

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 285

Witness Name [REDACTED] HIA 285

## THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

## WITNESS STATEMENT OF [REDACTED] HIA 285

[REDACTED] HIA 285 will say as follows:-

**Personal details**

1. I was born on [REDACTED] in Enniskillen hospital in County Fermanagh.
2. My mother was from [REDACTED] and she had me out of wedlock. When she brought me home, her mother wouldn't let her in so she gave me to my uncle [REDACTED] to look after me.
3. My uncle [REDACTED] looked after me until I was five months old but then he couldn't afford to keep me any longer.
4. I was placed in Termonbacca in 1944 when I was five months old. I stayed there for nine years until I was sent to Australia in/around 1953.

**St Joseph's Home, Termonbacca, Derry (1944 – 1953 approximately)**

5. My first memories of Termonbacca are from when I was about six or seven when you were big enough to fight another child and fend for yourself. There was one big room we all played in and then we would go out to the paddock to play. The nuns had a farm at Termonbacca. The only nuns' names I remember are [REDACTED] SR 86 and [REDACTED] SR 98

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6. We used to play musical chairs outside and that was brilliant. Somebody would have a whistle or a drum and when the music stopped we all had to jump onto bales of hay. I remember the nuns brought us to the seaside as well. We had never been to the beach before and we were frightened of the water. It was a beautiful day and we all got a stick of rock.
7. I went to a Christian Brothers school in Derry with two other boys. We walked from Termonbacca to the school. It was about a mile away. I hated school and I never did my homework. Every Monday I would get hit in school; I used to get walloped. The nuns taught us music, dancing and singing.
8. On one occasion when we were walking home from school, a doctor threw a cigarette butt on the ground. We picked it up and all had a puff each. I then gave it to my friend to put in his pocket but it burned his trousers off. I didn't realise; I thought it would keep us warm when we got back to the home. I got blamed for that incident. We were always in trouble. We were like little pups; we didn't know right from wrong.
9. I was always hungry in Termonbacca. I remember going to bed hungry all the time. I played the hornet in the band and after rehearsal we could always smell steak and chips coming from the kitchen but we weren't allowed to have it. It was for the people who were there after us. We could smell it but we couldn't have any of it.
10. My mother never visited me in Termonbacca. She ended up marrying a Welsh man named [REDACTED] and having nine children with him. He told me later that he had gone to Termonbacca looking for me but the nuns slammed the door in his face. I don't think my mother knew I was sent to Australia. I never asked any questions about my mum; I thought I didn't have one. You don't miss what you never had and because I had never seen her I never got attached to her. We only grew up with nuns. When somebody dies you grieve for them and we were grieving all the time; we just didn't know what we were grieving for.

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11. One day when I was eight or nine a priest came in and asked us who wanted to go to Australia and all the children put their hands up. The priest said we would ride horses to school every day and pick fruit off the trees. We didn't know what Australia was; we thought it was just down the road. We were so excited because we just wanted to go somewhere. Before that, we didn't know there was anywhere else.
12. I always remember one incident that happened just before we went to Australia. The priest came in and I was playing with him. A nun walked in and said 'I hope you don't do any badness in Australia' **HIA 285** The priest made me touch his penis but he didn't touch me. I was only a kid. I think it was 1952 so I was about eight years old. I didn't know right from wrong. That was the only time I was sexually abused in Termonbacca.
13. We all had to go to the doctor before we went to Australia. I remember the doctor told me I was the skinniest boy he'd ever seen. He said there wasn't a pick of meat on me. We were all branded and I had to be branded on my leg as it was the only place there was enough skin.
14. I sailed to Australia on the SS New Australia in 1953 when I was nine years old. I went with two other boys called **HIA 311** and **AU 8** I still keep in touch with them. We got the boat to England and collected people in London. Then we sailed from Southampton to Australia. When we landed in Fremantle we were met by the Brothers. They separated us from our friends and took all our belongings from us. I thought that was cruel. I didn't arrive at the orphanage until 3am in the black of night. I didn't know where I was and I wanted to get out.

#### Life after care

15. I checked the archives in Ireland and England to try to find out about my family but I found nothing. Then I went to **[REDACTED]** and by chance I found out I was Protestant. I also learned I have six uncles and a priest brought me



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out to visit my uncle [REDACTED]. He gave me a big hug when he realised who I was. I met all my uncles then and they all made me feel welcome.

16. I flew to Wales to meet my mother after that. My brother and sister were there too. There was no excitement when my mother met me. All she said was 'I knew you'd find me'. Then she said she couldn't tell anyone else who I was. I said that was fine, I did what I set out to do, I found her. I met my half-siblings but they don't really mean anything to me; I don't have a relationship with them.

17. I returned to Termonbacca for a visit when I was in my mid-thirties. I was greeted by a nun who told me she had cradled me as a baby. It could have been [REDACTED] SR 98. I asked her where the photos of the boys who went to Australia were but she said they were all gone. That was sad that there was nothing to remind us.

18. I now live in the outback about 300km from Perth. I look after a farm of 10,000 acres. I'm the caretaker and I look after the sheep and grow wheat. I make sure everything is running smoothly. I never married or had a family but I have a lot of friends. I have six dogs and I enjoy feeding the birds. I've always loved animals.

### Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Sig

Dated

18/11/2013

L.E.M. 3.

Ref. No.....

Group Nomination No.....

# Commonwealth of Australia

DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION, AUSTRALIA HOUSE, LONDON.

## Child Migration

Sections A and C of this form are to be completed by the approved voluntary organisation in the United Kingdom. Section B to be completed by the parent or guardian of the child.

## SECTION A

1. Name in full ..... **HIA 285**  
(In block capitals, surname first)
2. Full Postal Address ..... **ST. JOSEPH'S HOME, TERMONBACCA, CO. DERRY.**  
(In block capitals)
3. Age..... **8** ..... Date and Year of Birth..... **[REDACTED]** ..... Place of Birth..... **[REDACTED]**
4. Sex..... **M.** ..... Weight..... ..... Church Denomination **R.C.** ..... **Co. FERMANAGH**
5. Furnish name and address of parent, guardian or next of kin .....  
(If father is living his name must be given)
6. Is there any record of mental disease in the child? ..... **NO** .....
7. Has he or she at any time been subject to fits? ..... **NO** .....
8. Educational standard ..... **3<sup>rd</sup> STANDARD** .....

Signed .....

For and on behalf of.....  
(Name of Sponsoring Organisation)

Date .....

## SECTION B.

## PARENT'S OR GUARDIAN'S CONSENT (FATHER IF LIVING)

I, .....  
(Insert full name, occupation and address)

of .....

the { father  
mother  
guardian } of..... **HIA 285**

hereby consent to my child/ward proceeding to Australia under the Commonwealth Child Migration Scheme.

Dated this ..... day of .....

Signature .....

\* Witness ..... Qualification .....

Address .....

\*The witness to the parent's or guardian's consent must be one of the following :—

A Mayor, Magistrate, Provost or Justice of the Peace.

A Barrister, Advocate, Solicitor or Notary Public.

A Minister of Religion.

A Registered Medical Practitioner.

An Officer on the active or half-pay or reserve list of the ...

## SECTION C.

In the event of the child named in this application leaving Australia before the completion of 2 years residence (unless he/she is repatriated for medical reasons within twelve months of arrival) ..... (name of sponsoring organisation) agree to repay the financial assistance granted in respect of an assisted passage.

Signed.....  
(Representative of Organisation in the United Kingdom.)

Date .....

On completion, this form (in duplicate) should be forwarded with a certified copy of the child's birth certificate to :—

THE CHIEF MIGRATION OFFICER,  
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,  
STRAND,  
LONDON, W.C.2