



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

Statement

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| Name | Wendy PATTON |
| Address | Known to the Royal Commission |
| Occupation | Retired |
| Date | 18 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 Wendy PATTON but I was known as Wendy GRAY as a child. I was born in England in 1944. I am 69-years-old.
3. I am retired but I am a full-time carer for my husband.
4. I didn't know my birth parents because I was a war baby and I was adopted when I was two-and-a-half-years-old. I was brought to Australia on a ship called the "New Australia". It was full of immigrants and the policy was that a migrant could only enter Australia if you had two children. My mother adopted me and a boy from the Adoption Society so that she was able to enter Australia.
5. We arrived in Australia in 1951 when I was six-years-old. We went to the Goulburn City Migrants Camp. By the time I turned 11, my adopted mother arranged to have me live at Pallister Church Of England Girls Home at Greenwich. After two and a half years I was told by Sister Elizabeth that my parents were not paying for my boarding fees and that I was a charity case and a burden. I was then sent to Metropolitan Girls Shelter ("**Metropolitan Girls**"), which was a place for children who were waiting to be placed somewhere.

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Wendy Patton

Witness:

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6. I was sent to Albion Street Childrens Court where my adoptive mother came to court and she was asked if she would like to take me home but she said no. That's when I was told that I would have to be made a Ward of the State. It was then that I was declared an uncontrollable child and the court sent me to Bidura Children's Home ("**Bidura**") where I stayed for about two weeks. I was told I would be looking after the Aboriginal babies in the nursery, feeding them, caring and changing nappies. There were a lot of Aboriginal babies there.
 7. After two weeks I walked out of the gate of Bidura because it wasn't fenced and I wanted to leave. I walked out and decided I was going back to Pallister Girls because I considered that to be my home. I was going to tell someone at Pallister Girls that they made a mistake sending me to Bidura but I only got as far as Hornsby railway station where I was picked up by the Police.
 8. I was taken into custody and charged as an absconder. I was then sent back to the Albion Street Children's Court and where the court decided I was "Exposed to Moral Danger" and sent to Parramatta Girls Training School ("**Parramatta Girls**") at the governor's pleasure. When I asked why the governor would be pleased, they told me it meant that there was no release date. It was 1958 and I was 13-and-a-half-years-old at the time.

Admission to Parramatta Girls

9. My first impression of Parramatta Girls was horrifying. It was built by the convicts and it was a very old building. It was very antiquated and smelled of decay.
10. I was one of the youngest girls there. There were up to 200 girls at one time there and a lot of those girls were young and pretty tough. When I first got there I used to get in a lot of fights because I was picked on by the other older girls. I stood up for myself and that made me tough so that I wouldn't be abused by the older girls.
11. When I first went there I used to go to school during the day. There was a school room but there were no pencils and no paper. We were supposed to learn cooking but there was nothing to cook with, so we never learned anything.

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Witness:

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12. I was first sexually abused by Mr William GORDON who was the second in charge. He would regularly attempt to sexually abuse me and I would fight him off. When I didn't do what he wanted me to do he would place me into 'the dungeon', which was an isolated cell. This happened on several occasions. He would order a female officer to remove my clothes and remove everything from inside the cell. There was no light globe, no nothing. There was no bucket of water. I remember spending my day counting bricks. In the morning they would bring me a mug of milk which was sour so I couldn't drink it. I think they put lithium in it.

13. In early or mid December ¹⁹⁶⁰~~1961~~ to the best of my recollection, as we had no clocks or calendars, Mr GORDON came to the isolation dungeon and said to me: "You know why I'm here Wendy, I warned you, do it the hard way or the easy way, I do not want to do this. I tried to treat you good and you fought me. Of all the girls you are my favourite. All I wanted was to help you. Why do you think I am here now and not at home with my family, because I worry about you, you are a clever girl. You know I will win in the end. Make it end now."

14. GORDON opened the door of the cell and said to me: "let's make this a happy Christmas. Come with me and have a shower and some new clothes. I even have a special present for you in my office." I made a dash for it past him to the steps but he grabbed hold of me and I fell. I struggled and screamed and he hit me, his punches landing on my bare flesh and he forced my legs apart. I was lying on the steps and the concrete hurt my ribs. I grabbed his hair and banged his head into the wall but he laid his body weight on my body and pressed his hand over my mouth. I bit his hand and blood and felt red hot pain in my head. He then raped me. It felt like I was being ripped apart. I was in agony. Then somebody shone a torch light down on us and he scrambled to his feet and yelled: "get her back in the cell".

15. The woman officer who found us burst into tears. She got a blanket for me and wrapped it around me and I was then taken to the hospital block. A nursing sister was called in and a doctor also attended to me. No-one said anything and no-one supported me. Everyone knew about what happened but no-one did anything.

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16. After that incident I did more isolation and Mr GORDON would rape me repeatedly. He used to burn his cigarettes into my breast and make my genitals bleed. There was no water in the cell to wash in and I was exhausted because I was always anxious and alert in case he came in. He would force me to drink foul sour milk until I vomited and then he would leave me alone in my filth. He would punch and kick me and shove his hands into my private parts.
17. I knew other girls were being sexually abused by GORDON and JOHNSON because we spoke about it. One of the girls was pregnant to JOHNSON and she told me because some of the girls talked to me about the abuse because they knew I was being sexually abused. I didn't tell them but they just knew.
18. On or about 31 October 1960, two days before my 16th birthday, a food fight broke out in the dining room with the bigger girls demanding better food. It took a long time for the girls to get under control and we were all imprisoned in our dorms. The next morning a new man was brought into the dining room from Boystown. When he got up to speak the place erupted. I was dragged away and placed in isolation.
19. After the food fight, I received another 72 hours in detention. It was my 16th birthday and some of the girls sang "16 Candles" down the drain pipe to the dungeon. This time I was given no bed. Mr GORDON and two other officers dragged me down the steps to the dungeon. Mr GORDON held me while the two officers stripped me naked. Mr GORDON slammed the door and said to me: "scream all you want GRAY. No-one will be back to take you to the toilet." I was left in pitch blackness.

The riot

20. In February 1961 I was again isolated in the dungeon when I remember hearing the girls upstairs screaming out "riots, riots, riots." A short time later I heard Mr GORDON coming down the stairs of the dungeon. This time I was ready for him and when he opened the door I made a run for it. I ran up the stairs and out to the outdoor area. I was naked and I found a pile of uniforms outside

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the laundry block and dressed myself with no underclothes. I was shocked by what I saw. The place was on fire. There was smoke billowing through the windows. Mattresses were on fire and I could smell the burning. I ran for the hospital block and I climbed up on the roof because it looked close to where the wall was and I thought I could jump over but I couldn't because the wall was a long distance away.

21. When I was on the roof I saw television reporters on the other side of the wall. I started yelling out to them: "We're being raped. We're being tortured. There are girls in here that are pregnant that have never been outside the walls." I started screaming it. When I did that other girls came up onto the roof. I had a broom that I pulled them up with. I remember one reporter yelled at me and said 'Is it over food?' I replied, 'No, it's about rapes and girls being tortured'.

22. I remember that the wardens called in the fire brigade and police. Then the whole area was full of hoses, fireman and police with guns. I jumped down off the roof to run away because a policeman standing behind one of the other buildings had focused his gun on one of the children in the courtyard. I ran around the policeman and picked up a brick which I was going to throw at him but I couldn't hit him so I dropped the brick and he turned around and saw me so I started running again. As I ran away he shot at me and it went past my ear as I was jumping over a small veranda area. As I went over I was on the downside and the bullet went past me.

23. I was eventually grabbed by a policeman. I remember being really embarrassed of the way they were holding me and pulling me because I was aware I had no underclothes on under the wrap uniform I had hastily dressed in.

24. On about 7 or 8 March 1961, as a result of the riots, I was sentenced to one month hard labour in Long Bay jail ("**Long Bay**") for gross insubordination. Seven of us went before the court.

Long Bay

25. I was the first 16-year-old to be imprisoned in Long Bay.

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26. When I arrived, I was put into a cell in 'A block'. I was raped by the guards. Six male guards came into my cell. I remember that it was night time. I thought I was safe because it was lockdown. I was the only person in the cell and when I went to sleep I was woken with a torch in my eyes and was dragged out of bed by my hair. I was stripped naked and forced down on to the floor. I had my arms held above my head and I was then raped by four of them.
27. The following morning I was taken to see the nurse because they heard me screaming. I didn't say anything to the nurse because she said it was obvious that I had been raped. After that I got a call to the superintendent's office. I do not remember his name. I thought he was going to rape me too but he didn't. He was very compassionate. He was looking out of the window which had bars on it and he said to me: "You're the same age, nearly the same age, as one of my children." He turned to me and told me there was nothing he could do.
28. All he could do to help was to give me to a lady prisoner who took me under her wing. She was in there for murdering three husbands. I used to call her "Pockets" because she had big apron with pockets and she would give me things out of her pocket like an egg.
29. Soon after, three men in suits from the Government, came to see me at Long Bay. They wanted to do a deal with me. The deal was that if I went back to Parramatta Girls to stop the riots, they would get me a job and release me from Parramatta Girls with 20 pounds.
30. At that time I told the Government officials that I was not going back because I was getting raped. I also told them that I was raped in Long Bay but I don't believe anything was done about it. I was told by the Government officials that GORDON and JOHNSON had gone and that no-one would interfere with me. They said they would give me three days to think about it. I spoke to the lady prisoner "Pockets" about it. She said to me: "Wendy, you've got to start looking after yourself. You've got to get out of here. You'll never survive."
31. I decided to do the deal with the Government men and they came to Long Bay and returned me to Parramatta. I carried some authority and respect with the girls at Parramatta Girls so I was able to

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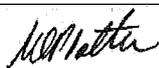
W.P. Bailey

quell the riots. I seemed to have leadership qualities that the girls needed. I told the girls about my experiences in Long Bay and about the pointlessness of rebellion. My ward file notes my exemplary behaviour and assistance in persuading others to behave. This is an enormous understatement.

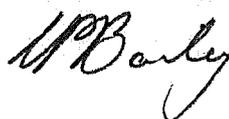
Leaving Parramatta Girls

32. They honoured the agreement and got me a job in a plastics factory and as a seamstress at Faulconbridge in the Blue Mountains. They found me a boarding house with a lady named Mrs QUIGLEY. They gave me a case of second-hand clothes which I had been fitted for at a government store. They also gave me 20 pounds.
33. About three months after I was released from Parramatta Girls I met my first husband, Richard BAILEY. I thought I was still a Ward of the State and thought I needed permission to marry. I wrote three letters to the Department of Child Welfare seeking permission to marry but didn't receive a reply. I was 16 years and 5 months and eventually married Richard on 6 October 1961.
34. On 28 July 1962, I had my first child, Shane. I was visited by two welfare officers who tried to persuade me to give him up for adoption but I refused. They told me that if I didn't give up my baby I would be returned to Parramatta Girls. They also tried to force me to annul my marriage to Richard. I was ordered to bring the child to court where the magistrate said "Wendy take your baby home." That intimidation was an important factor in my decision to keep quiet for years about the things that had happened to me in departmental custody.
35. I had four more children with Richard, my third child being born in Canberra. It was in Canberra that I realised I was claustrophobic and had been claustrophobic since Parramatta Girls. I always feared people closing doors.
36. In about 1965 we moved to Glenbrook and I fell pregnant with my fourth child. I contacted the Department of Child Welfare and asked for my file as I had turned 21-years-old. I was told that the file did not belong to me and would be filed under the *Secrets Act* for 40 years.

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37. This was a further humiliation to me. I felt like a non-person, whose life had been stolen by the Department. I felt like my dignity had been stripped from me as an individual and that I was powerless against the Department.
38. In 1970, my fifth child Vicky was born at Penrith Hospital and we moved to Blaxland and later to Willow Tree.
39. In about 1974, we moved to Manly so my son Shane could receive treatment for his dyslexia. My husband was admitted to the North Ryde Psychiatric Unit following three attempts on my life, the second of which he received a suspended sentence of three years. He was admitted to the hospital for three months and diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic. We divorced and he eventually passed away.
40. In 1978, I was employed by David Jones as a menswear clothing fitter. I was badly affected by claustrophobia but had learned to control myself. During my employment at David Jones I was offered a position in Security. I declined the offer because I feared them finding any information about my past. This greatly limited my employment opportunities.
41. In 1987, I met and later married my second husband Stewart PATTON and we have lived together on the Northern Rivers and Gold Coast areas.
42. In 2005, I commenced psychiatric treatment with Dr Desley FRASER. And over the past 6 years I have received counselling from Anne Neilson at Wattle Place who I continue to receive telephone counselling from. I later wrote an autobiography titled "*The Governor's Pleasure*" which has not yet been published.

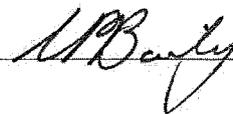
Reporting

43. In 2003 my daughter, who was researching the family tree, brought to my attention that I was now able to apply for my Ward file. I was afraid to apply for my file as I feared being back under any attention from the authorities.

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44. In January 2005 I contacted Gerard Malouf & Partners and commenced legal action against the State of New South Wales in the Supreme Court. Prior to that I was unable to deal with pursuing compensation for my injuries. This was due to the fact that I felt disempowered and ashamed by what happened to me and the way in which it happened. When my grandson said to me: "were you abused Nanna?" I was finally able to admit to it.
45. I could not face the prospect of publicly admitting what had happened until that time. I always felt that I was somehow to blame and somehow deserved what had happened. I felt both shamed and powerless. The earlier difficulties in the securing of my records had completely discouraged me. However when I did finally receive my ward file I was surprised how intact it was and proved that I was an innocent child. This empowered me to take action.
46. The State Senate Enquiry into Parramatta Girls made me realise that the criminal acts committed against me could still be recognised. My claim eventually failed because it was outside the statute of limitations on child sexual abuse and I could not afford the court costs the Crown Solicitors were demanding for my case to continue to trial. I was advised by my solicitors Gerard Malouf & Partners to desist. I feel that there should not be any statute of limitations on child sexual abuse or that I should pay court costs to prove my case. No child should have to prove that they were sexually abused. It should be obvious.
47. In 2013, I received victim's compensation for the sexual abuse perpetrated on me at Parramatta Girls but I didn't receive anything in relation to the rapes at Long Bay.

Impact of the child sexual abuse

48. As a result of the abuse, I suffer from terrible claustrophobia. I cannot travel on trains, planes or buses. I have a fear of small confined, windowless spaces & I must be in control of the door at all times. This is as a result of being confined to small spaces during my childhood.
49. I am a very nervy person, I look and watch everything. When I am in shopping centres, I walk close to walls to avoid any person approaching me from behind. Hearing the rattle of keys or coins

Signature:

Wendy Patton

Witness:

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in a pocket also distresses me as Mr Gordon would carry a huge ring of keys and he would shake them as a form of intimidation or he would hit me with them. This seems strange to others but I have learned to live with it.

50. I fear for children. I believe the statute of limitations should be removed for people wanting to report child sexual abuse. That's my main motivation for telling my story to the Royal Commission, I want children to have a voice and to be heard and believed.

Signed: *Wendy Patton* Date: 18.2.14

Witness: *UP Bailey* Date: 18.2.14

Wendy Patton
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