



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

Statement of Michael J. Groome

Name

Dr. Michael J. Groome, PhD., M.A.P.S.

Address

Private Consulting Suite,
Northpark Medical Centre,
Greenhills Road, Bundoora
Vic., 3083, Australia.

Occupation

Clinical Psychologist

Date

6 August 2015

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. This statement has been prepared on the basis that the Commission will issue a Notice to Produce under *Royal Commissions Act 1902 (Cth) s 2(3A)* for the production of a signed copy.
3. 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.
4. My full name is Michael J. Groome and I am 70 years old.

Signature:

Witness:

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Please note: Whilst I sincerely sympathise with Katherine X and her efforts to come to terms with her life experiences, I cannot recall specific details of any individual patients/clients from my work at the Children's Court Clinic (CCC) from 1976 to 1986. In particular, I regretfully have no memory for the circumstances referred to in the various documents provided to me by The Commission. Any attempts to respond to all questions would involve speculation, based on the documents supplied by The Commission. A letter from my general practitioner explains the reasons for my amnesia. Furthermore, I have examined personal records and confirm I am not in possession of any documents of relevance to these proceedings.

I have attempted to realistically answer as many of the questions put to me as possible.

1/. Qualifications and Employment History

Comments



I wish to clarify that, although I am now a clinical psychologist, at the time this report refers to, I was the senior psychiatric nurse at the Children's Court Clinic, filling a then unique autonomous role, approved by the head office of the then Office of Psychiatric Services. There were no other nursing staff working at the CCC.

Qualifications

Registered Psychiatric Nurse. Mont Park and Larundel Hospitals: 1963-1966

R.N Ballarat and District Hospital: 1968-1969

B.A (Psychology/Sociology). Swinburne University: 1975-1978

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Experience

1969: District Nurse: Royal District Nursing Service (2nd male employed by RDNS)

1970: Registered Nurse: Peter MacCallum Cancer Clinic

1970-1971: Ward Nurse: Parkville Psychiatry Professional Unit (Depression assessment and research)

1971-1974: Ward Nurse, Deputy Charge, Charge Nurse: Ernest Jones Psychiatric Clinic, Preston

1975-1976: Senior Nurse, Pleasant View Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centre

1976-1986: The Senior Nurse, Melbourne Children's Court Clinic (CCC)

Teaching/Education Roles

I was involved in education, with community groups, patient groups, and in-house staff training as below.

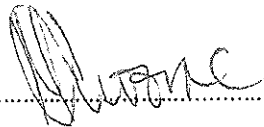

1975-1976: Staff Development Training, Group Therapy and communication Skills, Pleasant View Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centre

1976-1079: Staff Development Training, Department of Community Services, Winlaton, Turana and Baltara Centres, as well as at various conferences and staff training programs at the CCC.

Further Education

1971-1974: Training and Supervision: Group and Individual Therapy Ernest Jones Clinic

1976: Level one, Family Therapy Training, Bouverie Clinic

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1979-1981: Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy Training Program, Austin Hospital/Psychiatric Services

2/. Roles and Responsibilities at Children's Court Clinic

Years of Tenure: 1976-1986

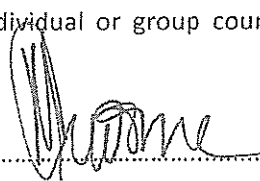

My roles entailed: interviewing and assessing children and adolescents and their families attending the Children's Court, or remand, providing court reports and consultation to magistrates; providing primary, secondary, and tertiary consultation to residents and staff in a variety of human relations/communications skills. All these roles were carried out with minimal supervision, being directly responsible to the then Psychiatrist Superintendent of the CCC.

3/. Relationship between Children's Court Clinic and then Winlaton/Department of Community Welfare Services

The CCC provided psychiatric and psychological assessment and treatment to Winlaton and other youth training centre's residents. As well, most individual clinic staff members had responsibility for particular institutions, to provide on-going assessment, attend case planning meetings, consult with the superintendent or assistant superintendent and other senior staff, and to provide guidance and education/training to staff in regard to various psychiatric disorders and guidance concerning individual young people and their management.

4/. The extent of my involvement with young people resident at Winlaton Youth Training Centre

Apart from the generic roles described in 3/, I also visited the centre usually once weekly to carry out individual or group counselling or psychotherapy for residents referred from case

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planning meetings, or by senior staff. For example, at Winlaton I ran a group for young women, helping them in regard to decision-making concerning tattoos they had on their limbs. This was part of a tattoo-removal program introduced by the then superintendent.

NB.

It must be pointed out, however, that although CCC staff could consult and make recommendations, it is my recollection that we did not have legal power to make decisions about the management of young people and their movement in and out of the various agencies and centres operated by the Department of Community Welfare Services.

5/. Systems, Policies and Procedures

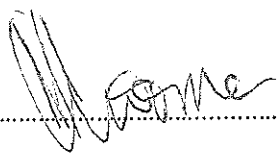
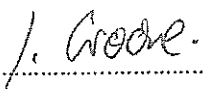
In terms of incidents, complaints, or allegations of sexual abuse, I cannot state categorically, but my memory is that there was no set policy, apart from ethically responsible professional care. Details of how to proceed were based on individual young people's needs and consensus decisions of case-planning meetings and discussions with senior staff.

In terms of questions 6 to 8, I am unable to provide any further information.

9/. The application of any Systems, Policies and Procedures referred to in 5.

I have no recall of any other systems, policies or procedures, apart from always following a principle of every decision considering what is in the best interests of the individual's welfare, especially if they were considered at risk.

I have attempted to answer the Commission's questions to the best of my ability.

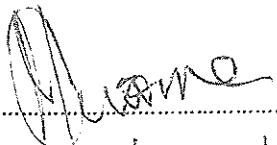
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Yours sincerely

Michael J. Groome

Signed: 

Date: 06/08/15

Witness: I. Groome

Date: 06/08/15