

Statement

Name Penny ROSE

Address Known to the Commission

Date March 2017

1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I would be prepared, if necessary, to give to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.
2. My full name is Penny ROSE I am 37 years old. I am a transgendered woman who grew up in regional part of Australia.
3. I have previously been involved with the Royal Commission. I have been asked to describe the changes I would like to see following the Royal Commission.
4. I feel very humbled and honoured to be here speaking publicly about the changes that I would like to see within the systems, to protect young children, and what I envision for children now and into the future. I would like to take this moment to acknowledge and thank the traditional owners and first nation peoples of this land that I was lucky enough to be born and live in.
5. I have lived with the trauma of childhood sexual abuse for many years. The last 4 years have been incredibly hard for both my family and myself.
6. The process of the Royal Commission has helped me heal and evolve beyond this trauma.
7. My story is one of many thousands and in my experience of trusted institutions of children it was the patriarchal system of leadership that led to my being groomed and subsequently abused. However it is not always males that are the perpetrators of childhood sexual abuse. I have come to the understanding through my experience that large groups of the same sex are inherently dangerous, in that as friendships and bonds develop, people drop their guard and people take advantage of situations and peoples trust.
8. This is something that I feel needs to change. There needs to be equal numbers of female to males across all institutions at all levels. Consistent and compulsory monitoring needs to be implemented to ensure everyone stays up to date with the latest information.
9. I feel that a national training certification for people who work in the area of caring for children needs to be implemented, primarily to train people to identify the signs of people grooming children and inappropriate behaviour. This would also need to cover recognising all the signs of sexual, physical and mental abuse in young children as well as recognising the gender and sexually diverse.
10. In my own experience the various signs were missed on many levels and by many people. I feel that if there was earlier recognition and intervention and a system in place that made me feel safe enough to talk, then my life may have been very different.
11. I know that I speak for a lot of my friends and acquaintances that I have met, both here in Australia and around the world during my travels. These people have not felt they have been able to speak out about their own experiences of childhood sexual abuse. Many of these people have perpetrators in their own families and this complicates and compounds the problem of speaking out. I have found in my experiences that these people commonly feel like they have no recourse but to deal with their trauma silently.

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12. I feel that if we had a system in place where people could go and tell their story and be believed and understood that it would go a long way in the healing process.
13. I found being listened to by the Commissioner in a private setting to be a profound experience and one that helped me move on and evolve. I think that something of this kind of transformative and healing power needs to be implemented into our society. This is something that you cannot always get from the current justice system. It's not so much about getting justice, it's about Recognition and Acknowledgement.
14. The option of free therapy to all survivors of childhood sexual abuse for their lifetime should be bought in nationally with 1-2 sessions a month being covered. Broader programs and support groups need to be established as well to help existing survivors heal and cope. This should also be made available to immediate family members as well. Ultimately these programs need to be established and maintained long term for them to have any real benefit.
15. Understanding that this problem is endemic in our society and constantly adapting to ensure children are not put at risk and if they are, have access to immediate help both in the short and long term.
16. On a broader scale childhood sexual abuse also goes hand in hand with mental, verbal and physical abuse. These issues should also be addressed along the gender and sexuality diversity training. It is only when we look at things holistically, can we really combat the true insidious nature of abuse and the cycles it creates within people.
17. I strongly feel that gender/sexuality diversity training needs to be implemented in all levels of our society, it is through education that ignorance and bigotry surrounding these issues is eradicated. This is something that should be part of our national identity, as a culturally diverse society. It is something that all governments, educators, community, sporting, and business groups should adapt to their existing training modules.
18. I feel that people in regional areas suffer the most. The lack of education on mental health and availability of therapists is another problem that needs to be addressed.
19. The lack of resources and the isolation and remoteness of some areas in Australia leads many young people who are the victims of childhood sexual abuse to think of suicide as the only option available to them.
20. The isolation and remoteness of country life only added to the confusion and depression bought about by my abuse and who I was really was. There was very little, to no-access to the GLBTQI community for me to seek out others like me. From my experience, as a Trans person, is that many in the GLBTQI community are survivors of childhood sexual abuse. There needs to be more access to support groups and professional help.
21. I believe that access to help in remote areas is vital and more needs to be done to help people in crisis. The stigma surrounding childhood sexual abuse and the common misconceptions surrounding it also needs to be addressed within this training and I feel that parental units need to be able to access this information quickly and the process of getting help needs to be shortened. Overall, things need to change both socially and politically so that no children are left out.
22. "What is my vision of children today and in the future?"
23. I see in nieces and nephews and my good friends' children, some pretty amazing little people. They really are a special bunch. It makes me feel a sense of responsibility to ensure that they are protected and that we, as their Elders, do our best to make sure they remain safe and free from situations that may bring them harm. I feel that the more diversity and openness we can create in our youth the more it will bring a richness to our future society.
24. Protecting our future scientists, writers, artists, politicians and business people is one of the most important responsibilities we have. We need to be educating people in all aspects of our society about all forms of abuse and have a zero tolerance policy.
25. The diversity that occurs within our communities need to be embraced and through building strong communities that all work together we can bring about the changes that are needed to build up children into strong, caring, contributing citizens of this world.
26. Lastly I would like to say that we, as a community, can grow from these negative experiences and through sharing our stories we can help each other heal. Alternative therapies and other ancient modalities of healing

can connect us to the healing power of the indigenous cultures and their very special healing techniques. In this way deep healing can be achieved first on a personal level and then on a wider social level.

27. I see the future leaders of tomorrow in the children of today and it is only by nurturing and leading by example that we can bring about real change to our society as a whole. Everyone needs everyone else at the end of the day.

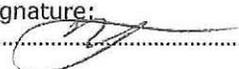
28. We all need to rely on our communities to accept and grow with these changes and bring about the best possible outcome for children into the future.

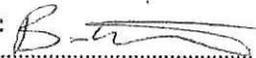
Signed: 

Date: 22/03/2017

Witness: 

Date: 22/03/2017

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