



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

Statement

Name Kathryn Ash
Address Known to the Royal Commission
Occupation Retired
Date

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. In preparing this statement, I have been shown my earlier statutory declaration relating to Bobbie Welch's abuse by a staff member at Gold Coast Family Support Group. Where I refer to that document in this statement, I have used the document reference number, which appears in the top or bottom right hand corner of the document to which I refer. I have not independently reviewed the records from which these documents have been drawn.
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. This statement has been prepared on the basis that the Commission will issue a Notice to Produce under *Royal Commissions Act 1902 (Cth) s2(3A)* for the production of a signed copy.

Background

5. My name is Kathryn Ash. I was formerly known as Kathryn Naismith. I worked within the disability sector for the majority of my career. Between January 1995 and February 1997,

Signature: K. S. Ash Witness: [Signature]

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I worked at Gold Coast Family Support Group (FSG) as an Administrative and Reception Assistant and later as a Payroll Clerk. Part of my duties included taking minutes in meetings and I believe that there was a minute book where these were kept.

6. In my capacity as Administrative Assistant at FSG, I worked closely with the Manager at the time, Dorothy Williams (**Dorothy**). I also knew other members of the FSG staff and Committee, including Maree Welch (**Maree**), who was a Program Co-ordinator. I knew Maree as a colleague. I also knew her daughter Bobbie Welch (**Bobbie**), as Maree would sometimes bring her into the office. I was aware that other members of staff, such as Dorothy and her daughter Melissa Edwards were reasonably close to Bobbie. I believe that Bobbie was Melissa's bridesmaid.
7. In February 1997, I was made redundant from FSG as I believe that they decided to outsource their accounts department. I commenced work a week later with Gold Coast Sport and Recreation, another disability service provider in the area.

Complaint of Sexual Abuse to FSG

8. I am unsure of the date that I became aware that Maree had made a complaint of a sexual nature against an FSG carer who had looked after Bobbie. However, I have a clear recollection of it occurring whilst I was working as Dorothy's Administration Assistant at FSG. I can say with certainty that it was before I left FSG in February 1997. I know that I was working in that position around the time of my fortieth birthday, which was in 1995.
9. I believe that I was first told of Maree's complaint by Dorothy. I clearly recall that I was sitting at the main reception desk and Dorothy came in through the back door from the staff car park with a worried look on her face. She said that Maree had made an allegation

Signature: K. S. Ash Witness: [Signature]

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of a sexual nature against an FSG carer who had been assigned to look after Bobbie. I am not able to recall his name. I do not recall whether there was anybody else present when Dorothy told me this.

10. I do not recall having any dealings with the complaint in an official capacity.
11. At that time, FSG was quite a small operation and I recall that the atmosphere was quite gossipy, everyone was very open and chatty. I believe that the complaint was discussed around the office for a few weeks, though I am unable to recall specific conversations.

Statutory Declaration

12. In 1999, I bumped into Maree in a shopping centre at Paradise Point and we had a brief discussion. Maree told me that there was an ongoing investigation in respect of her complaint. We didn't discuss the complaint or the investigation in detail.
13. I agreed to put my recollections down in writing for Maree and I believe that I wrote a letter on 29 March 1999 and a statutory declaration in identical terms on 30 June 1999, though I no longer have copies of these. I have been shown a copy of my statutory declaration (IND.0449.001.0225) and I agree that its contents are true and correct.

Signed: _____

K. S. Ash

Date: _____

1st July 2016

Witness: _____

[Signature]

Date: _____

1/7/2016