

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 295

Witness Name: HIA 295

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 295

I, HIA 295 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] in [REDACTED], County Derry.
2. My mother was called [REDACTED] I had a sister called [REDACTED] who was three years older than me. When I met my mother about seven or eight years ago she told me that my father was a soldier in the British Army. They were not married. My mother told me that she was going through hardship and could not look after [REDACTED] and me at that time. [REDACTED] went to live with her grandparents and I was placed with neighbours. The neighbours then had a baby of their own and could no longer keep me. The parish priest became involved and I was placed in St Joseph's Children's Home, Termonbacca on 12th April 1948 when I was two and a half years old. My mother later married a man called [REDACTED] and had two sons called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

St Joseph's Children's Home, Termonbacca (12/4/1948 – 26/1/1953)

3. I was placed in Termonbacca when I was two and a half years old. The nuns in the home were vicious. I do not recall any of the nun's names. The nuns

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physically abused me. They pulled and hit my arms which left me in pain. They used their hands to beat me.

4. I wet the bed nearly the whole time I was in Termonbacca. I did so out of fear of being beaten. I recall the nuns making me stand outside in the courtyard with a wet sheet around me. I was shivering because I was so cold. All the boys who wet the bed were made to do this. It was degrading. As we stood in the courtyard the nuns would hold a cage which had a rat in it up to our faces saying 'don't you ever do that again'. I was terrified. My most vivid memory of Termonbacca is standing in that damp courtyard.
5. My teeth were so bad in the home that I was in constant pain. I think they were rotting. I never saw a dentist. The more I cried with the pain, the more I got beaten by the nuns. When I went to the Army when I was twenty I had all my teeth pulled out. I recall always being hungry in the home, we never had enough food.
6. I did not suffer any sexual abuse in Termonbacca.
7. I never received any visitors during my time in Termonbacca. Termonbacca was frightening. The nuns had so much aggression. It felt as though they didn't want to be there looking after children. There was no love or affection shown to us.
8. I was discharged from Termonbacca on 26th January 1953 and I was shipped to Australia on 28th January 1953 when I was seven years old. I sailed on the New Australia from Southampton. I found out the name of the ship and the port years later. I wasn't aware of any boys from the home going to Australia before me. I was never asked by the nuns if I wanted to go to Australia. I was never given any warning that I was being sent. There was no discussion. I just remember being taken away from the home and I think I went on a train for the first time. My certificate of migration states that I had a medical examination but I do not recall this. I do not recall who supervised us on the ship. I do remember that I was very sea sick on the journey. I was nervous and scared as I didn't know where I was going or why I was being sent away from the only home I knew.

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St Mary's Agricultural School, Tardun (1956/7 – 1960/1 approximately)

9. We arrived in Fremantle on 22nd February 1953. When we arrived we were put on the back of a truck and taken to the Sisters of St Joseph's in Kellerrebin. I was taken with five other boys called [REDACTED] AU 31 [REDACTED] AU 30 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I am not sure if these boys were also from Termonbacca. This home was for younger boys so I was moved to St Mary's Agricultural School in Tardun which was run by the Christian Brothers around 1956 or 57 when I was eleven or twelve.
10. At Tardun schooling was non-existent. I worked on the farm driving tractors and carrying around sacks of wheat. I worked on the land with no shoes. I fought bush fires and chased wild goats. There were no workers hired by the Brothers, the boys did all the farm labour. During my time in Tardun I was physically abused by the Brothers. I was sexually abused by the Brothers approximately two to three times. It stopped when I had the courage to hit a Brother across the ear. When I was about fifteen or sixteen the Brother Superior hit me and I retaliated and grabbed his hands and I said 'don't you ever touch me again'. I was taken from the home two days later to work on a farm. Two pounds and four shillings was taken from my wages which I never received.
11. I do not recall seeing any inspectors from Child Welfare, British Government or authorities from Northern Ireland during my time in the Sisters of St Joseph's or Tardun.

Life after care

12. I left the farm and worked on crayfish boats until I was about eighteen or nineteen. I then joined the Army and I stayed for three years. I left in 1968 and worked in the mines in Queensland. I came back to Western Australia and worked on [REDACTED]. I met my wife [REDACTED] and our daughter [REDACTED] was born in 1972. We married in 1974. I have two stepsons called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I enjoy an excellent relationship with my stepsons and my daughter. From 1977 I travelled around the world with my job on the [REDACTED]. I retired in 2009 and I am enjoying life

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fishing and being at home. I have worked hard and held good jobs in my life but I think if I had a better education I could have achieved even more.

13. About thirty five years ago I contacted the authorities in Perth to find out about my family. They gave me the address of the parish priest in [REDACTED] and somehow my sister [REDACTED] intercepted the letter and thought that I must be her brother. She wrote back and we corresponded for a while. She came out to visit me about ten or twelve years ago. She stayed for three months. We enjoyed a good relationship. Unfortunately [REDACTED] has passed away. About eight years ago I went to [REDACTED] to visit my mother. The meeting didn't go well as I felt she was embarrassed and ashamed about the situation. She told me that she put me in Termonbacca so I would be looked after and adopted by a family. She said she didn't know I was sent to Australia. My migration form is purportedly signed by my mother. She said she didn't sign any documents and was never contacted about me. After the visit I didn't have any further contact with my mother. I had no contact with my half brothers.
14. I was never given a birth certificate while I was a child and I had to request one years later. I was thirty when I found out my Christian name was [REDACTED] I was always known as [REDACTED] which in fact is my middle name.
15. I feel that each institution lied to us. They told me I had no parents and I was made to feel that I was not wanted as a child. I have never felt part of society. I feel that I don't fit in. I feel that I am on the outside looking in. In my younger days my past and what happened to me as a child brought out so much aggression in me. I was hard to live with but I never got in trouble with the law.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed _____

HIA 295

Dated 25-10-2013-

L.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 295**
(In block capitals, surname first)
2. Full Postal Address **ST JOSEPH'S HOME, TERNON, DERRY**
(In block capitals)
3. Age **4 years** Date and Year of Birth **1945** Place of Birth **IRELAND**
4. Sex **M** Weight **25 lb** Church Denomination **R.C.**
5. Furnish name and address of parent, guardian or next of kin **AU 102**
(If father is living his name must be given) **Ireland**
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 **Under school age - of normal intelligence.**

Signed

For and on behalf of **Catholic Child Welfare Committee.**

(Name of Sponsoring Organisation)

Date **9.12.49.**

SECTION B.

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

I, **AU 102**
(Insert full name, occupation and address) above address
of
the **father** of **HIA 295**
mother
guardian
hereby consent to my child/ward proceeding to Australia under the Commonwealth Child Migration Scheme.

Dated this **5th** day of **Dec.** **1949**Signature **AU 102***Witness **J. E. Hennessy**Qualification **Head Teacher**Address **Christian Brothers, Derry**

*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 in the active or half pay or pension lists of any of His Majesty's Naval, Military or Air Forces.

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) Catholic Child Welfare Committee (name of sponsoring organisation) agree to repay the financial assistance granted in respect of an assisted passage

Signed P. L. Anello
(Representative of Organisation in the United Kingdom.)

Date 9. 11. 48

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.

Male, Aged 7.

C. of A. Department of Immigration 8/12/52 London Recommended <u>A.</u> <u>W. L. Hawley</u> Interviewing Officer.

Average type of child

Very clean and neat.

appears reasonably intelligent.

*Selected by Catholic
Group Domination.*

(a) Speech: average for age.

(b) Eyesight: appears normal.

Medical arranged.

(c) Education: average for age.

C. of A. Department of Immigration London.
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Approved Assisted Passage Child Migrant

W. & S. Ltd. 10000 7/48

Robert for Chief Selection Officer