



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

Statement

Name CNV

Address Known to the Royal Commission

Occupation REDACTED

Date 29/8/2016

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 CNV . I am 56 years old.
3. I was born in REDACTED, Newcastle, and was the fifth of seven boys. I also have two sisters. My parents were devout Catholics and we attended church regularly. Usually, we attended St Columban's Catholic Church, Mayfield and when I was young, I remember the parish priest being Father WITHNELL.
4. All of my brothers and sisters attended Catholic school, with my older brothers all going to the local Catholic High School, Marist Brothers, Hamilton (Marist Brothers). When I was in Year 6, my family moved to REDACTED, REDACTED I should have gone to St Pius X High School in Adamstown REDACTED but because my older brothers had all gone to Marist Brothers, I was allowed to go there too.
5. When we moved to REDACTED we also changed churches to St Mary Immaculate Catholic Church. I remember the parish priest was Monsignor Paul SIMMS and he had a junior priest with him, Father Peter BROCK.

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Marist Brothers, Hamilton

6. I started school at an early age, so in 1972 when I started High School at Marist Brothers, I was only 11 years old. I remember that the principal of the school at the time was Br CHRISTOPHER.
7. Some of the teachers at the time I was at school were Br PATRICK, Br ROMUALD, Br CASSIAN, Br TERENCE, Mrs KELLY and Jack TULLY.
8. The teachers all wielded the cane and used it often. I have a personal memory of playing cricket and stepping two or three inches over a line. A Brother gave me four of the best for putting my foot over the line. The harsh discipline meant that all of the boys at school were scared of the Brothers, and it made it virtually impossible to report anything.

Sexual Abuse by Br PATRICK

9. I never had Br PATRICK as a teacher, but I remember him as an older man, with grey hair. He always seemed to look unkempt. By the time I was in Year 8 I had heard students at Marist Brothers say, 'Backs to the wall, here comes PATRICK'. When I was in Year 8 and my older brother had finished at Marist Brothers, he told me that Br PATRICK would regularly put his hand down the pants of boys in the class whenever he felt like it.
10. In 1972, when I was in Year 7, the Marist Brothers owned an area known as Marist Park, now known as the Shortland Wetlands. We would go to Marist Park for school sport, although it was a fair way away from the school. I remember early in the year, it would have been first term, we were playing cricket. I don't recall if I was waiting to bat, or if I was scoring, but Br PATRICK came from behind me and grabbed me, holding me in a way that I could not escape. He then proceeded to put his hand down my pants and felt around my pubic area and

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genitals. He did whatever he wanted to do for as long as he wanted. I couldn't get away. I just froze. I didn't know what to do so I just stood there.


11. Brother PATRICK continued to grope me for some time. I distinctly remember his heavy breathing in my ear. He was abusing me in front of all of the other students. I can't explain what it felt like or what I was thinking at the time, but I was shocked and terrified enough not to move.
12. I didn't tell anybody about the abuse at the time.
13. My brother CNS , who was a few years ahead of me at school, left Marist Brothers at the end of 1972 and went to St Pius X High School for Years 11 and 12. CNS told me that before he left the school, he spoke to Br CHRISTOPHER and said something like, 'What are you going to do about this Brother PATRICK?' Br CHRISTOPHER responded with something like, 'Well, he's a very good maths teacher!' I don't know if CNS told my parents.

Sexual Abuse by Brother ROMUALD

14. In 1973, late in the year, either Term 3 or Term 4, when I was in Year 8, I was with about 20 other boys from Marist Brothers at Merewether Ocean Baths. I think that it was all boys who had elected to do swimming for school sport and we were working towards our Bronze Medallion.
15. We were all in the change rooms after swimming. All of the boys would have a shower, but we were at the age where you maintained your privacy so all of the boys would be wearing skimpies, or 'Speedos', or with a towel wrapped around them.
16. I noticed Br ROMUALD crouched down with his back to me. I remember wondering what he was doing crouching down for so long as it seemed to be a strange position that he was in.

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Suddenly, he stood up, dropped his towel and turned around facing everyone with a full erection. I was really taken aback.

17. Brother ROMUALD stood there for a while with a wry smile on his face, or an expression that suggested, 'Well, boys, have a good look at this.' We all just froze, then we quickly got dressed, got on the bus, and went home.
18. A couple of days later, Br ROMUALD called me in to his private office, which was like a room behind our classroom. I don't recall exactly what he said, but it was along the lines of, 'What happened at the pool change rooms was nothing to worry about. It's nothing you need to tell your parents about. What I did was a sex education situation because I know that some of the boys don't have a father'. I am not actually aware of anyone at swimming who didn't have a father.

Reporting the abuse

19. During 1973 my grades began to suffer. I was in the top class, but I got a report card that indicated I was going to be dropped to the second class. I decided I had had enough of Marist Brothers. I went to my parents and said, 'I want to leave, I want to change schools. I want to go to the same school as CNS '.
20. I can't remember exactly when, but around this time, I also told my parents about the sexual abuse by Br PATRICK and Br ROMUALD.
21. My dad had a meeting at the school with the Principal, Br CHRISTOPHER. As a result, I changed schools and in 1974, I went to St Pius X High School for Year 9. I don't recall dad saying anything to me at the time about what happened at the meeting, but many years later, not long before he died, I asked him about it. I was angry because I thought dad should have gone to the school and punched someone out. Dad told me that he did raise the sexual abuse and

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really gave it to them, meaning he told them he was very unhappy that Br PATRICK and Br ROMUALD were allowed to keep teaching.

22. My two younger brothers did not go to Marist Brothers as a result of what had happened. In my family, going to Marist Brothers was a family tradition and it was a very big deal for my father to not send my brothers there.
23. What is really upsetting to me is that I know Andrew NASH committed suicide in 1974. Andrew was the younger brother of my REDACTED's REDACTED. A lot of people believe Andrew was sexually abused by Br ROMUALD which led to Andrew's death. If that is true, I would be disgusted. I know that my brother and my father told the Marist Brothers about Br ROMUALD in 1972 and 1973. Action should have been taken against Br ROMUALD then. It is devastating to think they did nothing, and Br ROMUALD went on to abuse other boys because they did nothing. I also feel very, very angry because I, and other kids, were knowingly put in harm's way.
24. Sometime, I think around 2008, following the arrest of Father Peter BROCK for child abuse offences, Bishop MALONE publicly invited people with complaints or information to come and see him. I decided that I would go to Bishop MALONE about Br PATRICK and Br ROMUALD. I wanted to tell him about the sexual abuse so that no more boys would suffer.
25. I met with Bishop MALONE and told him what I knew of the sexual abuse that took place at Marist Brothers. At the end of the meeting, Bishop MALONE thanked me and told me he would look into it and get back to me.
26. A few weeks later, Bishop MALONE made contact with me. I think I met with him again, and he explained to me that he had done some checking and could confirm that regarding Br PATRICK and Br ROMUALD, one had retired and the other had left the Marist Brothers. Bishop
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MALONE then said something like, 'Well, there is no more risk to children, what do we do now? Are you satisfied with that?'

27. It was my impression that Bishop MALONE was more interested in whether I was going to seek compensation than the protection of children. When I told him I didn't want anything, he seemed to give a sigh of relief.

Reporting to police

28. In 2008, I don't recall how, but I became aware that the police were investigating Fr Peter BROCK. Father BROCK was a REDACTED, so I remember taking a keen interest in this matter. I contacted the NSW Police Taskforce Georgiana to report to them an incident involving my brother REDACTED. I was never abused by BROCK, so I was not involved in that matter. While talking to police, I asked them if they were also interested in looking at Br PATRICK or Br ROMUALD. I remember the police saying to me that Br ROMUALD and Br PATRICK were not on their radar so unless there was something serious, such as a rape, they were not going to investigate. I didn't follow that up any further at the time.
29. Around the same time, I contacted Broken Rites to ask if they knew of Br PATRICK or Br ROMUALD. I was told that they did not have any information about either of the two Brothers. Years later, Broken Rites made contact with me by email and told me that Br ROMUALD had been charged. I then contacted the police and as a result, I provided a statement in relation to seeing Br ROMUALD expose himself in the showers.
30. I was asked to give evidence against Br ROMUALD at trial. Brother ROMUALD was facing two trials, and I was to give evidence at the second. Brother ROMUALD was convicted of charges in the first trial, and as a result, he pleaded guilty to charges relating to the second trial, so I was not required to give evidence.

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Civil Litigation


31. Until recently I have not been interested in pursuing compensation from the Catholic Church. From all of the stories that continually keep coming up about how the church covered up the sexual abuse, I have found myself getting increasingly angry towards the institution. As a teacher, I teach 11 and 12 year old boys, and that has brought back a lot of memories about my experiences at the same age.
32. As a result, I have commenced civil litigation against the Catholic Church. My impression is that it is only by hurting them financially that any change can be brought about. I would also like an assurance that it never happens again.

Life after the abuse

33. I still have Christian values, but I struggle to continue to believe in the institution of the Catholic Church. It needs to change.
34. My abuse has left me with a spiritual void. As a result, I have explored other false religions which has had a detrimental effect on my marriage.
35. I have also found myself having flashbacks to when I was 11 years old and was abused, and this is adversely impacting upon my teaching career.

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36. I was always considered one of the brightest members of my family, but an under-achiever. I have a great family who have been very successful, but I feel that I have not lived up to my potential.

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