

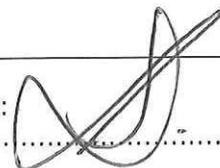
Statement

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Witness:



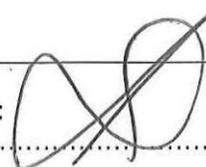
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1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I would be prepared, if necessary, to give to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.
2. My full name is Damian De Marco and I am 48 years old.
3. It is almost impossible to comprehend this, but, we are now in a position where even the rape, buggery and molestation of hundreds of thousands of innocent children worldwide by religious leaders, has not been a sufficient enough motivating force for some religious Institutions to reform their cultures.
4. This Commission has been for Australia a big magnifying glass. We have learnt how dangerous some institutions can be for children when they are allowed to act as a law unto themselves.
5. This epidemic of institutional cover-up also happened because of the massive failure of Australia's secular leaders. A two tiered society was allowed to operate where one class of people was protected from criminal accountability.
6. The rights of our children came second.
7. Allegiances to church, not state, prevailed.
8. History will also note that the work of this Royal Commission was significantly thwarted. It was refused access to documents which detail heinous crimes committed on our children.
9. Some institutions intend to continue to conceal this information from our government, treating us and our abused children with utter contempt.
10. No institution, given the privilege of operating on our soil, can be allowed to shield itself with unjustifiable statehood and the sovereign immunity it provides any more.

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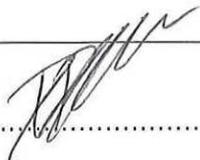


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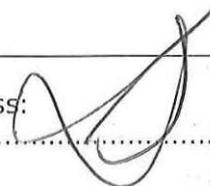


- 11.** If not held to account now, we will subvert to them, on behalf of our children. Again!
- 12.** Clearly, some institutions may never be trustworthy.
- 13.** Even today we have cases of paedophile priests being secretly housed with children and institutions conducting inquiries disguised as independent investigations. If they don't get it now they never will.
- 14.** Given this, the only solution is for all investigations of alleged abuse in institutions to be undertaken by the state or with government oversight.
- 15.** No institution can be allowed to investigate itself anymore.
- 16.** Institutions must be subordinated in all respects to civil law. No exceptions or exemptions. Each and every Australian must be equal under the same laws. The Commonwealth Government should coordinate with all the States and Territories to pass specific laws that define the churches and related institutions as legal persons with rights, duties and legal liability. The Prime Minister and Premiers must rescind the Ellis defence and replace it with full vicarious liability for all Institutions as the Canadian Supreme Court did.
- 17.** Whilst our head of state is also the head of one religious institution, clericalism will remain a problem. The present intimate relationship between church and state breeds clericalism and it is clearly understood now how clericalism enables adults to rape children then conceal it.
- 18.** Australian parliaments are opened with the compulsory recital of a particular religious verse, and the preamble to the Australian Constitution refers to a blessing of Almighty God. These damage the

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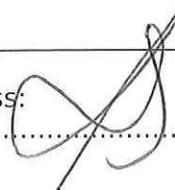
essential separation of church and state and contribute to the clericalist culture in this country.

- 19.** The legal separation of state and the Churches must be made real immediately, consistent with our Constitution. None should gain favour from or put fear into any Australian Government any more. Church and state must be separated before we have any hope of tackling clericalism elsewhere.
- 20.** Australia needs blanket mandatory reporting for all adults. Then an education campaign about those reporting requirements.
- 21.** Failure to report must be regarded as a crime and punished accordingly with strong penalties not excluding incarceration.
- 22.** Surprisingly, we see from what happened in Tumut and Wagga recently that we also need a national community education campaign about how paedophiles groom communities as well as children.
- 23.** All adults should also be mandated to report past cases of child abuses with exemption from prosecution for a certain period.
- 24.** Grooming behaviours which fall below the criminal threshold need to be responded to appropriately. Here we have an important opportunity for prevention. Reportable conduct schemes need to be established in all States and Territories and coordinated by the Commonwealth. Schemes must be effectively linked to ensure information is accessible and transferable across borders and what classes as reportable conduct is uniform.
- 25.** We need uniform national or state systems of working with children's checks that are also effectively linked.

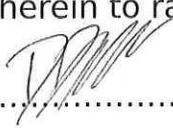
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- 26.** Australia and the world need to invest in scientific research looking at causes of paedophilia and a cure. It is extremely damaging to children and humanity needs to rid itself of paedophilia as much as is possible.
- 27.** We need to look at the option of long term treatment and housing facilities for offenders who remain a risk to children. Many perpetrators reoffend when released in the community and it is unacceptable for children to be needlessly placed in danger.
- 28.** It is now widely accepted that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 7 boys in Australia will be sexually abused. Without doubt, this is Australia's no.1 health and welfare problem, not smoking or drinking but child abuse in Australia. The national social and psychological consequences and costs of not addressing it immediately will make the rising costs of looking after elderly Australia, pale into budget insignificance.
- 29.** Over the last few years I have discovered that some of our highest leaders still have allegiances to institutions which prevail over their responsibilities to state.
- 30.** The safety of many children across this country is finally dependent upon whether our leaders have the courage to put religious loyalties aside.
- 31.** My vision for children in the future is the same as Braveheart's.
- 32.** That Australia may lead the way in becoming the safest country in the world wherein to raise children.

Signed:  31/3/17

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