

Statement

Name	Barbara Frances Taylor
Address	Known to the Royal Commission
Occupation	Minister of Religion
Date	29 September 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. Where direct speech is referred to in this statement, it is provided in words or words to the effect of those which were used, to the best of my recollection.
3. I refer to documents within my statement by Ringtail numbers. Those documents are annexed to my Statement as Annexures A to N.
4. My full name is Barbara Frances Taylor. My date of birth is 14 April 1932.
5. I am a Pastor at Emmanuel Christian Family Church (**Emmanuel Church**). I have held this position since 21 May 1977. At that time the Church was known Emmanuel Tabernacle.
6. Emmanuel Church is a Pentecostal church affiliated with Australian Christian Churches. Australian Christian Churches was formerly known as Assemblies of God in Australia (**AOGA**).
7. In about mid-1998, the mother of [AHA], [AHI], [REDACTED] [REDACTED] asked me to come and see her at her home. In that meeting, [AHI] told me that Frank Houston had some inappropriate sexual interaction with her son, [AHA]. [AHI] told me that when Frank had stayed in their home, when [AHA] was seven years old, Frank had shared a room with [AHA] and touched [AHI] inappropriately (the "**Allegations**"). [AHI] had told me that [AHA] did not want anyone to know about the Allegations.

Signature: *B. F. Taylor* Witness: *M. M. Judge*

Statement in the matter of Case Study 18**Page 2 of 6**

Statement of Barbara Taylor continued

-
8. From the time I was informed of the Allegations, I prepared contemporaneous notes of my involvement in assisting [AHA] to obtain redress from Frank Houston and a response from the AOGA. The document contains my typed and handwritten notes of events from 27 October 1998 to November 1999. The document is titled "Sequence of events regarding child abuse from the past" and a copy the document is marked [ACC.0006.001.0015]. I have also prepared other various notes of my discussions about the Allegations and correspondence which I refer to throughout my statement.
9. On or about 3 November 1998, [AHI] and I were at an evangelistic meeting led by Kevin and D'Anne Mudford held at Emmanuel Church in a tent. The Mudfords were visiting ministers conducting testimony nights at local churches.
10. Kevin Mudford told me that following testimony given by attendees about drug addiction and the devastating effects of child abuse, [AHI] confided in Kevin about Frank Houston sexually abusing [AHA]. Kevin asked me to attend with him to meet Pastor John McMartin (**Pastor McMartin**), an Executive member of the New South Wales AOGA.
11. On or about 4 November 1998, Kevin Mudford and I went to meet with Pastor McMartin. In the meeting, Kevin did most of the talking and spoke generally about the Allegations, but did not mention the name of the minister involved or [AH]'s name. My understanding at that time was that it was AOGA protocol to report allegations against ministers to the State Executive.
12. Later that same day, Kevin and I went to see [AHA] at his home. I do not recall the exact words of the conversation that occurred that day. I recall Kevin was very angry and said to [AHA] words to the effect "*Frank needs to be dealt with and confess*". [AHA] was distraught and told Kevin that he did not want anyone to know about the Allegations.
13. On 5 November 1998, I went to see [AHA] by myself and prayed with him. [AHA] told me that he was very distressed that his mother had told Kevin Mudford. [AHA] appeared to me to be confused and traumatised. My initial response to the Allegations was to speak with [AHA] about it and encourage him to let the church thoroughly investigate the Allegations before considering legal recourse.

Signature: *B. F. Taylor*Witness: *M. M. Jackson*

-
14. Because of the delicate nature of the investigations I met with a lady from an independent Counselling Practise, Cheryl Lewin to check how I was handling the issue. She said to me words to the effect:
- "You can't go ahead of the victim and initiate actions they haven't sanctioned as this can cause extreme distress to the victim as you are disempowering them. Especially after the actions of others have taken away their rights and personal power."*
15. The investigation proceeded at a slow pace as **AHA** at certain times totally closed down to dealing with the offence against him. My various communications with **AHA** throughout 1998 and 1999 are recorded in my notes at **[ACC.0006.001.0015]**.
16. On 25 November 1998 I called Frank Houston and he was in a meeting. He called me back and said he would see **AHA** I made a note of this in my contemporaneous notes **[ACC.0006.001.0015]**.
17. On 26 February 1999 I wrote a letter to Frank Houston inviting him to meet **AH** at my office to discuss the matter. A copy of this letter is marked **[ACC.0006.001.002]**. I did not receive a response to this letter and the meeting did not occur.
18. About two weeks prior to Easter in 1999 (Easter was early April), I had a telephone discussion with Frank Houston who told me that he was going to South Africa for two weeks, and that he would call me on his return. I did not receive a call as I expected from Frank Houston so I wrote a facsimile to him on 6 April 1999 asking him to address the matter and informed him that Pastor McMartin had already been approached by the evangelist (Kevin Mudford). A copy of the letter is marked **[ACC.0006.001.0003]**.
19. On 19 May 1999, I sent a letter to Pastor McMartin (and sent a copy to Frank Houston). A copy of the letter is marked **[ACC.0006.001.0004]** with its annexure at **[ACC.0006.001.0005]**. The copy of the letter is now quite faded and I have prepared a transcript of the letter to the best of my recollection of its contents which is marked **[ACC.0010.001.002]**.

Signature: *B. F. Taylor*

Witness: *M. M. Fadzear*

-
20. On 16 September 1999 I spoke to Pastor McMartin. On that same day I wrote a letter to Pastor McMartin confirming some of the content of our discussion and told him that I would convey to AHA that the AOG had a structure in place that can and will deal with such allegations. A copy of the letter is marked [ACC.0006.001.0007]. Other than the contents of that letter I do not recall the discussion we had that day.
21. On 16 September 1999 I wrote a letter to AHA to, among other things, explain what Pastor McMartin told me about AOGA's process to deal with allegations [ACC.0006.001.0006].
22. On 1 November 1999 I prepared a document [ACC.0006.001.0008] to support my application for my minister's credentials to be renewed with the AOGA. On the application for information about anything that was causing stress to me so I attached this document describing the stress that dealing with the Allegation had had on me. I did not identify AHA's name or Frank Houston's name.
23. At about that time, I do not recall the exact date, I received a telephone call from John Wolfenden, State Secretary of the AOG New South Wales about the information I had written in my credential renewal application. I told him that Pastor McMartin was handling the Allegations.
24. On 25 November 1999 I had a conversation with AHA about the Allegations. I made contemporaneous notes of the conversation [ACC.0006.002.0009].
25. On 28 November 1999 Pastor McMartin and I met with Pastor Brian Houston. I prepared contemporaneous notes of the meeting which is marked [ACC.0006.001.0010].
26. In late November 1999, AHI told me that AHA had been trying to contact Pastor Brian Houston. This prompted me to write a letter to Pastor Brian Houston on 29 November 1999 which described AH's response when he was informed that Frank had confessed. A copy of the letter and my handwritten notes is marked [ACC.0006.001.0011]. With the assistance of these notes, I recall that I rang Pastor McMartin in early December to tell him about AH's desire to speak with Pastor Brian Houston.

Signature: *B. F. Taylor*

Witness: *M M Fadzars*

-
27. On 21 December 1999 I prepared a list of points that I wanted to discuss with Pastor McMartin which are marked [ACC.0006.001.0012].
28. On 26 June 2000 I wrote a letter to Pastor Brian Houston. In that letter I refer to the fact that I had heard that Frank Houston was still preaching in person and on television. I also suggested that Frank Houston should receive expert counselling. A copy of this letter is marked [ACC.0006.001.0013].
29. On 19 July 2000 Pastor Brian Houston telephoned me responding to my letter. A copy of my contemporaneous notes are marked [ACC.0006.001.0014].
30. I readily admit that from the timing of the initial report of the alleged offence through to informing Pastor Brian Houston may appear lengthy. However, I was constantly waiting, often weeks at a time, for various parties to get back to me. At times AH changed his mind on how he wanted to proceed with the matter. It was simply a matter of moving at the best pace we could.
31. Around the time of my reporting the Allegations to the State Executive, the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 had not yet come into effect. In 2000 there was also a directive by Ian Woods, State Superintendent of the New South Wales AOG to report such matters to Police. By the time this Act came into effect in 2000 I had already turned the matter over to the General Superintendent of the AOGA as was the protocol at the time.

Signature: *B. F. Taylor*

Witness: *M M Fadzecan*

32. In my mind two things are paramount in situations such as this:

- a. the right of the alleged victim to be heard and be given due process in the investigation;
and
- b. the responsibility of those in authority (in my case a Minister of Religion) to follow due process to ensure the first issue is dealt with.

Signed: B. F. Taylor

Date: 29th Sept., 2014

Witness: M. M. Fudge

Date: 29th Sept. 2014

Signature: B. F. Taylor

Witness: M. M. Fudge