

STATUTORY DECLARATION

I, **MAUREEN O'HEARN**, of _____ in the State of New South Wales, do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

1. I am employed at Zimmerman Services, Diocese of Maitland Newcastle in the role of Coordinator Healing & Support. I have been in this position since December 2007 when the role was first established. During that time I have had contact with approximately 200 individuals to a varying degree.
2. My qualifications are a degree in Social Work – Bach. of Social Studies (Uni. of Sydney 1977). I have just over 30 years experience working as a Social Worker mainly in the area of child abuse.
3. My work experience includes:
 - (a) 1977 – 1981: Centacare (now Catholic Care): provision of counselling for families and children, involvement in the training & support of foster carers, assessment of requests for the placement of children in care.
 - (b) Department of Community Services (DoCS):
 - I. 1981- 1983: Child Protection Worker: intervention & management of child protection cases, initiation of Children's Court action & the provision of training in child protection to the community, government departments & non government agencies.
 - II. 1983 -1985: Child Protection Consultant Hunter Region: overseeing regional child protection programs, implementing Departmental child protection policies and procedures across the region, reviewing management of child protection cases, providing consultation to Departmental and non-Departmental staff and organising and providing training in child protection.
 - (c) 1985 -1989: Sexual Assault Counsellor (Dept. of Health – Hunter Region): provision of crisis and long-term counselling for child & adult victims of sexual abuse, involvement in Court proceedings as a support person and witness, group

work with victims of sexual abuse, providing written reports for Court regarding the effects of sexual abuse and providing reports for victim compensation

- (d) 1989 – 1992: Dept of Community Services: Coordinator of the Hunter Child Protection & Assessment Centre. This was a new service established to undertake assessments of families in cases of serious child abuse matters in order to provide reports for the Children's Court.
 - (e) 1996 -2002: Social Worker Catholic Care Children's Services in Out of Home Care Program
 - (f) 2002 – 2004: Project Officer Catholic Care – Adoptions, British Child Migrants, After Care Programs
 - (g) 2004 – 2007: Manager Children's Services including out of home care, adoption, supervised contact, British Child Migrants programs.
 - (h) 2007 – Present: Coordinator Healing & Support, Zimmerman Services
4. The concept of having a role to offer support to those affected by abuse was initiated by Bishop Michael Malone in 2007, initially for a 6 month term. This was made a permanent position in 2008. The role continues to be strongly supported and encouraged by Bishop Bill Wright, current Bishop of Maitland Newcastle and recruitment for an additional worker is currently being undertaken.
5. My role as Coordinator Healing and Support is to work with people who have been directly affected by child sexual abuse perpetrated by members of the Diocese of Maitland – Newcastle to support and promote their personal and unique journey towards healing. This includes primary victims, (those who were sexually abused), and secondary victims (partners, parents, siblings and the children of primary victims).
6. My tasks in this role may involve the following:
- (a) Referral to & facilitation of counselling services for individuals
 - (b) Reporting complaints of abuse to Police & supporting and facilitating the person making a statement to Police or other statutory authorities as they disclose their abuse
 - (c) supporting the person, their family and friends through the criminal process in their quest for justice or a civil process in search for restitution

- (d) advocating to the diocese or other Church authorities on behalf of the person or groups of people who have been adversely affected
 - (e) supporting the person and their family through periods of distress
 - (f) working with groups; building networks of support within the Diocese, the wider Catholic Church, other denominations and faith based organisations and the wider community. It is particularly important for the Coordinator to build close, collaborative working relationships with victim advocacy groups and support groups.
 - (g) Maintaining long term supportive relationships with individuals
7. In my role as Coordinator Healing & Support my practice has always been to report complaints of childhood sexual abuse to NSW Police. During my time at Zimmerman Services (formerly Zimmerman House) it has always been Policy that any suspected child sexual abuse matters are reported to Police. I refer to Zimmerman Services Policies & Procedures, past and present, below:
8. *"Policies & Procedures – Towards a Better Future August 2008*
It is the practice of Zimmerman House to notify the police of any potential crime and the name of the alleged offender, even if the aggrieved person will not allow their name to be disclosed."
9. During this period I can only recollect one person not being comfortable initially with his name being given to Police. Whilst he was accepting of the information about the offence and the offender being passed on to the Police he was unsure that he wanted to make a statement so did not want the Police to know who he was. I was able to get this man to at least agree to meet with the Police in order to assist him in his decision. He did this and then made a statement.
10. On another occasion another man I saw was happy for me to pass on all of his details to the Police but was very unsure about making a statement. This was related to his embarrassment and undeserved sense of shame about the offences. On this occasion the man agreed to me arranging a joint home visit with the Detective who would be investigating the matter so that she could explain the whole process to him and what would be involved. Following this the man agreed to make a statement.

11. ***"Policy – Diocese of Maitland Newcastle – Investigations Policy 2011***

6.1 Diocese's Obligation to Report Suspected Criminal Conduct

The Diocesan Child Protection Unit will report any alleged crime that would constitute a serious indictable offence or conspiracy to commit a serious indictable offence to the NSW Police Force. Section 316, Crimes Act 1900 makes it a criminal offence to conceal a serious indictable offence. The Diocese will report alleged crimes or conspiracies to commit crimes to Police irrespective of the reporter's or alleged victim's wishes. When a report is made to Police all relevant available information is provided to the Police, including the identity of the reporter and alleged victim(s) and perpetrator(s). The investigator should ensure that the alleged victim is aware of this practice as soon as practicable."

12. In line with this Policy details of the abused person are given to Police and the person is informed of this. My experience is that individuals have been comfortable with this process as they understand it is still their decision as to whether they will make a statement.

13. Policies & Procedures in place in the Diocese of Maitland Newcastle make it clear that there is an expectation that any suspected child sexual abuse matter is reported to the NSW Police either directly or via Zimmerman Services. My role requires more than simply reporting. My role is to encourage and facilitate that contact between the individual and the appropriate Police officer as indicated by case examples mentioned above. Further to this, the role of Coordinator Healing & Support may support the person whilst giving a statement to police as well as supporting them at subsequent Court appearances and keeping them fully briefed of progress of a Court matter.

14. Whilst it is important to respect the individual's wishes and to ensure that the individual does not feel pressured in any way I believe that my role is to ensure that the individual is given every opportunity and support to pursue making a statement to Police. It is often the case that individuals who have been abused as children particularly within a Church context can return to that "childlike state" when discussing the abuse and in a sense fearful of their abuser and fearful of repercussions from a Church. Whilst this fear is ill-founded it is a feeling that some people experience. In these circumstances individuals almost need "permission" from the Church to pursue making a complaint to the police. My experience is that this "permission" is best given by way of practical support and encouragement.

- 15. My experience is that some members of the church community (parishioners) are quite vocal in proclaiming the innocence of the accused and staunchly support that person. As such these parishioners find it difficult to accept that my role has been instrumental in the complainant making a statement to the Police.
- 16. It is my opinion that the Policies and Procedures which operate within Zimmerman Services are of a high standard both in relation to offering support to victims of abuse and also in relation to reporting any matters of suspected child sexual abuse to the NSW Police force. Officers of the NSW Police force in this area regularly refer new complainants to me for support when they have approached the Police in the first instance.
- 17. My position of Coordinator Healing and Support is an innovative role. I am not aware of any other Diocese in NSW that has such a position that is dedicated specifically to offering ongoing support to and advocacy for individuals who come forward with complaints of abuse.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the Oaths Act 1900.

Declared at MAYFIELD [place] on MONDAY 3 JUNE 2013 [date]

Signed
[signature of declarant]

In the presence of an authorised witness, who states:

I, BRENDA MOLONEY [name of authorised witness],
a JUSTICE OF THE PEACE JP 131512 [qualification of authorised witness],

certify the following matters concerning the making of this statutory declaration by the person who made it: [* please cross out any text that does not apply]

- 1. *I saw the face of the person OR ~~*I did not see the face of the person because the person was wearing a face covering, but I am satisfied that the person has a special justification for not removing the covering.~~
- 2. *I have known the person for at least 12 months OR ~~*I have confirmed the person's identity using the following identification document-~~

..... [describe identification document relied on]

Signed MONDAY 3 JUNE 2013 [date]
[signature of authorised witness]