

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 319

Witness Name **HIA 319**

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**THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995**

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**WITNESS STATEMENT OF **HIA 319****

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**HIA 319** will say as follows:-**Personal details**

1. I was born on  in . My mother was called  and when she had me she was twenty four years old and not married. She married a man name  in 1943 when I was two years old. They had four children  and
2. I was admitted to St Joseph's Children's Home, Termonbacca on 30 August 1943 when I was two years old. I do not know why I was admitted to care but have assumed it was because I was the child of a single mother.

**St Joseph's Children's Home, Termonbacca (30/8/1943 – 06/05/1953)**

3. I was placed in Termonbacca when I was two years old and stayed in the home until I was eleven.
4. I recall only three nuns names from the home while I was there - **SR 87** **SR 87** **SR 16** and **SR 12** **SR 12** came from Aberdeen, Scotland and would often threaten to hit you with a stick but she never caught me. Once I played up and was placed in a bath by a nun and it was full of Jeyes

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fluid. I cannot be sure now but think it might have been **SR 12** who did this to me. The nuns put fear in us. If we were misbehaving they would threaten that the boilerman would come and lock us up.

5. I was not sexually abused in Termonbacca. I was not ill treated there but I was denied an education as the standard of teaching whilst I lived in the home was extremely poor.
6. We used to sing and have concerts in the home and I enjoyed my time there.
7. I recall on one occasion I received a visit from my mother and a couple of my aunts who lived in **██████████**. I only recall one visit from my mother.
8. I recall there being talk in the home about boys going to Australia. They said that in Australia you would ride horses, eat apples and oranges and go to the beach. I recall a priest saying to me that I would love it there. I do not recall the name of this priest. I knew other boys from the home had gone before me and it sounded exciting. I do not recall being asked but I must have agreed to go.
9. I remember having a medical examination in Termonbacca prior to departure. I don't believe they conducted this examination properly as I later discovered I was cross eyed and probably should not have passed the medical examination.
10. I was very excited on the date of departure and four other boys from the home came with me **AU 16 HIA 266 AU 38, AU 17** and **HIA 284**
11. I was deported to Australia without my mother's consent or knowledge in 1953 when I was eleven years old. I travelled to Australia on 8 May 1953 on the SS Otranto.
12. We were supervised on the ship by **██████████** and **██████████**. There were nineteen boys on the ship from Scotland and fourteen girls from England. We had a great time on the ship playing games.

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13. When we arrived at Fremantle on 4 June 1953 we all knew immediately that the holiday was over. They brought us to Clontarf where I stayed overnight and the next day **BAU 1** the head brother from Bindoon, came to collect **BAU 38, AU 17** **HIA 284** and I. We were then taken to Bindoon.

#### Bindoon Boys Home (5 June 1953 – 1958)

14. I was physically, mentally and sexually abused during my time at Bindoon by several Brothers. I was called a “snivelling sh\*\*e” and beaten with sticks and leather straps. I was left with purple bruises on my arms and one of the Brothers would beat me even harder saying “you Irish are trouble, you never cry”. **HIA 284** **AU 38, AU 17** and I were stripped in front of the other boys and made to stand on the table for the entertainment of **BAU 1** **AU 18** put his hand down my trousers when I was an altar boy, touched my private parts and said “you’re growing to be a big boy” and I told him to stay away from me. I reported this to **BAU 5** but he punished me by sending me to work in the piggery and the dairy farm. **BAU 24** sexually abused me and subjected me to buggery. He left me bleeding and then hosed me down after the abuse.

15. At the home we were not known by our names but given a number which I felt dehumanised us. I was Number 134 **AU 17, AU 38** was 133 and **HIA 284** was 135.

16. The Child Welfare Department did visit Bindoon periodically to inspect the premises but these inspections were far from thorough. There was never any contact to my knowledge from the British government or authorities from Northern Ireland to check on our progress or welfare.

17. Bindoon changed me as I was very sensitive as a child but quickly hardened when I had to survive the regime in this institution. I experienced a lot of abuse and brutality.

#### Life after care

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18. I left Bindoon when I was seventeen and a half years old and did various jobs over the years. I found it hard to trust people after my time in care. I moved from one job to the next but finally worked as a kitchen porter where I met my wife. She was a cleaner in the same hospital.
19. I married my wife [REDACTED] in 1974. We had a son called [REDACTED] who died at nine months old. We have two daughters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I retain a good relationship with both my daughters and my two grandchildren.
20. I had a problem with alcohol from the age of fourteen to twenty six and would describe myself as being an alcoholic at that time. However, one day I decided that I was better than my past and stopped drinking there and then. I have not had a drink in over fifty years.
21. I attempted suicide when I was twenty four and could not discuss the abuse I had suffered with anyone.
22. I contacted the Catholic Diocese office in Perth to obtain details about my background and any relevant papers and they wrote to my mother's parish priest in Derry. He replied and told me where she was living. I was in shock at this response as I was not even aware at that stage that I had a mother. I met my mother when she was seventy during my only trip to Northern Ireland and I told her that I did not hold her responsible for the past. She told me that she had no idea that I was still alive or in Australia as she had never been informed. I also met my half brother and sisters during this visit. Since then I have kept in regular contact with my mother by telephone. She is now ninety four and living in a nursing home in Derry. I still maintain contact with my nieces.
23. As a result of being sent to Australia without my mother's consent or knowledge I lost my identity and all connections to my family, my home and my country for many years. I lost out on a family life and the love and affection of a family. I never had a birth certificate or passport or a sense of identity over the years. We were taught to be honest, yet the authorities were not honest with us in relation to how they presented our opportunities in Australia. I have learned to live with

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my past but it never really leaves you, it is permanently with me. In my view I was deported from my own country without parental or the appropriate consent being sought and the authorities should be held accountable for our treatment over the years.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Sign **HIA 319** \_\_\_\_\_

Dated 23. 10. 2013.