Child Abuse Royal Commission  
PO Box 5283  
Sydney  
NSW 2001  
July 12th, 2015

Re. Information relevant to the Issues Paper #8 - Experiences of Police and Prosecution Responses.

This organisation has decided that I should write this letter to inform the Commission. We did receive notification about Issues Paper #14 and at the time it was decided that a formal response would not be made. Our reasoning was that members of the organisation had little evidence and therefore no grounds to be critical of police investigations and processes. Indeed, we have been able to work very closely with police in various jurisdictions and the efforts of police have resulted in numerous investigations and criminal convictions. We are aware that in Victoria, the Taskforce SANO has been very active and several new persons will face the courts in the coming 1-2 years. There are two matters that I wish to bring before you.

On March 3rd I wrote a letter to Justice McClellan drawing his attention to the fact that the organisation had made a formal submission about the Catholic religious order, the Hospitaller Order of St John of God. This document focused upon out experiences with a group of male victims and our understandings about the past activities of a number of members of this order. I received an acknowledgement of my letter from Mr Philip Reed and confirmation that our submission had been received on February 1 of this year.

In this letter I wish to draw the Commission’s attention to some observations that I and another members made probably during the years 1992-2001. At the time we were in

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regular contact with the group of men who were making allegations at the time. I myself wrote many letters of behalf of individuals, I acted as an advocate at mediations concerning financial compensation and with another member, we accompanied men who decided to make statements to Victoria Police. As I recall statements were given at a number of different police stations. As a consequence, we became aware that a police investigation was current since, from time to time we would be contacted by a Detective who was located within the and operating out of the police station in the suburb of , on the edge of . I never met Detective although I did have several conversations with him. I had come to a conclusion that at least twelve, and possibly fifteen, paedophiles had been active for twenty or more years. They had been abusing boys who were either orphans, boys who were Wards of the State and boys with varying degrees of intellectual impairment.

As I recall, Detective conducted investigations into members of this Order for at least 6-7 years and not a single alleged offender was ever charged. It became clear to me that these investigations were not being resourced adequately. Detective told me that at times he could not even get the use of a motor vehicle! At one point in his investigations, I pursued the matter of police resources with a minister of the Bracks government, Ms Christine Campbell. I understand that eventually she did speak to the Minister for Police (Mr Andrew Haermeyer) at the time,. Detective told me that extra police were put into the investigation and about three months later they were withdrawn.

On November 9th, 2012 members of this organisation (me included) appeared before the Family and Community Development Committee of the parliament of Victoria. Committee members were conducting the “Inquiry into the handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Organisations”. I had prepared a submission on behalf of the organisation and this informed the Committee about the St John of God saga. By this time, Taskforce Sano had been established and detectives were attending the parliamentary hearings. Following the appearance, I was approached by a Detective who indicated that he wished to meet again with me. We met on several occasions and I was able to give him a lot more information and also contact details for some of the men who had made formal statements to police, some years earlier. I already knew at this time that Detective had left the police force some years beforehand.

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Eventually he was able to be contacted by the taskforce and I came to understand that members of the taskforce had to conduct searches for Detective's original files as well as the statements that victims had given to police. Apparently none of these files had been entered into the central records system used by Victoria Police. To this day I am intrigued by this situation and also by the fact that not one member of this Order was ever charged until 2014. I do concede that there may have been other confidential matters relating to these investigations of which I and others are not aware.

The second matter is a more general one and may be relevant to police activities in several jurisdictions. It is our understanding that for years many priests and religious in the Catholic Church, who were the subject of sexual abuse complaints, were required to undertake psychological treatment in Australia. Some treatment was given by individuals with training in psychology whilst others attended more structured programs. One such program was offered by a private business called Encompass that operated in Sydney. But operating its treatment programs, encompass must have built up a large body of information and files about offenders. We were always curious as to why police, in the course of their investigations, did not gain appropriate warrants and access the information being held.

Yours sincerely,

Wayne Chamley