



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

Statement

Name Paul Gray

Address

REDACTED

Occupation

Date

20 July 2016

1. My name is Paul Gray and my date of birth is REDACTED
2. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I am prepared to give to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
3. Where direct speech is referred to in this statement, it is provided in words or words to the effect of those which were used, to the best of my recollection.
4. Where I refer to a document in this statement, I have used the document reference number which appears in the top right hand corner of the document to which I refer.
5. This statement has been prepared on the basis that the Royal Commission will issue a Notice to Produce under the *Royal Commissions Act 1902* (Cth) s 2(3A) for the production of a signed copy.

Background

6. Growing up I lived with my father, mother, brother and sister in Spears Point, in the Lake Macquarie area. When I was 8 years old my parents separated, and my mother moved to

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Sydney. My siblings and I moved with our father to Cessnock to live with my step-mother, step-siblings, and half-sister.

7. I have been diagnosed with and currently suffer from Dissociative Identity Disorder. As a result I was only able to recall the incidents of abuse set out below in 2010 and I continue to suffer the effects of my breakdown from recalling these events.

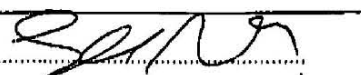
Sexual Abuse by Father Rushton

8. When I was about nine and a half years old, my family met Father Peter Rushton ("Father Rushton"). Father Rushton was a priest at the Anglican Church at Cessnock ("the Church").
9. Father Rushton visited our house regularly. I recall that he still visited our house on at least three occasions after he moved to Wyong. At those times he came to pick me up and took me back to Wyong with him.
10. From about the age of 10, I regularly attended Sunday school at the Church. From ages 11 to 14, I was a member of the Church of England Boys Brigade ("the Brigade") and went on church camps to Wollombi and Yondaio, near Swansea. At the age of 12, I became an altar boy and started attending services in outlying churches in the parish with Father Rushton. Following these services, Father Rushton would take me back to his house.
11. When I was about 10 and a half years old, Father Rushton anally raped me in his bedroom at his property in Westcott Street. I do not recall the precise circumstances in which I arrived at Father Rushton's property. However, I recall a green wall in that bedroom and being lain face down on the bed as Father Rushton anally raped me. That was the first instance that Father Rushton sexually assaulted me.

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12. Subsequently, between the ages of 10 and 14, I was sexually abused by Father Rushton on a weekly to fortnightly basis.
13. There were occasions where Father Rushton would drive me back to his house after attending Church and anally rape me. On many of these occasions, Father Rushton would cut my back with a small knife and smear the blood on my back as he continued to anally rape me. After the sexual intercourse, he would clean my wounds with white towels.
14. There were also occasions at the Church where Father Rushton would ask me to perform oral sex on him whilst he was dressed in his church robes. On those occasions I would comply, however I do not recall any specific instances except one.
15. The instance I remember involved a woman who observed me performing oral sex on Father Rushton in the vestry at a Church in Wollombl. She opened the door to the vestry, saw us, and left immediately. Not just anyone was allowed into the vestry, so she must have had a greater involvement in the church beyond just being a member. She sat in the congregation and stared at me during the Church service afterwards. I am not aware of whether she reported the incident to anyone in the Church or to the Police.
16. When I was about 14 years old, Father Rushton took me to Wyong, where he was then posted, and taught me how to swim. When we were in the water, Father Rushton fondled me and got me to fondle him.
17. I recall on another occasion, Father Rushton took me to his house and raped me. Afterwards Father Rushton took me to a church camp at Yondaio where there were about five men and at least one other boy. I recall the men saying: "We are going to get you". From my previous experiences I knew this meant they were going to sexually abuse me. I was chased by two men

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to the edge of a cliff and hid in the bushes. After I was dragged from the bushes, I was raped by the two men. While I was being raped, I could hear another boy screaming.

18. On another occasion, I was taken back to Father Rushton's house and raped again. This is the final occasion I remember having any sexual contact with Father Rushton.

St Alban's Home for Boys

19. When I was about 13 years old, Father Rushton took me to the St Alban's Home for Boys ("St Alban's") and left me with three men. The men led me into what they called "the fucking room" and took turns at raping me. I do not recall who these men were.
20. Following this incident, I continued to be taken to St Alban's for a period of approximately 18 months. Father Rushton would either take me to St Alban's himself or would ring someone from St Alban's to pick me up from the Church. This would usually occur on Sunday afternoons, following the morning Church service. However, it would occasionally occur at other times, for example, when there was a gathering at St Alban's. These gatherings would be attended by a number of men. At these gatherings, I would be assaulted by these men
21. While at St Alban's I would usually be locked in the room at the end of the hall, sometimes for hours at a time. Different men would visit me in this room and either rape me or make me perform oral sex on them. Sometimes two or three men would visit me on the same day. From time to time, one of the caretakers at St Alban's, Mrs Barry, would let me out of the room. I cannot recall whether she would let me out early or only following the abuse. I also recall that Mr Barry, the gatekeeper, would keep me quiet before and after these assaults by beating me.

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22. On one occasion there were between six and eight men at St Alban's. These men made me and five other boys lay face down on beds in a side hall. Each of the men picked a boy and each of the boys was taken into a different room and sexually abused.
23. On another occasion, a fat man named Frank raped me with a wooden "dill doll" while two others watched. If I did not move enough, Frank would punch me in the ribs and then make me anally penetrate him using the same dill doll.
24. I did not recognise most of the people who were present at St Alban's, save one man whom I recall seeing at the Church on a regular basis. I was never approached by this man outside of St Alban's.

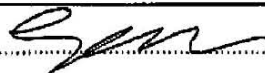
Institutional Response

25. In 2007, I had a flashback of a green wall with slats in a particular pattern. At the time I thought this image might be related to something I had seen when I was very young. But when I tried to face this image, I only found blackness.
26. In 2010 I heard from my mother that there were people who had accused Father Rushton of being a paedophile. I believe she had been told this by my father who had read a newspaper article.
27. On hearing those allegations I called up the church and spoke to Michael Elliott ("Mr Elliott") in order to defend Father Rushton. I did so because at the time I had no memory of the sexual abuse that had occurred to me as a child.
28. Afterwards, I had another conversation with my mother. Following that conversation, she suggested that the green wall I was seeing in my mind was at Father Rushton's old house. It was at this time that I realised that I had been sexually abused by Father Rushton as a child.

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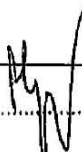
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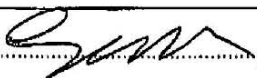
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29. Since then, memories of sexual abuse experiences have continued to flood back to me.
30. In October 2010, as a result of my recollection of such experiences, I called the Church and informed Mr Elliott that I had been a victim of sexual abuse by Father Rushton.
31. Soon after I suffered a mental breakdown and was admitted to a State hospital by the name of James Fletcher on two occasions. On each occasion I was treated and discharged the next day. However, I did not feel that my condition had improved.
32. In November 2010, my son, REDACTED spoke to Mr Elliott and arrangements were made for the Church to pay for my admission to Lingard Private Hospital. Mr Elliott also provided REDACTED and me with documentation to complete a formal application for assistance under the Pastoral Care and Assistance Scheme.
33. After my discharge from Lingard Private Hospital, I did not feel ready to re-enter society, so I contacted Mr Elliot again and he suggested that I attend the Heal for Life Foundation's Mayumarri Centre ("Mayumarri"), which operated a program for survivors of child sex abuse. I attended that institution on two separate occasions (both for five days) and for a short time after felt I was able to cope.
34. By December 2010, however, I wanted to return to Lingard Private Hospital for further treatment. My son, REDACTED therefore contacted the Church to request that they pay for a second admission to that hospital. The Church refused. As a result, I was again admitted to James Fletcher Hospital where I was prescribed medication and discharged.
35. Over the period December 2010 to April 2011, I contacted Mr Elliott on several occasions to describe further memories of sexual abuse from my childhood.

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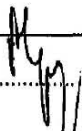
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36. In the latter half of 2011, I engaged John and Nicky Ellis to be my legal representatives and to communicate with the Church on my behalf. I made the decision to engage legal representation because the Church had indicated to me that they were no longer going to pay for my treatment.
37. In November 2011, my legal representatives approached the Church to resolve my claim for assistance and redress against the Church by negotiation. Shortly thereafter the Church agreed to pay for my counselling sessions with a psychotherapist by the name of REDACTED til further notice. The Church also agreed to meet the costs of a further attendance at Mayumarri, and up to six counselling sessions for my son, REDACTED who was suffering from the impacts of my disclosure.
38. In February 2012, I attended an interview with a consultant psychiatrist by the name of REDACTED REDACTED to obtain a report for the purposes of settling my claim against the Church.
39. In April 2012, my psychotherapist REDACTED recommended to the Church that I attend intensive twice weekly therapy for a considerable period, supported by a psychiatric admission to a specialised Trauma and Dissociation Unit, such as the one at Belmont Private Hospital which is located in Brisbane. The Church replied that they would not pay for that treatment because they were currently in negotiations with my legal representatives regarding a financial settlement and they had previously paid for a private hospital admission "where no notable outcomes were apparently achieved" (ANG.0050.002.7107, ANG.0050.002.7106).
40. For this reason, I obtained private health insurance to be able to pay for further intensive treatment myself.

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41. On 25 August 2012, I was admitted to the Trauma and Dissociation Unit at Belmont Private Hospital and participated in the inpatient program. I paid for this admission myself. On 14 September 2012, I was discharged.
42. On 1 June 2013, I entered into a Deed of Settlement and Release with the Church settling my claim [ANG.0050.002.7274].
43. About two and a half years ago I attended a meeting with Bishop Farran, together with my partner and son, to request approval to speak to the Synod about the effects of child sex abuse. The Bishop declined my request. He said that the Church already had a good understanding of what was going on.
44. Earlier this year I contacted Mr Elliott to request the Church to pay for me to attend further sessions with a psychiatrist. Mr Elliott indicated that the Church would not pay as I already had a financial settlement. I therefore requested and was granted an audience with Bishop Thompson. At our meeting I repeated my request. The Bishop did not give me a definitive answer at the meeting, and I have not received one since. However, I have been told by Mr Elliott that the Bishop does not have authority to approve payment, as this authority resides with the Church's financial committee.
45. Throughout the process of dealing with the Church, I felt that the response of the Church was not adequate in any way shape or form. While there was some measure of care and support at the beginning, the Church did not show adequate compassion and concern for my wellbeing, nor did it demonstrate an adequate understanding of how long it takes for survivors to come to terms with and attempt to address their abuse.

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46. I have had a very good experience with 'Heal For Life', and feel that the church should fund something like this. I do believe it needs to be independent from the Church as people just won't talk if they think the church is controlling it. I know the Church pays 'Heal for Life' on a case by case basis for a certain number of sessions, but feel it needs to go further and make regular general donations to a scheme like this.

Signed:

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