



Royal Commission  
into Institutional Responses  
to Child Sexual Abuse

Statement

Name Jacqualine Tracey HENDERSON

Address REDACTED

Occupation Senior Administration Officer

Date

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. My full name is Jacqualine Tracey Henderson and my date of birth is 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1962.
3. I am currently employed as a senior administration officer with Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council.
4. I started working at the Hunter Aboriginal Children's Service (HACS) around 1998. I was employed as an out-of-home care caseworker and a family worker. At that time, HACS was looking for out-of-home care caseworkers, and other support workers to enhance the children's service and to make sure that the current foster carers and the children that were in care were catered for appropriately. I worked for HACS from 1998 to 2003.
5. Steve Larkins is connected family. REDACTED
6. After I left my employment with HACS, around mid-2003, I took on the role of the Chairperson of the HACS Committee. This was a voluntary position. Steve was the manager of HACS at this time. The Committee was made up of between four and six people, and met about once a month. I did not spend time at the service outside of committee meetings.

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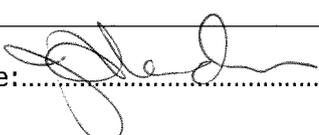
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7. I first heard some rumours about Steve that caused me concern back in the early '90s. Probably 1995, maybe 1996. At the time, I was working with the Worimi Land Council. I heard whispers and rumours that Steve had interfered with a couple of boys in Scouts. I was told this by the mother of one of the boys that had been a witness when Steve allegedly touched one of the boys. At first I thought "Oh, it's a load of hogs". I was told that it had gone to court. And I thought, "Okay, it's been dealt with." I thought, okay, maybe he's on a bond or something like that, and I didn't take it any further. It was sort of never talked about after that.
8. Around 2000, HACS advertised the position of coordinator for the service, because the existing coordinator had gained a position with the Department of Community Services. Steve was interviewed and got the job. I was not involved in the selection process. As I was a caseworker, Steve became my boss.
9. In 2003, when I was still employed with HACS, I heard rumours within the Worimi Aboriginal community about Steve and a past incident involving a scout. The details about how I confronted Steve and asked him to tell me the truth about these rumours is described in my statement to police, dated 7 September 2011. The following information is in addition to what I said in that statement.

**EXHIBIT I PRODUCE A COPY OF THAT STATEMENT WHICH IS ATTACHED MARKED JH1**

10. From the time Steve was employed in 2003, he was responsible for the day-to-day running of HACS. He reported to the HACS committee. The Chair at the time, from memory, may have been Michele Perry or Trevor Patton. They were community elders that had started Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services. Trevor is now deceased. Joseph Perry was on the committee, as well as Colleen Perry, Michelle and Joseph's mum. Some foster carers were also on the committee.

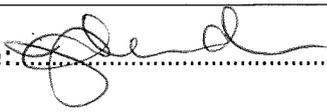
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11. In early to mid 2003, one of the other workers said to me "I have just heard a whisper. I've just been told that 'fat arse' interfered with boys in the Scouts. Did he actually do this?" I said, "I am under the belief that it was dealt with through the courts." And Nicki, the Hunter ACS Family Worker, said "How in the hell did he get that job when he's been to court with this sort of thing?" And I just said, "I don't know, go and ask him." She said, "No, you" and because I'm the forward one, I did. I went and confronted him.
12. I said to Steve, "Look, staff have got some concerns about the rumour and innuendo that's still floating around about you when you were in the Scouts and interfering with the boys. And he just went off his head, and he said, "If I hear this effing shit again", he said, "I'll walk down to my solicitors right now and have youse all for defamation." And I said, "Well, you go effing right ahead and do it." I said, "What have you got to hide? Why are you getting agitated?", because he got very agitated at the time.
13. I told Michele Perry and Trevor Patton that one of the staff members had told me that they had concerns about Steve with the Scouts. I told them rumours were circulating around in the community. I am pretty certain Michelle said to me, "Well, his Working With Children's check's come back, so it must be okay".
14. After I confronted Steve, I just left it. I was told by the mother of the boy who had witnessed Steve allegedly touch another boy that the case had gone court. I was under the impression that it had been dealt with, and he got off. I didn't want to create waves. There was no further talk about the rumours within HACS, because Steve had threatened us with defamation.
15. Around 2003 or 2004, it came to my attention that Steve had children visiting and staying at his home. REDACTED It was of concern to me that Steve had

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children at his home because he had not been assessed through the Department of Community Services to be a foster carer.

16. At some point – I am not sure when - I became aware that Steve had taken a child into his home.

I was under the belief that it was a crisis, and Steve had taken him in and would then arrange a carer. I started getting suspicious because Steve continued a friendship with the young boy that continued for a long time. The child, whose name was REDACTED, was not a child in care, so I did not take any action.

17. Another child who stayed with Steve was named AD . REDACTED

REDACTED

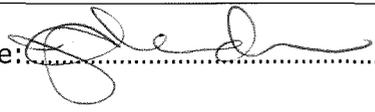
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18. In 2003 or 2004, AD was having foster care breakdown issues. REDACTED

REDACTED . Steve stated that AD needed a male role model. AD started spending time at Steve's house, but did not sleep over. I didn't think anything of this.

19. Around 2007 or 2008, when AD was about REDA yrs old, AD started spending the night at Steve's. I recall that this was approximately the same time that REDACTE, who was at risk of entering care, came onto the scene and was also hanging out at Steve's residence.

20. I did not contact any external agencies like Community Services or the Children's Guardian or other Aboriginal caseworkers within the department about my concerns. I probably should have, but I didn't. I did not consider making a risk of harm report about the children who were staying overnight with Steve. Steve was very convincing. He showed us the court papers that gave him parental responsibility so I did not question his authority to provide care for the children.

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21. I don't think there was a lot of governance training for committees. I felt obliged to go on the committee. I was told "We need you on the committee to do this and do that. If we don't have a committee then" - well, you know what goes on with all that sort of stuff.

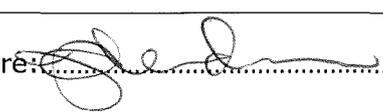
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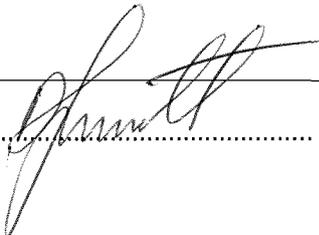
Date: 28<sup>th</sup> August 2013

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Date: 20/8/13.

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