



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

Statement

Name Dianne Joan GRAHAM
Address Known to the Royal Commission
Occupation Retired
Date [16] February 2014

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 Dianne Joan GRAHAM and my date of birth is 24 September 1943. I am 70-years-old.
3. I am unsure if I am Aboriginal because my mother and her sister were adopted. I have been trying for years to confirm this but no-one seems to know anything about it.
4. I was born in Lakemba, Sydney in 1943. My mother moved from there after I was born to St Peters in Sydney. I was raised there until I went into the Parramatta Girls' Training School ("**Parramatta Girls**"). When I got out of Parramatta Girls, my mother and father got a house in Punchbowl, NSW. It was like an old Army hut, they were really long. You got placed there before you got put into housing commission.
5. I was the youngest of nine children. From the oldest to the youngest there was, Bubby, Eric, Dulsie, Norma (who passed away very young), Elsie, Ronnie, Nola, Kevin then me. There was 11 years difference between my sister Nola and I. If Kevin had lived he would have been 12 months older than me. However, he died three days after he was born. Mum had already had five children and when Dad married her he was only 18-years-old.

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6. When I was eight-years-old I was molested by the man next door to my mother's house. After that my behaviour at school just changed. I used to walk out of the classroom, I couldn't understand what was wrong with me. I never got a lot of schooling because I had rheumatic fever from about three and a half to four-years-old and I used to be in hospital for six to eight weeks.
7. In 1956, when I was 12-years-old I repeated the last year of primary school. My teacher used to go to the hotel at lunchtime and he'd come back and he'd cane the kids. I'd just yell out "Leave them alone". It used to upset me and then me yelling out, he'd send me out to the corridor. I didn't tell anyone about this at the time. I never attended high school.
8. I remember going to the police station when I was 13-years-old because of being labelled uncontrollable and exposed to moral danger. I went before the judge at Albion Street Children's Court near Central Station in Sydney. The judge started off being nice to me until he read the report written by my teacher. He said, "Right, you're committed to Parramatta Girls Home". It was just straight out 'You're uncontrollable'. My mother accompanied me to court. If I was so uncontrollable and neglected why was she with me?

First Admission to Parramatta Girls

9. On the drive there I was so scared and crying because I was going away from my mother and father and still couldn't understand why I was the only one. I was angry about that. When we got there, driving into it, and the big wall, it was like a gaol and when you're only 13 everything seems bigger to you. The only thing that could get me out of the car was I sat there and thought to myself: "No-one can hurt me in here. I'm going to be safe." I got there and they put me through the office and I went through.
10. There was Keller House, for the younger ones, and the very first night I was in there they were all playing up, running on the beds and jumping around everywhere. I got the blame for that. They said I stirred them up, that I was doing it. They put me back in the building where you waited until you got your doctor's results. Downstairs it was like two rooms that shut with a door. I was put in

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there for two weeks with a girl about 17-years-old. I had to tell her I had my periods. She was trying to kiss me and everything all the time and then they wrote in my file that I'm a lesbian and I never was a lesbian in there. Four girls in the dorm tried to rape me in the toilet in the dormitory but they never got anything and I just went ballistic. I went down the next day with black eyes, split lip and an officer said: "What happened to you? You can't say anything because you'll only get it again". I was scared.

11. It was Christmas day on 1956 and we all had lunch out on the corridor and Mr GORDON, the superintendent at Parramatta Girls, sat there with us. Well I thought he was such a nice man then and I really trusted him and at Christmas lunch he was sitting on a box thing that was a bit higher so he could look over us and he called me up to the table and he said: "Dianne, here's a box. It's from your mother. She dropped it off Christmas morning." It was all Christmas lollies, cakes. She used to always send me a lot more. I think she must have thought the kids would like me there to share with everybody. There was a parcel too and I opened it up and it was a gold bracelet and "Mum and Dad" on it and it was a good one. Mr GORDON said: "I think you'd better put that in the office after Dianne, because someone might steal it." I thought so too, so I wanted to put it in there so it'd be alright until I left.

12. So after lunch, when we cleared everything he took me up to the office. In the office of a night time, weekend or holidays, there was no staff in there. He had the run of the whole home. He had a house on the property, out the front. He took me up to the office, it was very big, and I signed a bit of paper that my bracelet was going in and he just said: "Put it in the safe there." Well, I bent down and when I came back up he put his arms around over my breast. I started wriggling and then I just got my arm free. I elbowed him in the stomach and he let go of me. I kept on running around the desk and everything and then I told him if he didn't open up the big door and let me back in the home I was going to smash the window with the chair and go and tell my sister. My sister lived up at Westmead. He let me out.

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13. After that day, Mr GORDON would make me sit near him in the dining room, he'd ask me to say grace and I'd react and say no and I'd be cheeky. He'd put me in isolation. It was horrible. It was bread and milk the first 24 hours, the next 48 hours, water and bread. You used to have to wet yourself sometimes because they didn't even come in and take the toilet. You'd get a blanket of a night and a mattress. He used to stick me in there all the time and I hated him. He could come in there any time he wanted to. I used to lay in there of a night and wait for him. You'd hear his keys rattling and the big steel door slamming. He'd come in and he'd slap you around and I used to spit in his face and everything.
14. The last time he did this to me was before he ceased working at the home. He came into the cell I had been locked in. He started grabbing me. I jumped over his shoulders and I got right in his face and I had to tell him: "You touch me again and you're going to have to kill me" because I was going to kill him. And then he left a couple of days later and didn't return again before I went home. I was 14-years and three months old. I know that because they said that I would need an exemption to work.

Second Admission to Parramatta Girls

15. In 1958, when I was 14-years-old I was sent back to Parramatta Girls again. During the time I was out I was just so mixed up. When I got back to Parramatta Girls, Mr GORDON was gone this time and it was a different place without him there. I know I made a dress, never done that there before, and I did it for a fashion parade and I organised it all. He was gone.
16. A Mr JOHNSON replaced him. Mr JOHNSON used to take the older girls out for the day. I would hear them talking in the dormitory about who had sex with him.
17. I don't remember when I got out of Parramatta Girls the second time. It is a bit hazy. I was very sick.

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Leaving Parramatta Girls

18. After I left Parramatta Girls, I used to go once a month to Bankstown when we were living at Punchbowl. I would see someone in a welfare office but I hardly ever spoke. I wasn't cheeky but I just hated Government after that.
19. I got married in 1960 at Punchbowl Church. We had three boys: Gregory John RIEN in 1961; Glen William RIEN in 1962; and Grant Stephen RIEN in 1963. My husband was a very violent and abusive man. He assaulted my father, beating and injuring him so badly he was operated on. He left my dad very ill. Also at that time my mother was in hospital, not expected to live after being diagnosed with cancer.
20. My family sent me to my Aunty's place at Bexley North. She was so different to my mother but they were a spitting image of each other. I want to know more about their adoption. They were adopted together.
21. I went to Liverpool Welfare and they didn't do anything for me. I had no option but to return to my husband. I had nowhere to go. I will never forget that. I was about 19-years-old. I left my husband again when Grant was around 10 months old. I went to Liverpool Welfare for help. The man I spoke to initially said they could help me. He went away and then abruptly said 'We can't help you'. They gave me a couple of dollars that's it. It was not enough money to buy food for my kids. I told him he would have to keep my kids until I could care for them. I went back to my husband because I had no money. That's when I fell pregnant, but I miscarried after he bashed me and I lost the baby. The doctors tried to save it for a week. I was also being evicted from the house I was living in because I could not pay rent.
22. I met Joey in Sydney and had Jodie who was born on 11th January, 1967. I was with him for a while and then he went to South Australia. Joey got sent to jail in South Australia. The laws then required Joey to have some family living in South Australia or he couldn't be paroled.
23. In 1968, I went to South Australia. I was running away from what happened to me. I wanted a new life.

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24. I went to OARS - Community Transitions, a crime prevention agency in Adelaide, and they were great. They were very good to me. They got me a flat. Joey eventually got out and he got a job at Holden doing some spray-painting. We had a flat near the Morphettville racecourse. He was going to work and then he came home one night and said he was going to Melbourne. Joey came back with a mate to pick me up and we went to Sydney and then he went back to Melbourne. I didn't want Jodie to have that sort of life.
25. Joey was in a car accident in Box Hill. He went back to jail again. I lived with Mrs POTTER who was Joey's mother. I told Joey that if I meet anyone, I'll be leaving him. I didn't want Jodie going to school having people say her father was a jailbird.
26. I felt that if I wasn't with anyone I'd lose Jodie too. Jodie was all I had because I lost my boys. I couldn't trust people, I liked staying at home. Even now I don't go out because I don't trust anyone.
27. Leah was born in 1971 and I gave birth to a boy who only lived a few hours. I called him Dane. After staying with him in Sydney my brother encouraged us to come to South Australia. We stayed for a few weeks at my brother's place in Modbury then we moved to Semaphore and later to a house at Cross Road, Edwardstown. Rebeca was born in 1974. When I had Rebecca it showed up that I had cancer I got put straight into hospital at Ashford, South Australia. Five days later I haemorrhaged and I was put back in hospital and operated on again. Whilst I was in hospital my partner said he was going to Sydney and took Leah. I could not travel for 6 weeks. I stayed with Barbara and Ronnie, who were friends of mine and my daughter's god parents.
28. I went to Sydney and took Rebecca and Jodie with me. My partner was already there with Leah. He did not have a job and was spending his time drinking. I told him that if he didn't get a job I would leave. For three months he told me he was working but this was a lie. We separated. After leaving my partner I moved in with a female friend. I minded hers and my children whilst she worked full time. We helped one another.

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Impact of the child sexual abuse

29. I feel like I have been in prison since I left Parramatta Girls. I only had employment before I got married. I couldn't hold down a job because I couldn't leave the house.
30. Everyone I have been with would have to lay me down from the bad nightmares I had about Mr GORDON. I couldn't even stay in bed sometimes.
31. In 1978 we moved back to South Australia to try to save our relationship. We moved to a flat at Largs Bay. We later moved to Sefton Park.
32. I tried to kill myself at Sefton Park and went to Enfield Hospital, like Hillcrest Hospital but smaller. I was made to stay there for two weeks. I still couldn't talk to anyone about Parramatta Girls. Then they sent me to Queen Victoria Hospital to have a hysterectomy. When I came out I changed a bit.
33. A woman who worked at Port Adelaide Correctional Services, who was a friend of the man who owned the house we lived in, took me up to the hills to meet a minister she knew. He gave me a tape, it was called 'A cry of the heart'. I remember I ran around the block with no clothes on at 3am one morning and crisis care came. My partner signed himself into Hillcrest Psychiatric Hospital and was going in and out of Hillcrest during that time. I let him come back because I thought he was going to change. Then the owner of the house came to say he was going to sell but he gave us a referral. I had already put my name down for a Housing Commission house. A man from the Housing Trust came to see me. We were offered a house at Smithfield.
34. I moved to Smithfield in 1980. My son Gregory died on 23 July 1982, he just turned 21 the week before. That's when I went into Hillcrest Hospital. I was in there for six to eight weeks. I went back to do an eight week course. I couldn't even speak about my husband when I was in there. I had a social worker Pam McGEE there who was talking to me about Port Lincoln. I was still under her after I had left for a couple of years.
35. I moved to a house at Hindmarsh.
36. I went to the Welfare head office in Adelaide. I saw Mr Brian WILSON. I told him everything that had happened with the Police and Welfare, how sick I was and how I was treated. He told me he

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was on the Board for Priority Housing and they would be meeting in two weeks. He asked where I wanted to move to and I said Port Lincoln as I had heard good things about the area.

37. When I first arrived in Port Lincoln I had to report to Corrective Services, where I met Vicki JAMES. She was the first person I ever spoke to about Mr GORDON. I saw her regularly and we discussed this for a few weeks. I then began writing for myself notes about what happened with Mr GORDON. I wrote for about a year. I liked living in Port Lincoln with Leah. Leah was now about 22-years-old and was living in her own house.
38. My daughter Rebecca then came to tell me she was pregnant.
39. About this time, Jodie got out of hospital and we got an eviction notice. I was only \$100 behind in rent and had a payment plan. Then I approached the Housing Trust and the eviction was wiped.
40. I have seen my ward files from when I was in Parramatta Girls. I saw a word in my file, 'rapturous,' which means evil, mental, never to leave me alone with children. That's what put me right back again. I didn't look at the file again. I only read the remainder of my file two months ago. What happened then is why I have had so much trouble throughout my life. I can't understand why my parents had to pay maintenance when I was a State Ward.
41. I haven't had a drink since 2001.

Reporting of the abuse

42. In 1998, I went to the Campbelltown police station in Sydney to report Mr GORDON and the Police took a statement from me. The police man said he'd get in touch with me in Adelaide. I was so stressed I had to go straight back to Adelaide that night after talking to the Police. Back in Adelaide, a policeman from Christies Beach police station came and told me that Mr GORDON had cancer and he'd passed away. The Police said nothing else was going to happen in regards to Mr GORDON.
43. I want my testimony to be used to prevent this happening to anyone else ever again. What has happened to me has caused me and my children and grand-children to suffer emotionally and

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financially. I was never given, nor offered, any help or assistance that I and my children so desperately needed. The events since 1964 have changed my whole life. I have no superannuation because I was never able to work. I have no significant assets. I have no financial savings or security. I have not been able to obtain any original birth certificates relating to my parents or children. The things that other people my age take for granted, I never had.

Signed: *D. Graham*.....

Date: 16-2-2014

Witness: *[Signature]*.....

Date: 16-2-2014

Signature: *D. Graham*.....

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