some sort of problem involving CIB of a serious nature. It was a medical issue. *As far as I can recollect* She took CIB initially to Camden Hospital. From memory, I think I spoke to CIB and informed her as to what was going on. Ultimately, I think CIB took CIB to Westmead Hospital where she required surgery in relation to her anal passage and where the doctors formed the view that there was the likelihood of there having been some type of sexual intercourse. Needless to say, this was a matter of some considerable weight in my mind and I consulted with various professionals in respect of the handling of the case. In particular, I believe there were discussions with Tony Carroll. Also there was a retired police inspector, Barry Brown, who was of some support and help to me. Of course, I also was in close consultation with one of the

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Province counsellors, Sister Bernadette. At that time Paul Grew was the Chairman of the Board.

The matter was formally reported to the Police - Trevor Fairall and Warren Sheill. There was a letter forwarded to Camden Police dated 5 June 1991.

I am sure that we took some sort of advice and a process was set up to dismiss CID unless a resignation was immediately forthcoming. There was a meeting with him and I think Sister Marie Casamento attended this meeting. I had to very strongly suggest that CID should tender his resignation forthwith. I believe this meeting took place within a very short time of the information coming to us in relation to what appeared to have occurred. CID did resign from his employment. We then went with him to the house when he collected his gear and made his keys available to us. Barry Brown was with me when that happened. CID was seen off the property and has not been seen since.

I cannot verify exactly when the child was treated at Westmead Hospital but I think this all happened within a fairly short period of time. It was an emergency type situation. We knew that action was required. The mother had noticed bleeding.

Funnily enough there was another issue at the time involving a male resident, CIL REDACTED which had been reported to FACS and with which FACS had close involvement. This had resulted in some restrictions being imposed on CID in terms of his capacity to have an ongoing involvement at the school. I had to indicate that I understand that he did at one time act in breach of these conditions having picked the boy up. Just to clarify the condition was that there would be no contact with CIL whatsoever in the school context or outside the school context and the breach of this occurred at the social level outside of the immediate school environment.

CID would probably not have tertiary qualifications. Nor would he be a trained teacher. He had a social welfare type background. I cannot say what level of scrutiny would have been applied at the time of appointment. Obviously we all know now more than we knew in those days.

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I understand that CID may have been through the Barnardo Homes system in Australia having come from England after the Second World War.

As you may know, a hotline was established as part of the NSW Royal Commission and it would seem that CID may be on the war path. *intent on taking action* She made an enquiry on that hotline as was referred to Ian Baker at Polding House who is the Catholic Education Commission's representative for such matters. This may be a part of the new Towards Healing process. Ian was informed that there were two specific allegations:

1. CID's complaint in respect of the assault by CID ;
2. An alleged complaint on her part as regards the way in which the matter was handled at that time.

So far as I am concerned the matter was handled competently. Both FACS and the Police Department were involved. Advice was taken every step of the way. I did not think to do anything about following CID up subsequently because surely this is an issue to be handled competently and sensitively by expert government departments rather than myself. We had heard nothing from CID since his departure.

However, there was a follow-up meeting towards the end of July with FACS.
I understand that the Police who are carrying out some sort of enquiry in relation to the matter may wish to have access to some of our files and I would be pleased if you would make these papers available to the Police but ensure that this process is undertaken normally with the originals being retained and kept in order, etc.

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