



Royal Commission  
into Institutional Responses  
to Child Sexual Abuse

# Statement

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**Name** Janet Young MULQUINEY  
**Address** Known to the Royal Commission  
**Occupation** Pensioner  
**Date** [9th] February 2014

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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 Janet Young MULQUINEY and I was born in 1954. I am 59-years-old.
3. I receive a disability pension.
4. I grew up in Balgowlah with my mother and father, two brothers and a young sister. I was the eldest child. I went to primary school in Manly. I went to Mackellar Girls High, Manly Vale. I left school at 15-years-old and started working at the Village Dry Cleaners in Manly.

## **Admission to Parramatta Girls' Training School ("Parramatta Girls")**

5. In 1970, I was sent to Parramatta Girls because I breached an 18-month good behaviour bond. I was 16-years-old. We weren't a very rich family, so my parents didn't have a solicitor to represent me. They said I was "uncontrollable and exposed to moral danger".
6. I remember arriving at Parramatta Girls in the evening when it was dark. I was met by a matron and told the rules: I couldn't answer back, I couldn't speak unless I was spoken to, and I was told to toe the line or I would never go home. Then I was taken to a dormitory and I just had to follow the rules and regulations of the dormitory. I was told that I was going straight to Dormitory 4, which

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was sort of like halfway there, and I just had to try and make my way up to Dormitory 7 and then to Bethel through good behaviour. Bethel was where you went if you were really well behaved. You got privileges there, like being able to go home on the weekend for a day. I only got as far as Dormitory 7 though. If you got in trouble you would be dropped down to the lesser dormitories, which was where the troublemakers were.

7. Day-to-day life was either scrubbing floors or working in the laundry washing sheets and clothing. Occasionally we could work in the kitchen cooking or serving tables for each other. If we were good, we got sent to needlework room where we made clothes and did repairs. So most of my first three months was spent scrubbing the dormitory floors with a can of polish and a scrubbing brush. Then I did a bit of kitchen duty and then worked into the needlework room.
8. Everything was very controlled and regulated. We weren't allowed to speak to each other, we weren't allowed to really talk about anything unless we were spoken to by an officer. They were very stern, very strict, there was no personal chats or anything like that. It was very, very staunch.
9. We were all treated as if we were dirty and we didn't have any common sense and that we were all liars who would attempt to hide things. So even when it was that time of the month and we needed things - we had to approach the officer and say that we needed attention and then pads were handed out in front of everybody else. You couldn't have any modesty, it was pretty much everything was out in the open.
10. I remember if you were privileged enough you would walk upstairs to like a television room. But we couldn't talk while we were watching television. It was in one of these rooms that I was pushed down the stairs by an officer because I had expressed an opinion that I didn't want to do waitress duty the next day, so I was pushed down the stairs.
11. I had an experience with one female officer where I was really, really desperate to go to the toilet and I asked and she said no and I proceeded to say I had to. I was reported for insubordination and I was taken to Superintendent MAYHEW and he punched me in the eye. He was the head of

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the home. He ruled the roost. This is the only incident that I can remember where I knew who the perpetrator was. He was a really big man, he was a bit like a hawk, he was very imposing and scary and you just absolutely knew that if you had to go and see him, you were in the biggest trouble under the sun.

12. I got a black eye from Mr MAYHEW punching me and as a result I was not allowed to have any visitors. My parents were told that I didn't have any privileges because I hadn't behaved myself. So it wasn't until my eye healed that my mum could come back again. I couldn't tell my mum about having a black eye because I was too scared. We were instructed that if we said anything, then we would lose even more privileges and that we would go to The Institution for Girls in Hay ("**The Hay Institution**"). Some of the girls that were in there had been to The Hay Institution and had come back saying it was even worse than Parramatta Girls. We were all a bit scared to do too much wrong, in case we were sent there.

13. I had conversations with some other girls at Parramatta Girls about the beatings they suffered. They were very brief discussions. It would be like a girl would disappear for a couple of days and if she didn't come back, you knew she had been put on the train to Hay in the middle of the night, because that's when they used to take the girls. They would take them in the middle of the night and you'd get up the next morning and that person just wouldn't be there.

14. The girls who had returned from The Hay Institution told me that they were not allowed to have any eye contact with anyone. You couldn't look above anybody's shoulders, so your eyes were to the ground all the time, and all you got to do all day was scrub the asphalt quadrangle with bricks, until there was nothing left, and then you got another brick and did it again. You didn't talk to anyone, there was no conversation whatsoever, it was absolute total, you know, silence and no eye contact and just this scrubbing with the bricks. Girls came back from there very bruised and beaten and swollen and it took them a long time to be able to adjust and actually look at you when they were speaking.

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**Sexual Abuse at Parramatta Girls**

15. One day I was bending over in the quadrangle brushing shoes and an officer attempted to lift my skirt. I had a wooden shoe-polishing brush in my hand and I got a shock, I jumped, and I threw the brush at the officer and I can remember saying: "Get away". I was sent to the 'dungeon' for being insubordinate and for attacking an officer. The dungeon is where I think they kept the convicts many, many years ago. When I was there it was used as a punishment room if you were insubordinate. Whilst in the dungeon, I was given steel wool to scrub metal garbage bins. You were just given dry steel wool, no water, no nothing, you just had to scrub until they were shiny with the old fashioned steel wool.
16. I must have been there for a few hours when the light went off and I started hearing a male whispering. I said: "Hello, hello, is someone there?" and I was told in a whisper: "Keep quiet, everything will be alright if you stay quiet." A body came up close to me, very close. I was basically told to "shh" and that if I made a sound I would go to The Hay Institution, but if I kept quiet, everything would be all right and that I wouldn't get into trouble. So I remained very quiet and then there was some fumbling and then my underwear was removed.
17. I didn't know what was happening. I hadn't had any experiences like this. I can remember saying: "Stop, you're hurting me," but I was shoved pretty roughly up against the wall and told to "shh" again. I can remember the person just put their fingers inside me. I had never had any sexual experiences before and I just wanted to scream. I was very roughly treated, but I wasn't hit at that stage. I just remember a lot of puffing and panting and "shh, shh" and clothes and shuffling and I can remember the keys jangling and I kind of zoned out a bit. I was scared that I was going to die. I thought I was going to be killed. Now when I recall it, I think that the person must have been masturbating.
18. Then the person just went silent for a while. Then my pants, which were around my ankles, were pulled up roughly and I had to adjust those later. Then I was told not to say anything to anybody

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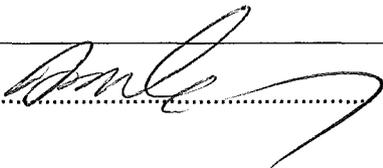
ever because bad things would happen. I would go to The Hay Institution and other bad things would happen.

19. I can remember sobbing afterwards and thinking that I was the worst person in the world, that everybody would hate me and that I definitely couldn't say anything to anyone because it was disgusting. I think I was in there for 24 hours, all night, because that was the usual stint. I was then let out by a female officer and from then on I was very subdued. I pretty much kept to myself and I did end up working my way up to the Dormitory 7.
20. There was also another isolation chamber and it was called 'the loft'. I only ever had to go there once. It was a very tiny loft and it had a grill. The pigeons used to roost on that grill and it was just full of pigeon droppings. It was such a tiny space you couldn't even lay down. You would be sent there for 24 hours at a time.
21. That wasn't the only form of punishment. Not everybody went to the dungeon or the loft. You were often made to scrub where we used to dance. You were made to scrub that for hours, just down on your hands and knees.

**Impact of the child sexual abuse**

22. When I finally left Parramatta Girls in 1971 it had a dramatic impact on the rest of my life. I didn't get any support when I left. I just went home to my parents.
23. I pretty much had a suicide attempt not long after I left. I tried to throw myself from North Head. I had gone up to North Head, jumped over the safety fence and jumped onto a ledge which was about 18 inches wide. I actually went up there with some friends, but they didn't know what I was doing, and when they realised, they called the Police. I had to be rescued. I was taken to Manly Hospital after being rescued and then I was put into North Ryde Psychiatric Hospital to be assessed. I wasn't given any long-term medication or anything like that. Basically they just said that I just was depressed.

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24. So years went on and I did get a boyfriend. But as soon as that relationship didn't work out, I had another suicide attempt, and then I've had suicide attempts each time my three marriages have broken up. My last one was six years ago, after my last marriage broke up. I was in Kempsey Mental Health Unit for one month.
25. My whole life has just been about putting on a brave face, being there for everybody else and not having anyone here for me. The impact has been huge, but in saying that, it's also given me a great deal of compassion for other people.
26. I had repressed a lot of memories for a lot of years and I had repressed most of it until I was watching a program on what happened at Boys Town and just every emotion and every single feeling came flooding back to me. There are days when I have extremely vivid flashbacks and dreams of Parramatta Girls. I can remember a lot of what it looked like and I can visualise things like the inside. I have flashbacks of being scared, but I can remember the look of the place and I can remember the toilet and shower blocks. I have some vivid flashbacks in my dreams. I've even been caught sleepwalking and banging my head against the wall and screaming out: "No, no, no." It's always been when I've had a dream about that.
27. When I asked for my documents to be released from Parramatta Girls, the only thing I got from there was the card saying what date I was put in and what date I was released and a few details about my address and my date of birth and why I was in there.
28. I could tell you something that did make a difference, I know that when Kevin Rudd made his apology, basically for the stolen generation and to the children that had been incarcerated in these homes, from their normal homes, I have to say that that made a big impact. The apology was someone actually coming out and acknowledging that things that had been covered up for so many years. The things at Parramatta Girls actually did happen. It struck a bit of a chord in my heart to hear it coming from someone in a high position. Generally I find that people in those positions do say: "No, no, no, that would never happen".

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29. My participation with the Royal Commission is the first time I've made disclosures about my experiences at Parramatta Girls. I never reported the abuse to anyone. I was too frightened, too scared, no-one would have ever believed a word I said, and I knew that.

Signed: *J. Mulquney*  
Date: *9/2/2014*  
Witness: *[Signature]*  
Date: *9/2/2014*

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