



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

Statement

Name CQS
Address Known to the Royal Commission
Occupation REDACTED
Date 6th September 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 CQS . I was born in to a Catholic Family in Newcastle, NSW
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3. My family regularly attended mass at Holy Family Parish at Merewether Beach and involved in the local Catholic community. I went to Holy Family Primary School, Merewether Beach finishing Year 6 in 1972. I then attended Marist Brother's College, Hamilton starting first form or Year 7 in 1973 and finishing sixth form or Year 12 in 1978.

4. REDACTED . I am based in Newcastle.
Marist Brother's College, Hamilton

5. Marist Brother's College, Hamilton was my local school. It had a good reputation, excelling in both academics and on the sports field.

6. In Year 7, in 1973 my Form Teacher was Brother CASSIAN. He was very violent and aggressive in his disciplining of students. He was a strict disciplinarian and would both cane and strap students if their hair was over their collar, or a desk lid banged during class,

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or there was any disruption. He punched me on occasion, and I saw him punch other students. It was often talked about by the boys. In my first year I also heard things about other Brothers and was warned to stay away and be wary about. The three main brothers I recall being warned about were Brothers PATRICK, DOMINIC and ROMUALD.

7. In Year 8 in 1974 my Form teacher was Mr Jim FORBES who was a good and fair teacher. He was a lay teacher and he taught Geography.

Brother Patrick and Brother Dominic

8. In Year 8 in 1974, Br PATRICK was my maths teacher. On a number of occasions during that year, Br PATRICK approached me at my desk supposedly to assist me with maths tuition. During that time, while leaning over me or sitting next to me, he put his hands down my shirt and into my pants. I believe he was trying to fondle my genitals and I remember pushing his hand away. I saw him do it to other boys more frequently. The boys that he targeted tended to be smaller, more quiet, boys. I remember three boys in particular who would be targeted by Br PATRICK on nearly every occasion he taught us – one is ^{CNJ} , and another boy since committed suicide.
9. It was common knowledge among the boys that this was standard behaviour by Br PATRICK. As kids, we certainly knew it was weird and wrong. I remember Br PATRICK was known as 'Pat the Poof' by the students. It was just something that was almost accepted in that environment at the time.
10. Apart from my mum, who I think I might have told, I don't recall ever telling any adult about what Br PATRICK had been doing to the boys.

Brother Dominic

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11. I had very little contact with Br DOMINIC, but I heard from other students that you should avoid him because he would try to touch you. He had a special choir group that used to sing at church and weddings. I went to one rehearsal and I witnessed him playing the piano, and then he would sit with the boys and sit them on his knee. I saw him groping boys in the choir group.

Brother Romuald

12. Year 8 in 1974, Br ROMUALD was my Religious Education teacher. He was also very involved in sports and outdoor activities. I played both Rugby Union and Rugby League, and I played both for the Under 14As. Brother ROMUALD was the Rugby League Coach of the Under 14As. Brother ROMUALD also co-ordinated the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme for the school, and organised regular Father and Son camps which were held at the Myall Lakes. I attended a couple of these with my father, and other students and their fathers. Brother ROMUALD was a very intimidating, masculine man. He was also very tall, big and imposing.

13. Brother ROMUALD had a way with parents, and was very engaging and popular with the fathers. Notwithstanding this, he was also a very strict disciplinarian and was known to be aggressive in his punishment of students to the point where I think he enjoyed exacting punishment on them. One example was his method of caning or punishing players in the Under 14As who failed to perform well or missed tackles. Another example of his sadistic behaviour was the way he regulated the cricket. Children were required to stand behind a line and bowl, and if anyone bowled over the line, they were caned. In addition to this,

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he singled out people that he had a set against, and would cane them relentlessly during classes.

14. As the Rugby League Coach, Brother ROMUALD would try to manhandle the forwards when they were packing down practising scrimmaging, by putting his hand under or between their legs and groping them. This was under the guise of explaining how to bind the scrum. He did this to me on a number of occasions. I had had a lot of rugby coaches before and after this and none ever used such a technique during training. I remember at the time knowing this was not usual, and it made us all feel very uncomfortable.
15. This same year I joined the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme and took part in a number of camps or outings which involved long bike rides, hikes and learning about survival techniques. In addition, we also had to do our Bronze Life Saving Medallion which was part of those awards, and the training was conducted at Merewether Baths.
16. I recall on one occasion Brother ROMUALD organised a day trip to Bulahdelah. He then drove us home to Newcastle in his ute. At first I was sitting in the tray of the ute with three other boys. After dropping off another boy who had been in the front cabin, he stopped the car and insisted that I sit in the front bench seat with him. The other boys were still in the tray of the ute.
17. I remember that Brother ROMUALD started asking me questions of a sexual nature and then he put his hand on my thigh. He asked things like whether I was circumcised or not, and whether I had pubic hair. He also suggested that as part of the Bronze Medallion Life Saving Award, given that I was just reaching puberty, it would be important to demonstrate on someone who has pubic hair where the femoral artery was. He also said

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it would be good for me to undress in front of the other students to learn about the difference between circumcised and uncircumcised penises and the difference between adolescent and mature bodies. He then put his hand near my groin and groped me on the genitals. I was very uncomfortable, I pushed his hand away to stop him from touching me, and moved away. He grabbed me again and just smiled. I was terrified.

18. At this stage I didn't tell anyone. Marist Brothers were held in high regard by members of the Catholic community. Brother ROMUALD had been a dinner guest at my house before and knew my family. I was very embarrassed about what had happened and couldn't bring myself to tell anyone, apart from one of my closest mates who had been in the tray of the ute.

19. As part of our Bronze Medallion training under the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, Br ROMUALD would run us through life saving drills at Merewether Baths on a number of mornings per week before school. I would ride my bike to the Baths, do the training in the pool, get dressed for school at the changing rooms and then ride to school.

20. When Br ROMUALD was in the water demonstrating rescue techniques at Merewether Baths he would grope me under the water. He would often swim up behind me and rub his erection on my back. I would try to keep away from him in the water, and a few of us would stick together so we could do our own rescue techniques together. Though I couldn't see under the water at all times, I am sure he was doing this to the other boys. On one occasion I saw Br ROMUALD holding another boy on his lap for what seemed like an unusually long time, maybe five to ten minutes. I couldn't see what was going on under the water but I now think that he was raping that boy.

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21. After training Br ROMUALD would also appear in the showers. He insisted that all boys shower naked without their swimmers. He would be naked and often he would have an erection which he would not attempt to hide.
22. On one of these occasions at the changing rooms at Merewether Baths, I think it was after I was in the ute with him, Br ROMUALD told me I had to help him demonstrate life saving techniques to three other boys also doing their Bronze Medallion. He made me undress in front of the other boys and talked about finding the femoral artery in the groin region. While doing so he handled my genitals and fondled me. It made me very distressed. I pushed his hand away. I was in tears and I ran away from the Baths, got dressed and rode back to school.
23. I must have been upset when I arrived at school that morning because Mr FORBES took me aside and asked me what was wrong. I don't think I told him anything at the time but I knew he was worried about me and he asked me what had happened at the Baths. I told him I did not want to talk about it.
24. I remember still being very upset and scared of Br ROMAULD when I got home from school that afternoon. I was crying when I walked in the door and Mum asked me what was wrong. I told her what Br ROMUALD had done that day. I remember her being very upset. She called my father and asked him to come home from work straight away.
25. When my father got home I told him and my mum what Br ROMUALD had done that morning. I do not recall my exact words, but I told them that Brother ROMUALD had made me stand naked in front of the other kids while demonstrating where the femoral artery was, had touched me on the genitals. I told them I pushed him away, ran away and

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was frightened. I also told them that Br ROMUALD had tried to touch my genitals in the ute on the way back from the Duke of Edinburgh outing at Buledelah. I also told them he walked around Merewether Baths naked and with an erection.

26. My mum was very upset. My dad was angry but also quite matter a fact about it. I remember him saying something like 'in life, you have to be careful, there are people who prey on children'. He said he would get it sorted out. Dad knew Mr FORBES from parent/teacher interviews and he knew Mr FORBES was my class master and I trusted him. Dad contacted him to discuss what I had told him. I don't know for sure, but I think he may have gone to the school to talk to him about it in person.

27. Sometime after this, it might have been the following day, Mr FORBES approached me at school and asked to have a word. He said something like 'I have been hearing rumblings around the school about Brother ROMUALD'. I think he may have also said he had spoken to my father. I trusted Mr FORBES and believed he would be able to help. I think I explained that Br ROMUALD was being inappropriate doing things like walking around the change rooms with an erection and trying to touch boys, including myself.

28. I remember thinking that Mr FORBES was not surprised by this, saying something like 'I knew he was up to something' and that he had been after this bloke for years. Mr FORBES told me I had to tell Brother CHRISTOPHER as this was very important. I also recall him saying how important it was I told the truth to Br CHRISTOPHER. I think I said that I didn't want to go to Br CHRISTOPHER alone, and that I wanted my dad to be there. I believe he then made arrangements for my dad and I to meet with Br CHRISTOPHER.

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Complaint to Brother Christopher

29. Within a couple of days of speaking to Mr FORBES, I was called to Br CHRISTOPHER's office in the afternoon. My dad was at the school and we both went into Br CHRISTOPHER's office. I was very scared about telling Br CHRISTOPHER. As students, he was the Headmaster and was known to be very strict and another disciplinarian. I don't recall my exact words but I believe I told him everything Br ROMUALD had done to me. This included that he had tried to touch my genitals in the ute on the way back from Buledelah, that he rubbed his erection against me and probably other boys at the Merewether Baths, and that he walked around the Merewether Baths change rooms with an erection. I also told him that Br ROMUALD made me undress in front of the other kids, demonstrated where to find the femoral artery, and groped my genitals while doing so. I told Br CHRISTOPHER that Br ROMUALD said he wanted to do this on a boy who was going through puberty and show the other boys.
30. I remember that Br CHRISTOPHER gave nothing away in his response, he had a poker face throughout the meeting. I remember my father said something like 'something had to be done about this' and that it could never happen to me or another child again. I remember Br CHRISTOPHER said that he would do something about it. I think he also thanked me for being honest and that this was a very important matter.
31. I remember telling Br CHRISTOPHER that I didn't want Br ROMUALD to know I had said anything about him as I was already scared of him, and I knew he would single me out and punish me. He told me to go back to class and not to say a word to anyone which I

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didn't. I never had another conversation with Br CHRISTOPHER about Br ROMUALD. He didn't contact my father.

32. I don't recall that Mr FORBES checked in on me. I think he got sick that year and died from cancer shortly after.

33. About a week after I had made the complaint to Br CHRISTOPHER, Br ROMUALD approached me at school. He said 'Have you said anything to anyone about Merewether Baths?' I said 'No, Brother'. He then said walking around naked was natural, and it was perfectly normal for a grown man to have an erection in the morning. I felt like I had to agree with him because I just wanted to get away from him and stop the conversation. He said if I mentioned it to anyone that I'd be in big strife or he'd make an example of me.

34. From this time on time onwards, Br ROMUALD became very aggressive towards me. He remained my religious teacher. He caned me and one other boy at every class. On each occasion it was at least four strikes of the cane. Before I spoke to Br CHRISTOPHER, I had only been caned by Br ROMUALD on the odd occasion. I believed Br ROMUALD had a vendetta against me. I remember there was only a couple of months until the end of the year. My grades went downhill because I found it hard to concentrate in class. I would be upset before and after school. I lived in fear and lost confidence in myself and in the school.

35. At the end of the year it was announced that Br ROMUALD would be leaving the school. I don't recall there being any reason publically stated for this, but at the time I assumed it was because of my complaint to Br CHRISTOPHER.

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36. The following year in Third Form I had a female teacher who was very encouraging. I gained back some self-confidence and was able to concentrate on my studies and sport. RE

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37. I feel very blessed that I had the kind of relationship with my parents where I could tell them about this kind of thing. I had an open and honest relationship with them, where I could express my concerns and confide in them. They gave me the support I needed to heal. My father was a great mentor and teacher to me, which enabled me to come back from my experience with Br ROMUALD and I could do well in my remaining years at school.

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Signed:

Date: 6 September 20 16

Witness: 

Date: 6 September 2016