



Royal Commission  
into Institutional Responses  
to Child Sexual Abuse

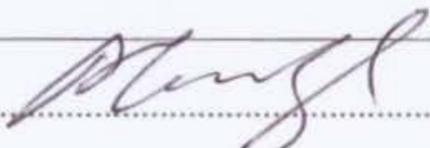
**Statement**

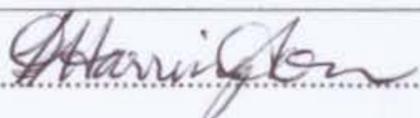
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<b>Name</b>	Robert CUMMINGS
<b>Address</b>	Known to Royal Commission
<b>Occupation</b>	Known to Royal Commission
<b>Date</b>	March 2017

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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 Robert Cummings and I am 62 years old.
3. I have previously been involved with the Royal Commission and I am a survivor of Child Sexual Abuse.
4. I have been asked to describe the changes I would like to see following the Royal Commission.
5. Once the Royal Commission has completed its inquiries, ideally what I would like to see is no more Royal Commissions. We have the information, we have the reasons, it is time to stop the inquiries and start putting actions into place.
6. It is clear that children in care have been suffering abuse and still continue to suffer abuse. I believe we need to look at how we can provide a service that young people will feel comfortable with. The only way this can be done is to have a national service.

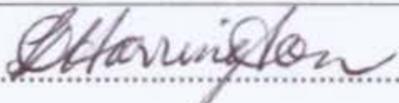
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7. We need a dedicated hotline with a dedicated team just for young people to ring for reporting abuse. This would mean that the Federal government and the federal agencies i.e. Federal police would be responsible for investigating any child abuse reported to the hotline. Alternatively a dedicated team manning the hot line should be given the power to investigate and recommend criminal proceedings against perpetrators to the state DPP's.
8. Having a nationwide number or hotline will get rid of all the different ways the different agencies have to record and report abuse. A standardised system, I believe will go a long way to reducing the amount of abuse perpetrated on young people in our care system today.
9. Every agency looking after children must have this number clearly displayed and available for young people. Every young person entering into care must be given this number in a convenient form and shown where this number is displayed in the agency to enable them to ring if they are being abused.
10. People employed to look after children in care need to be aware of this number. They need to encourage young people to use this number, and if they feel a young person is suffering abuse or has been abused they need to report it to the national hotline.
11. No workplace should investigate an abuse claim by a young person. All abuse reports must go to the federal number. Certainly, the worker on the spot must make all attempts to place, and keep a child safe but the investigation must be done by the federal team as

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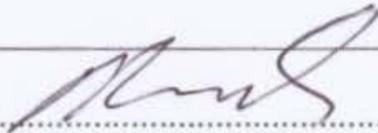
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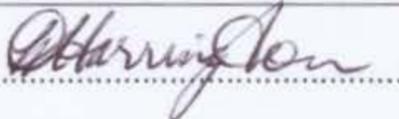
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We've already seen that agencies investigating their own reported abuse does not work.

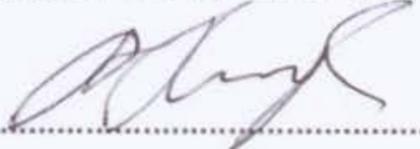
There is often too much conflict of interest.

12. In addition, we need to value the people who look after our children in care by valuing our workers in the field by paying decent wages and conditions. Things need to change, we need consistency in our system. Any young person in care will state that one of the most frustrating things for them is to have to repeat their own story over and over to new workers. If we value our workers, if we pay our workers and support them in the field with decent wages and conditions, along with a dedicated reporting abuse hotline, and a minimal national standards for working with young people, this would go a long way to retaining workers to work with our most vulnerable young people.
13. My vision of children today and in the future is a society of inclusion. There will always be a small percentage of young people requiring incarceration. Most young people just need consistency, boundaries and support. They need to be made to feel that they are part of their community. After working as a youth worker for the past 41 years I have seen that young people who are connected with, valued and part of their community are happier and have some hope for the future.
14. I have spent my whole working life with young people trying to ensure that no young person would go through what I did as a child in care. It has distressed me that I often would be assisting a child who had been abused in the same system I went through 40 years ago. It has to stop.

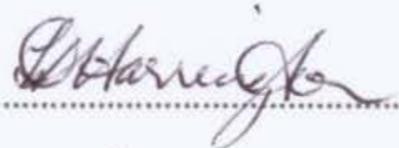
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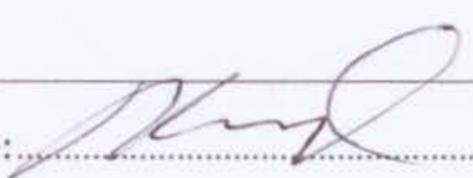
15. We as a nation have to really believe that our children are our future, and not accept abuse happens but make every effort to ensure it does not happen.

Signed: 

Date: 23 / 03 / 2017

Witness: 

Date: 23/3/17

Signature: 

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