HIA REF: 340
Witness Name: HIA 340

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 340

I, HIA 340 vill say as follows:-

Personal details

- 1. I was born on ______ County Home. My mother was called nd she lived in _____. She was unmarried and fourteen years old when I was born. I do not know who my father was.
- 2. My mother's father said she was too young to look after a baby and so I was placed in Nazareth House in Belfast on 25th August 1950. I was recommended by Nazareth Lodge. I believe I was put in care as a baby so I may have been in the nursery of Nazareth Lodge from when I was born. The nuns gave a promise to my mother that I would have a good home.

Nazareth House, Belfast (25/8/1950 - 21/2/1955)

- 3. I was placed in Nazareth House when I was two years old. I left on 15th March 1953 and I was readmitted on 14th February 1954. I do not know where I was placed during this time.
- 4. I still have flashbacks to incidents when I was dragged out of bed by the nuns for wetting the bed. When I was out of bed the nuns either belted me with a strap or

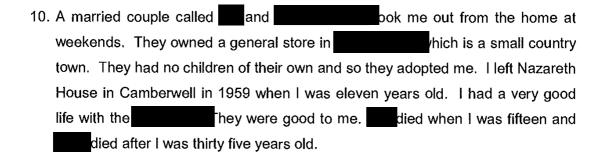
hit me around the head. I remember seeing other children who wet the bed getting treated the same way. I do not recall any of the nun's names and I do not recall anything else from my time in Nazareth House, Belfast.

- 5. I do not recall anyone talking to me about Australia or asking me if I wanted to go. I left Nazareth House on 21st February 1955. I do know recall anything about the journey to the ship. I sailed to Australia on 23rd February 1955 on the Orontes when I was six years old. There were other boys and girls on board the ship. I have a memory of a little boy being hit on the ship for misbehaving and then being thrown overboard. I do not recall anything else about the journey to Australia.
- 6. My Child Migration form is signed by SR 99 om Nazareth House in Belfast and dated October 1954.

Nazareth House, Camberwell, Melbourne (27/3/1955 - 1959)

- 7. I arrived in Melbourne on 27th March 1955. I was taken to Nazareth House in Camberwell. I do not remember anything about my arrival in Melbourne or the journey to Nazareth House. Another girl and I were the youngest children in Nazareth House.
- 8. I was bitter that I was never shown any love or affection from my time in care. I felt lost as I thought I didn't belong to anyone. I had no self esteem and I never thought I was good enough. I was never made to feel like a person I was just a number to the nuns. As a result I rebelled as a young girl. I just wanted to be loved.
- 9. I remember sliding down the banisters in the home and misbehaving. The nuns caught me and punished me. As punishment the nuns locked me up in a wardrobe for hours. This was a regular occurrence. When they let me out of the wardrobe they belted me. I cannot recall any of the nun's names. During mission time in the home if you played up the nuns belted me or hit me around

the head as punishment for showing them up in front of the priests. Sometimes the priests would also have hit us for misbehaving.

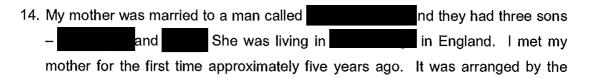


Life after care

11.	When I left school I went to make then I worked in a factory
	which made components. Later I completed a course as a nurse's assistant.
	I worked as a nurse's assistant for years and retired a few years ago after I had
	two shoulder replacement operations and a knee replacement operation. I now
	work as a crossing supervisor for children.

12.	I met my husband	when I was sev	venteen. He was in the N	avy. We married	
	when I was nineteen.	We moved to	where we live no	w. We have two	
	children called	and We	have three grandchildren	– two girls and a	
	boy. I am very close to my children. I feel we have brought them up well and I				
	learned from the mistakes others made in relation to my childhood. I have				
	always done the best I can for my family.				

13. I contacted the Child Migrants Trust in Melbourne in the last ten years after seeing an article in the Herald Sun newspaper. They helped me to obtain my birth certificate which I never had as a child. Eventually they traced my family in Ireland and found my mother.



Child Migrants Trust. Our meeting was a beautiful experience. She cuddled me and for the first time in my life I felt that I belonged to someone. I felt immediate affection as soon as I saw her.

- 15. However whilst part of the longing to know who I belonged to was fulfilled I was also sad as all my life I never felt worthy of love. I still lack self esteem and I question myself every day. That feeling will never go away. I will always have those feelings of doubt. I can love other people and I do I love my family, but I have never loved myself. I have lost a lot in my life. I never had a mother as a child. Whilst I am happy that I have reconnected, that happiness is tinged with sadness for a past of 'what ifs'.
- 16. I met my mother again a few years ago and there was no awkwardness. I can be open with her and tell her anything. She has health problems now and is hard of hearing. We stay in contact by way of telephone and writing short notes to one another as neither of us are very literate. I am in good contact with my step brothers and two of them have visited me here in Australia. My husband regularly emails of find out how my mother is doing. I have also visited Ireland and met my extended family in the They welcomed me but our contact is sporadic. The Child Migrants Trust paid for both of my trips to England and Ireland.
- 17. I attended the apology made by a Minister on behalf of the Australian Government in Melbourne a few years ago. I feel aggrieved that I was sent off to Australia without being asked. As child migrants we were not treated as children but as commodities to be traded by one country to another. They don't know how much damage they caused us. I lost my identity and I was deprived of the opportunity of reconnecting with my mother and family sooner because I was in another country.



Statement of Truth

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



HIA 340 AR THEALT.

IN THE MATTER OF

, (in Religion known as SR 189 SR 189) of Nazareth House, Ormeau Road, in the City of Bellfast. a Member of the Community known as The Poor Sisters of Nazareth, aged twenty-one years and upwards, make Oath and say as follows:-That on the Nineteenth day of January, One thousand nine HIA 340 an Infant, who was hundred and forty-nine born on the was placed in the care of my Community at the Community's Home known as Nazareth Lodge, Ravenhill Road, Belfast , who was then unmarried. aforesaid by her mother, informed the Sisters at that time that The said HIA 340 was born in the County Home in the County of Subsequently on the Twenty-eighth day of May One HIA 340 thousand nine hundred and fifty the said transferred to another of the Community's Homes known as Nazareth House, Ormeau Road, Belfast aforesaid. did not at anytime to the best That the said of my knowledge sign any form of Consent to the adoption of her HA340 , but I am informed and daughter the said believe that at the time the child was placed in Mazareth Lodge requested the Sisters to aforesaid, the said HIA 340 adoption. arrange for the said has not at anytime contributed That the said nor did in any way to the support of the said she enter into any agreement to do so, nor has anyone at anytime contributed or agreed to contribute to her support. had not at anytime visited the That the said said HIA 340 either in Nazareth Lodge or Nazareth House aforesaid, nor has she communicated with the said HIA 340 or with the Sisters of my Community, nor has she made any enquiries whatsoever concerning the said HIA 340 The Sisters of Mazareth Lodge and Mazareth House have no knowledge of the whereabouts of the said placed the said am informed that when the said



That no person has at anytime been made liable by any order f any Court to contribute to the support of the said HIA 340 HIA 340 HIA 340 On two occasions the said laced in the care of a foster mother, with a view to adoption

ut on both occasions the foster mother became ill and the hild was returned to our Home.

Save where otherwise appears, I make this Affidavit of my wn knowledge.

SWORN as Nazareth House, Ormeau Road in the City of Belfast this 23 to day of October 1958 before me, a Commissioner for

Oaths.