

# INTERIM REPORT VOLUME 2



**Royal Commission**  
into Institutional Responses  
to Child Sexual Abuse



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The artwork used for each chapter cover page was created for the Royal Commission by Josh Herd, who is descended from the Mbarbaram people of North Queensland. It represents different stories and experiences being told, heard and connected around the country.

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# INTERIM REPORT

## VOLUME 2

Royal Commission into Institutional  
Responses to Child Sexual Abuse



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## Content warning

This report contains material that is sometimes confronting and disturbing. Sometimes words or images can cause sadness and distress, or bring back memories for people affected by child sexual abuse which are very hard to deal with.

If you need help to cope with the feelings that you are experiencing, support is available. For a full list of support services visit [www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au) or call 1800 099 340. Alternatively, you may wish to call Lifeline on 13 11 14 anytime for confidential telephone crisis support.

## Reporting

It is a crime to sexually abuse a child. If you have been a victim of abuse or are concerned about a child being abused you can report your concerns to the police. Support services can also help you do this.

## Share your story

If you were sexually abused as a child while in the care of an institution in Australia, you can share your story with the Royal Commission.

The abuse may have happened in any private, public or non-government institution including a school, church, sports club, childcare centre or in foster care.

Your story is important. Sharing your experiences will help us understand what happened to children in the past, and help build child safe organisations in the future.

There are three ways to contact us to share your story:

 1800 099 340 between 8am – 8pm AEST/AEDT

 [contact@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](mailto:contact@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au)

 GPO Box 5283, Sydney NSW 2001

We will then contact you to work out the best way for you to share your story.

# PERSONAL STORIES

Bearing witness to the personal experiences of those affected by child sexual abuse in institutions is central to fulfilling our terms of reference. It helps us to better understand the nature, scale and impact of the sexual abuse of children in an institutional context in Australia. Many survivors have told us that telling their story in a private session helps their recovery process. Every story is important and they will together help us to develop practical recommendations for change.

As at 31 May 2014 we had held 1,677 private sessions. In each session we heard a deeply personal story about a person who suffered from abuse as a child. We have also received 1,632 written accounts from people who have preferred to tell us their story in writing.

## Private session with a Commissioner

Private sessions allow survivors, or people who may be aware of the abuse of another, to speak privately with one of the Commissioners.<sup>1</sup> This enables people to tell their stories to someone in authority, without the trauma of giving evidence in public. People attending private sessions are often supported by family members, friends, counsellors or victim support organisations. These sessions are unique to our Royal Commission and required a specific amendment to the *Royal Commissions Act 1902* (Cth) in March 2013.<sup>2</sup>

The *Royal Commissions Act 1902* (Cth) requires that a session be held in private. Only people who are authorised by the Commissioner can be present.<sup>3</sup> Participants are not witnesses<sup>4</sup> and do not take an oath or affirmation, although they are expected to tell the truth.

There is no set format for a session. The Commissioner will introduce him or herself and explain the purpose of the session. It is then up to each person to decide how to tell their story.

Participants usually share their story of abuse, the immediate response and the impact that the abuse has had on their lives. They are not required to give a detailed account of the abuse, but can if they wish. Commissioners may ask questions to help us understand the story the person wishes to tell. However participants are not cross-examined.

The Royal Commission is careful to support victims before, during and after telling us their stories. By 31 May 2014, we had referred over 160 matters to the police for investigation. We follow-up with victims to check on their welfare after their private sessions and have referred many to counselling, support and other services.

## Sharing the stories with Australia

We acknowledge the courage of those people who have taken part in a private

### Names have been changed

The real names of individuals have not been used. The names of all individuals and any other identifying features have been changed.

session or sent in a written account of their experience. Each of these people have made an important contribution to the work of the Royal Commission. They have helped us to better understand the nature and profound impact of the sexual abuse.

This volume includes the stories of 150 people who shared their experience of abuse with us by coming to a private session or providing a written account. They have been chosen as a representative group to assist people to understand the accounts the Royal Commission is receiving.

The real names of individuals have not been used. The real names of all individuals and any other identifying features have been changed, for privacy and fairness reasons and in accordance with the *Royal Commissions Act 1902* (Cth). We have selected substitute names for individuals but the description of a person's position in an institution is real. In some cases the geographical location has been changed.

The stories have been grouped according to the type of institution or circumstances where the abuse took place. The groups are:

- residential care (including orphanages, mission stations, children's homes)

- foster care
- government school
- non-government school
- community (sports and recreation clubs, health services, workplaces)
- church or place of worship and related activities
- juvenile justice.

In addition, this volume includes a selection of poetry given to us by survivors. Through their own words, these poems provide further insight into their experiences of child sexual abuse. They tell both of the harm of abuse and the incredible resilience of survivors. As with the personal narratives, the names of all individuals have been withheld for privacy reasons.

We have shared these stories and poems to give survivors a voice. But each person's story is important to the Commissioners. Anyone who suffers abuse as a child suffers a great wrong. Unfortunately, many in the community do not understand the potential for abuse to occur, the frequency with which it does occur, and its consequences. We present these stories in the hope that they will contribute to a better understanding of the profound consequences of child sexual abuse on the lives of survivors and their families and help us all to make our institutions safe for children in the future.



## Commissioners have observed common themes

There are many common themes in the stories we have heard. They are outlined in the table and we examine them in more detail in volume 1 of this report. Many of these themes are being examined in research and are reflected in our public hearings.

Theme	Observations from private sessions
<b>Abuse is often multi-dimensional in nature</b>	Abuse is often reported to be multi-dimensional, involving physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Many survivors reported a culture of fear in institutions created by severe physical abuse. This created an environment in which sexual abuse was both possible and unlikely to be disclosed.
<b>Abuse has long term impacts</b>	Many survivors reported long-term effects of abuse, including on their physical and mental health, their education and career prospects, their ability to form relationships and their faith.
<b>Abuse has ‘indirect victims’</b>	There is often a ‘ripple effect’ of abuse with impacts on people other than the victim. Survivors have reported the impact on their children, partners and parents. Parents and siblings have also reported the impact on the survivor, themselves and other family members. Many ‘indirect victims’ have attended a private session to speak on behalf of a victim who had committed suicide.
<b>Survivors display strength and courage</b>	Many survivors have shown resilience in various aspects of their lives, in spite of dealing with the adverse effects of child sexual abuse. They have displayed incredible strength, kindness and compassion; formed stable relationships; and triumphed over multiple challenges.
<b>Some children are more vulnerable</b>	Some children in institutional settings appear to be more vulnerable to sexual abuse, including those who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are in out-of-home care</li> <li>• have a disability</li> <li>• have already been the victims of abuse</li> <li>• are in tightly controlled settings where there is little public scrutiny such as some closed religions.</li> </ul>
<b>Repeated abuse and multiple perpetrators are common</b>	Most survivors reported being abused multiple times, and some spoke of multiple offenders in the same residential setting.  Children were also sometimes moved from one place to another and abused in both places.

<p><b>Grooming of victims and family members was common</b></p>	<p>It was reported that perpetrators commonly prepared a child with the intention of sexually abusing them. They did this by building a relationship of trust with the child and their family or carer and by isolating the child.</p>
<p><b>There are major barriers to disclosure</b></p>	<p>Survivors reported that when the abuse occurred, they feared that they would not be believed or would be seen as weak for letting the abuse happen. They worried that disclosure would hurt and distress others. As children, often they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• did not understand that what was happening was sexual abuse</li> <li>• were not spoken to in private or asked by a trusted, known and sensitive person</li> <li>• were threatened</li> <li>• may have had a complex relationship with the perpetrator.</li> </ul> <p>Adult survivors also told us that current barriers to disclosure include them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feeling shame, embarrassment, self-blame and self-doubt</li> <li>• deciding that the abuse was not as serious as other forms of abuse happening to other children.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Several factors encourage disclosure</b></p>	<p>Factors that encouraged children to disclose abuse include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• taking part in school-based prevention programs</li> <li>• being asked in a sensitive and appropriate way by a trusted adult</li> <li>• trusting a peer</li> <li>• feeling concern for other children or younger siblings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>There are barriers to identification and reporting</b></p>	<p>Many factors undermine the identification and reporting of child sexual abuse, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of training on child sexual abuse</li> <li>• failure to recognise indirect disclosures of abuse</li> <li>• delayed disclosure by victims</li> <li>• adults not recognising concerning or abusive behaviour or rationalising such behaviour because it does not fit their stereotypical view of perpetrators.</li> </ul> <p>Some survivors reported that the health and other professionals they had seen had not asked them whether they were abused despite them showing signs of abuse. Survivors said that as a result they often did not disclose the abuse when seeking assistance.</p>

<p><b>Criminal justice system</b></p>	<p>Many survivors reported negative experiences of the criminal justice system, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not being believed</li> <li>• limited understanding of child sexual abuse and the needs of victims and survivors</li> <li>• being afraid of or overwhelmed by prosecution and court processes</li> <li>• feeling sidelined and irrelevant to the prosecution process.</li> </ul> <p>However many others reported positive experiences of the criminal justice system, with significant changes in the attitudes and responses to abuse over time. Positive experiences included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feeling supported by the police and at court</li> <li>• police officers who were patient, calm, professional and caring when receiving reports of abuse</li> <li>• being kept well-informed about the progress of their case</li> <li>• referrals to support services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Responses by adults in authority were ill-informed, inadequate and at times harmful</b></p>	<p>Survivors reported that they told adults in positions of authority what was happening but those adults did nothing.</p> <p>Many also reported that perpetrators were moved from one region, diocese or state to another in the wake of complaints.</p>

1 *Royal Commissions Act 1902* (Cth) ss 60B(1), 60B(2).

2 See *Royal Commissions Act 1902* (Cth) ss 60A-60M, inserted by the *Royal Commissions Amendment Act 2013* (Cth).

3 *Royal Commissions Act 1902* (Cth) s 60G.

4 *Royal Commissions Act 1902* (Cth) s 60C(1).







# RESIDENTIAL CARE

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# ARTHUR

In a moment of terror, Arthur said he felt he had no choice but to stab his father with a steak knife.

'He was hitting my mother and after I did it I said "If you ever touch her again, I'll kill you". He left and never came back, a violent drunk, never gave us a penny. I was seven years old when I done that.'

Five years later in 1957, Arthur told the Commissioner, he began skipping school. He was charged with truancy, then sent to a Salvation Army boys' home in regional New South Wales.

'Cruelty there was commonplace. My first three nights I was molested by Major Leon. He was touching and fondling, teaching me how to masturbate. He was a very big man. His wife came into his office on the third night and told me to get dressed and go to bed. She was a friend of my mother, she was crying her eyes out. He never touched me again after that.'

Two years later, Arthur became the target of further abuse, this time at the hands of Captain Piper.

'I don't know what brought him to drag me into his room, but I wasn't the only one he picked on. I'd hear him go into the other dormitory and someone get dragged out at two, three in the morning, and I'd thank God it's not me, but then you're wishing it on someone else, aren't you?'

This time the abuse continued for several months until one night, Piper attempted to rape Arthur.

'He called me a slut, and bent me over the bed. I knew what was coming and I swung around and hit him, he was off balance and he went down, so I grabbed my stuff and went out of there.'

By that point, Arthur recalled, Major Leon had been replaced, and he told the new Major's wife what was happening to the boys.

'I never told her I was one of them. She went white and said "Leave it with me, I'll look after it". Piper was gone within a week, but he started working down at the railway station so every time you travel, there he was.'

At 15, Arthur decided to make a police report.


'Well they laughed at me, the whole station thought it was quite funny. They said, "The Salvation Army wouldn't do that! Rubbish! Bloody liar!" That was the attitude everywhere.'

Arthur went on to build a career and a family, but never told anyone about his abuse until 2011 when he was 65 years old and stumbled across the CLAN (Care Leavers Australia Network) website by accident.

'I've received counselling through CLAN, and they urged me to tell my story to The Salvation Army, so I did. I didn't ask them for anything but to listen, but then a couple of weeks after the meeting they rang me and offered me an ex gratia payment of \$55,000, which I took.'

Arthur was horrified to later discover Piper had previously worked at another





boys' home where, he understands, a number of boys were abused by him.

'I just can't believe it was allowed to continue from home to home. I mean this man would stand there with an erection watching us all shower, but no one would listen to the kids in those days.'

To Arthur's knowledge, Piper was never charged or punished for sexually abusing the boys entrusted to his care.

# AUDREY

Audrey's legs still bear the scars of burns she said were inflicted by a nun for telling authorities she was being sexually abused by priests.

In 1955, when Audrey was seven, she and her younger sister became wards of the state. They were placed in an orphanage run by Catholic nuns in regional Victoria.

Audrey told the Commissioner that priests regularly visited the orphanage and she became a target for sexual abuse.

'The first time it happened a priest took me into the space behind one of the statues and touched me. After that he'd make lightly veiled threats towards my sister like, "your sister's becoming a pretty little girl, isn't she?" I was always terrified for her. Even at that age, I knew he was breaking the law somehow.'

The abuse became 'more intrusive' over time, and Audrey reported the sexual abuse to at least three nuns.

'I'd be in the hallway hysterical, petrified. I told the Mother Superior and she called me a terrible liar and belted me, then started slapping me across the face making me say it didn't happen over and over. One of the nuns would sometimes hide me when I was running away from a priest, so they must have known what was happening.'

Audrey told the Commissioner she ran away several times to tell local police what was happening at the home, but would inevitably end up back at the orphanage.

'The Mother Superior would say, "Oh this one's got a great imagination". I'd hold onto their legs begging them not to leave me there, but the nuns were so highly regarded, the police didn't believe a word I said. Other times I'd knock on doors of random houses and ask if I could live with the family. I'd tell them I would be very good and help them around their home, but they'd always call the police and back I'd go.'

'I'd be in the hallway hysterical, petrified. I told the Mother Superior and she called me a terrible liar and belted me, then started slapping me across the face making me say it didn't happen over and over.'

Unable to stop her own abuse, Audrey fought to protect her younger sister from the priests' advances.

'I was always terrified for her, she was only five.' Audrey believes the nuns enabled the priests to sexually abuse her and others, as she said they would often send her to priests for 'instruction' on her own.

'All the while they'd be giving me internal examinations. I was always bleeding and scratching, and they'd tell me they were checking for worms. I was given tablets and told they were for my itch, and they said I was bleeding because I had a bladder infection.'

'I'd been brought back by police and the Mother Superior burnt me. After that I didn't speak to anyone about it.' She stopped reporting the abuse after that, at the age of 10.

When Audrey began developing breasts, she said the nuns taped her chest.

'I was about 11 or 12 and my breasts were large compared to the rest of me. Every night they'd pull the tape off. It was painful, embarrassing and sick.'

Around the same time, Audrey said she was removed from school and sent to work in the laundry.

By the time she left the orphanage at 18, Audrey was pregnant and when she gave birth, was told her baby had been born prematurely and had died.

'But then I had to sign some papers which I'm sure mentioned something

about adoption so I've always wondered if I was told the truth.'

Later in life, painful memories surfaced and Audrey became an alcoholic, and underwent shock treatment in a bid to regain control of her life.

Eventually Audrey contacted the Catholic Church and attended an appointment where she said she was shown photographs of priests and asked to pick out those who'd abused her.

'I wasn't prepared for that psychologically, and I just said "I can't do it".' So they had me sign this and that and I ended up with about \$15,000, but that wasn't the point. I was waiting for someone to acknowledge they'd neglected their duty.'

Therapy over the years has helped Audrey, but she still sleeps on a 'two-hourly alert system' and blames the abuse for robbing her children of a loving upbringing.

'My kids have suffered terribly, I was always waiting for someone to take them away from me and if they wanted a cuddle, I couldn't do it.'

# CIRRIGEE

Cirrigee's family life centred around 'running after' her two younger siblings and keeping them safe from their bad-tempered Irish father until she was four, when authorities removed the three children from their mother's care.

'We became part of the Stolen Generations. One minute we were camping by a creek, the next we were at a children's home. I have no memory of what happened in between or how we got there.'

Life in the mission was a world away from the life Cirrigee had known with her parents.

'We didn't speak a word of English, we only knew our native language and the Sisters were very cruel and frightened us. Sometimes they'd give the boys cakes, but the girls never got any.'

Cirrigee told the Commissioner that younger children were offered little protection from others under care, and she recalls being forced to participate in disturbing games.

'The older girls would make us younger ones lie down with our pants off, then tell the boys to lie on top of us and have sex with us. They'd be laughing watching the boys try to get their penises in us while we fought them off.'

When Cirrigee was eight, her mother visited the mission, telling her to look after her younger brother and sister.

'She put her arms around all of us and spoke to us in our language, then she was gone and we were being put on a train in the last carriage like the

Aborigines always had to travel in. Some Aborigines on the platform was calling my name and pointing. I looked out the window and saw my Mum, she'd just had a baby and was waving to us.'

That was the last time Cirrigee saw her mother for several years. The children were sent interstate to live with a missionary couple.


'They thrashed us often, it was so bad we'd nearly pass out. They'd both come into the bathroom when I was washing to make sure I used enough soap. If I didn't use enough she'd flog me, then he'd flog me, then she'd come back and push my head down towards the plughole. I worked out as I got older she was doing it so she could look at my private area.'

Cirrigee started wetting her bed which attracted severe and humiliating punishments.

The children were starved while under the care of the couple, and the siblings resorted to stealing food from other children's school bags or scouring bins for leftovers.

'We were so hungry all the time. Then one day my Headmaster came around to our class and called me out, I thought I was in for a big flogging. When we got to his office there was a big chocolate cake on the table and he said, "my wife cooked this for you", and we stopped stealing after that.'

Cirrigee continued to suffer abuse under the 'care' of the missionary couple until she turned 17 and left.



'I was always told I'd be a prostitute, I was worthless, and I made a mistake marrying my ex-husband, he was a bad person. I live alone, I don't trust any man. I've been a single woman maybe over 20 years. I had three children with him because I always wanted a family. We starved, he wouldn't give us no money. I wanted to commit suicide but I couldn't leave my children.'

Painting and drawing have helped Cirrigee cope and keep her mind occupied. She is an established artist.

'To pick myself up, I kept busy. I've done nursing and midwifery, and I've fostered over 30 children to make sure they don't go through the same pain I went through. My own family is broken, my eldest said I ruined her life and I don't know how to fix it but if we don't tell our stories, nobody will know.'

# DARRELL

Darrell was given conflicting accounts of the reason he was removed from his mother at six months of age and made a ward of the Victorian State. One story was that his mother couldn't look after him; another, that he'd been removed as part of the Government's forced removal of Aboriginal children. He was 40 when a service for reuniting Aboriginal people helped him find his mother and siblings.


After placements with foster families, in 1965, at the age of seven Darrell was sent to a home conducted by the Hospitaller Order of St John of God in Victoria. Darrell told the Commissioner that the home was for boys like him who had intellectual disabilities. He said the Brothers meted out harsh punishment, including slapping boys across the face, whipping them with a strap and kicking their testicles.

Darrell said he dreaded school holidays because the teachers and most of the boys left, and only he and two or three other boys remained. It was during holidays that the sexual abuse by Brother Hodges was worst. 'The first time, I was 11 and in the TV room. He told me to sit on his lap, then he put his hand down my pants and grabbed hold of my penis, moving his hand on it. After a few minutes he told me to go and clean myself up.' The abuse soon escalated and continued two to three times a month for the next four years. Darrell said he was first raped by Brother Hodges in the showers. 'I told him it hurt and to stop, and he told me to stop crying. Afterwards he told me to clean up the blood with a mop and bucket. Then he gave me two aspirin and said I wasn't to tell anybody.'

On the occasions Darrell refused to do what Brother Hodges wanted, he was locked in the kitchen cool room and told he'd stay there until he cooperated. He told the Commissioner that he was also punched in the face and given alcohol spiked with drugs that made him lose consciousness. Later, Darrell was made to wear a women's wig and clothing while the abuse was perpetrated. 'It was always worse in the holidays. I don't participate in Christmas because of the flashbacks and the nightmares. I wake up screaming sometimes. It doesn't go away.'

'I still worry about kids in institutions. I don't want any other kid to go through what I did. Someone needs to keep an eye on them.'

Darrell said that when he was 12, he told a teacher that Brother Hodges was coming around at night time and hurting him. The teacher spoke with Brother Hodges who told her that Darrell was making things up. Around this time, another Brother at the home also started sexually abusing Darrell, who made several further attempts to disclose the abuse. He told the secretary who worked at the home as well as a male nurse and a psychiatrist, but no-one followed up his complaint.



After leaving the home, Darrell was convicted of several violent crimes and spent years in jail and the secure wards of psychiatric institutions. In 1992, he told a disability worker about the abuse. 'He was the first person who believed me', Darrell said. 'It was such a relief.'

The disability worker encouraged Darrell to report his abuse to police after hearing media reports that St John of God Brothers were being investigated by Victorian Police for child sexual offences. Darrell joined

a class action against the Brothers and was awarded \$430,000, which included \$35,000 for legal fees. 'I would have liked an apology', he said. 'They said they'd make a public apology, and I wanted to be there for that, but in the end it was just a notice in the newspaper. No one from the Catholic Church ever spoke to me. The money put a roof over my head and I haven't been in trouble again, but it hasn't healed me. I still worry about kids in institutions. I don't want any other kid to go through what I did. Someone needs to keep an eye on them.'

# DAVID

David still can't bring himself to reveal details of his childhood abuse to his 83 year-old mother.

When his parents divorced in 1962, David told the Commissioner, his mother had little choice but to place her two boys into a Lutheran home for children, while the boys attended the local primary school.

Gerard Roach was a worker at the facility charged with care of the children each Wednesday night, to relieve the full-time staff while they enjoyed a night off from their duties. David recalls he had an 'obvious penchant' for young children. Before his abuse, David had witnessed the night worker molesting a little girl.

'He then did the same to me. He sat me on his knee and began to manipulate my genitals. I didn't know what in the world was happening to me. I was molested a number of times.'

David told the Commissioner that he still has flashbacks to the night when Roach drove a small group of young boys to a swimming pool where there were a number of naked men walking around.

'I do remember quite clearly asking him why we're not taking our bathers and he said, "you will not be needing them". I could swim quite well and was never scared of the water, but I was quite scared of what might be going to happen to me.'

One by one, the naked boys were pushed into the water where the naked men waited. Many children couldn't swim, and so had little choice but to cling to the men.

Fuelled by adrenaline, David managed to swim back to the side of the pool, clamber out, and run back to a dressing room where he hid in a cubicle.

'I remember Roach followed me calling, "David, where are you?" When he found me, he pushed me to the ground. I glanced up and saw another man with grey hair, and as Roach held me down I could feel a sharp, excruciating pain in my bottom. After some time I blacked out and the next thing I remember is Roach carrying me into my room at the home.'

As a young teenager, David ended up at a Catholic boys' home after breaking the law.

With memories of the abuse he'd suffered as a child still raw, David told the Commissioner he faced a new wave of abuse, this time at the hands of a Brother in the home.

'He used to get great joy out of thrashing us, and what he did with the cane was in my opinion a sexual assault as well.'

To this day David feels embarrassed and ashamed of his past abuse. He blames ongoing depressive outbursts for the breakdown of his marriage and loss of contact with his children for 25 years. For the past six years, he's been homeless.

He holds hope of Roach being held accountable for his actions, and of asking him a long-burning question.

'I want to just look him in the eye and say, why did you do what you did to me, and do you know what effect it's had on me in my life and others? I just wish it would go away, but I've got to take it to the grave with me.'



# DEAN

On the night he and his older brother were removed from their mother's care, Dean recalled witnessing a violent scene in the family home at the age of five.

'My mother's husband was a drunk, alcoholic abuser who used to bash my mother senseless all the time and one night he was abusing her. I was screaming and yelling, and he bashed me with a belt that had metal studs in it. The neighbours called the police, and they came and took us away.'

Dean was made a ward of the state soon after, and placed in a government reception centre in Victoria in 1972. Two years later he and his brother moved to a non-denominational orphanage where, he told the Commissioner, he was sexually abused from about the age of 10.

'There was a female caregiver, and she would make me and this little girl simulate having sex, and she would sit there and watch us. We'd be naked and so on. Other times she would make us perform sexual acts on each other. We'd be not wanting to do it, and if we didn't, she'd give us a bit of a slap. I didn't know what I was doing, I feel sorry for the young girl, a few times she wet herself. That was terrible. It was disgraceful and disgusting.'

In 1979 the boys were transferred to a Catholic children's home in regional Victoria where they lived for 12 months, before being placed with a foster family by an Anglican foster care service for another year.

'I shared a room with my brother and the foster father would creep into our

bedroom at night and perform sexual acts on us. He told us if we told anyone he'd kill us. I told the foster mother, but she didn't believe me and said if I told anyone else, they wouldn't believe me either because I was a "home boy". In orphanages, if you didn't know how to survive, you got eaten alive.'

'I've been very lucky. I made a choice in my life to go down a certain pathway. I taught myself to read, taught myself to write, educated myself and have been reasonably successful. I always wanted to better myself.'

Not long after reporting the abuse to his foster mother, the two boys were moved on to another foster home in 1980, and Dean left care on his 18th birthday.

'I dabbled in drugs a long time ago, was a very angry man for a very long time. But I've been very lucky. I made a choice in my life to go down a certain pathway. I taught myself to read, taught myself to write, educated myself and have been reasonably

successful. I always wanted to better myself.'

Despite forging a solid career and building a family, Dean said his past has tainted what should otherwise have been positive experiences.

'Once you have children, you just realise what happened to me was wrong. From being institutionalised for a long time and being abused, emotionally, physically, sexually ... I couldn't bathe my daughter without feeling like it was wrong. As a Dad I should be able to do that and not have all these horrible feelings, I don't think I should be made to feel like that.'

Dean sought therapy to deal with his past following the Forgotten Australians apology, but told the Commissioner he still suffers nightmares and feels he can't trust others.

'There's always been a stigma attached to me, I've probably been a bit ashamed of it and shame carries with you for a very, very long time. I don't rest easy with a lot of it. I was in the care of the State, it was the State's responsibility to look after me, and they never did. Maybe I can forgive a little bit, but I will never forget. I want those who abused me to be held accountable, and the kids in care to have a much brighter future and better experience than I did.'

# DENNIS

In 1952, Dennis was driven from his home at a Christian Brothers' orphanage in Victoria to a nearby police station to report the sexual abuse he'd just disclosed to Brother Fitzpatrick. Dennis was 11 years old and had been in the home for about a year. He said he and several other boys told Brother Fitzpatrick about a Brother and a priest at the home who were sexually abusing the boys. Brother 'Fitz' was widely trusted by the boys and took their allegations seriously. Dennis knew a priest had raped a boy in the dormitory, and a Brother had been inviting boys, including Dennis, to his room to listen to the radio and once there, making them masturbate him.

'We went to the police station to tell the story, but they wouldn't believe us. They told us we were lying. I said, "No, it's true". They were in plain clothes and one was standing over us saying, "You made those stories up". He was over six feet tall. They abused us the whole way. Brother Fitz was outside. After that, we kept quiet and didn't tell anyone.'


Dennis told the Commissioner that he encountered further sexual abuse from another Brother at the home. The Brother taught at a technical college during the week and came to the orphanage on weekends. I couldn't remember his name until recently, because I'd blocked it out. I could remember the names of the ones who were good, like Brother Fitz, but not him. With him it was rape.'

Soon after the boys' report to Brother Fitzpatrick, Dennis said the Brother was moved to another school in Victoria. The arrival of Brother Bennett

a year later brought sweeping changes to the school and orphanage. 'He came in and cleaned the whole thing up. I was told he got all the Brothers together and said what had happened wouldn't be tolerated. He said he was in charge and "If anything happens to the boys I want to be informed".' Dennis said he also spoke to the boys. 'He told us, "Things have happened that aren't going to happen again". We knew what he meant. After that we didn't have problems with the Brothers, because he'd nailed it right there and then. We could trust him.'

Dennis didn't disclose the abuse again until his wife pressed him one day to know what was wrong. 'I was embarrassed. It was something that happened that shouldn't have. My self-esteem was very low and I'd tried to bury the abuse and move on.' He thought 'everything might go the wrong way' if his wife knew about the abuse, but found to his surprise that they'd become closer after his disclosure. 'I thought we would have split if I told her. But now, if I'm feeling or thinking of different things about it, we go out for a cuppa or a walk. She'll say, "We'll go down to the garden" and we just walk through it. She's been my rock.'

In 2008, the Catholic Church awarded Dennis \$30,000 compensation, which included \$11,000 for legal fees. He felt that the Church fought him all the way and that the amount awarded wasn't fair. In preparation for the mediation session, he had contacted the Christian Brothers to get information including the names of staff in the home and dates they were there. He felt thwarted



by their response. 'I think they knew about the abuse, but were denying it. I tried to get documents and they wouldn't show them to me or give me a hand. But they've changed this year. It's a big difference. I could ask for anything now.'

# DIAN

Dian was born in 1960 and came from Europe to Victoria in 1966. She and her three brothers and sister were made wards of the state after their parents abandoned them. All of the children except for one brother went to a family group home run by the Presbyterian Church.

The house parents from 1967 to 1970 were Mr and Mrs Stevenson.

Dian told the Commissioner that Mr Stevenson was frequently violent towards the children. If the children didn't behave, they were made to strip off and stand on a chair or walk around the house naked.

Dian's sister was a bed wetter and Dian said that Mr Stevenson used to molest her in the bathroom. Dian told the Commissioner that 'I can't remember why, but I just walked in and he had her bent over the sink and she was washing her hands, and he was molesting her ... And I asked him what he was doing and he said to me, "Go back to bed, otherwise you can take her place".'

Once, when official visitors came to the house, Dian told them that she had been beaten and they told the Stevensons. She was beaten again as a result.

The Stevensons were replaced by Mr and Mrs Domager between 1970 and 1973, Mr Domager repeatedly

subjected Dian to sexual abuse. Dian told the Commissioner that once Mr Domager offered Dian to his friend for sex in return for money. The friend took Dian to a train museum but abruptly took her home. Dian said, 'then he just suddenly got really angry and I didn't know why ... and he gave some money to Mr Domager and said, "I can't do it. I just can't do it". And I didn't know what it meant at the time.'

Dian said that after the Domagers, a lovely couple were appointed house parents and the mother helped her to obtain a scholarship to do further studies that set her on a successful career path.

Dian said that she has found it difficult to relate to people although she has been successful at school and in her career. She struggled with disclosing the abuse to others because she was afraid of retaliation. Eventually, she said that she reported the abuse to the police but was told it was too long ago.

Dian now lives in another state and has become a foster carer. She is passionate about making sure that she gives the best care she can to children placed with her. She noted that she had to undergo a psychiatric assessment to ensure that she would be a suitable foster parent - something she doubts was applicable in the 1960s and 1970s in Victoria.

# DONNY

The pain of his past caught up with Donny when he hit his mid 30s. Donny's mother died in 1955 when he was only 12 months old and after that he was sent to a mission for Aborigines run by the Lutheran Church in a regional area, just 30 kilometres from his father's home. But in all his 16 years there Donny only ever saw his father twice, and he told the Commissioner starvation and beatings were commonly used as punishment and deterrent tactics.

'It was difficult because we didn't have anyone to go to, we didn't know where our parents were but were told never to cry out for them. There was no love or affection, from the age of five we'd be out doing chores from five in the morning like milking the cows. Everything was done by the kids, and we didn't have the chance to learn about our community and our culture.'

Donny was eight when he first experienced sexual abuse. He told of Superintendent Fencer lining him and his two cousins up during their bath time, then 'fondling and touching' them each in turn. Boys throughout the mission went to great extremes to avoid him.

'If you were caught on your own with Fencer, you were in a whole lot of trouble. He chased me through the dormitory once, but I jumped out through the open window and straight onto a coke bottle. It cut right up through my left foot and destroyed most of the nerves. I was in hospital for three months recovering.'

The lid on the 'bottled up' memories of


his shattered childhood only started to come unstuck as Donny approached his 30s.

'In the Aboriginal way we see it as shame, and we wouldn't have dared raise it with anyone because we'd have had the living daylight flogged out of us. As it was we were attending school covered in bruises, but teachers turned a blind eye.'

'Telling my story is the hardest thing I've ever done, but I'm really glad I did it. Hopefully it will make other Indigenous people come and let everyone know their story.'

When he left the mission, Donny set out to find his family. 'I found my father, but he was very angry about losing the opportunity to raise us. I spent a lot of time with him before he died, but that cost me my relationship with my partner.' He is yet to find his older siblings. 'I still battle with alcohol, and just want somebody held accountable for what happened to me and a lot of others.'

Each day continues to bring its own challenges for Donny, who has since confronted one of the missionaries who was charged with the care of the boys in his dormitory.



'I told him we were being abused by Fencer, and he broke down in tears wanting to know why I hadn't told him what was happening. Put simply, I told him we couldn't tell anyone there without copping a beating for lying.'

Donny's children understand their father had a difficult childhood. Although he's kept the details private in an effort to protect them, he fears future generations will continue to be negatively impacted by the wrongs of the past.

'Our children and grandchildren are living the pain and that has to stop. People were paid to provide a level of care that was never delivered, and the state government needs to own up for its responsibility. I still cry, I still have my moments, and telling my story is the hardest thing I've ever done, but I'm really glad I did it. Hopefully it will make other Indigenous people come and let everyone know their story.'

# EDDIE

Excursions away from the Sydney Salvation Army boys' home where Eddie lived were seldom offered in 1963, and when he was selected to travel to the Snowy Mountains with some other boys, Eddie looked forward to the trip.

'I'd just finished cleaning the dorms and was ready to go, when I came across an older boy in the rag room. He was masturbating himself and said I could only go if I'd done a good job of cleaning, and said he was to make a report. He wanted me to put his penis in my mouth, and he wanted me to suck it. I did that, then he masturbated himself and ejaculated into a rag, then we went downstairs to go. I was only eight. I was devastated.'

Eddie told the Commissioner that a few months later he ran away and was molested again, this time by a stranger.

When Eddie reported the abuse to a Salvation Army Major, he recalled being told it was God's way of punishing him for running away.

Throughout the four years he spent at the home, Eddie said boys were exposed to a 'peculiar' ritual while showering.

'You'd have to stand there in the shower block, and show you'd cleaned everywhere. You'd show your elbows, your knees and bend over and spread your cheeks. It was just what we had to do.'

Later, after a short time living at home with his father, Eddie was made a ward of the state and placed at an Anglican

boys' home in Sydney when he was 13.

'Mr Hackett was in charge, and I remember once he said he wanted to see how I was going. I was in his lounge room and he sat next to me, put his hand on my leg, then it went on my crotch and he said, "how does that feel?" Then he played with me until I became erect and said "that looks alright".

The following night Eddie remembered Mr Hackett finding him again.

'This time he starting tongue kissing me. He pulled my penis out and his penis out, and put my hand on his penis. Then he put his penis in my pants, he said he wanted them to get to know each other.'


The sexual abuse continued at least twice a week for twelve months, and on at least four occasions, Eddie said he was raped.

Eddie told the Commissioner that at one point, Hackett introduced him to another man and asked him to go for a drive with the man and act as a 'companion'.

'I went to this man's house, and he said I could have a shower. He jumped in saying it saved water, and washed my back and my butt. We got out and he gave me a cup of milo, then I went to sleep in my undies. The funny thing is the next morning my undies were on the floor next to me. I assume I was drugged and he had his way with me.'

Eddie left the home at 16, joined the Navy and later married and had three daughters.





'When I left the Navy my wife left me, and I got custody of the children, who were all under six at the time. I couldn't remarry, my life was my kids, I focused on them and they've all done well thankfully.'

To this day, Eddie described being 'too scared and ashamed' to report the sexual abuse he suffered through his childhood to police, and despite having a positive outlook, has found it difficult to forge intimate relationships with women.

'There was a nice lady interested in me once, but when she put her hand on my leg, I jumped up and chucked a wobbly. I just seem to do better on my own.'

# SPEAK OUT. 1996

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Why should the child suffer

Is it so that no other children will need to suffer

We must never allow this to perpetuate

The silent sufferer must speak out

Speak loudly, so as this hideous crime,  
and your pain is not hidden

This must not never be allowed to continue

Validate your pain

Acknowledge your pain

The crime must be seen

The crime must be acknowledged

The perpetrator must be punished

The perpetrator must be exposed

In the darkness your pain will only manifest

In the darkness your pain will multiply

Speak out loudly through your pain

Speak loudly do not be shamed

Speak out loudly to all those that do not hear

Speak out loudly for all to hear

# ERNEST

Violence was part of daily life in the Victorian Salvation Army boys' home where Ernest was sent at the age of 13 in 1959.

'I ended up there because of property offences. My mother went to hospital and unfortunately I ended up in the wrong crowd and was made a ward of the state.'

The boys quickly learned that absolute obedience was required if a beating was to be avoided. So when Envoy Peterson told Ernest and another boy to report outside his room after Sunday school, both boys were quick to obey.

'I went into Envoy Peterson's room first, and he said it was a strip search. He told me to bend over the bed, the next thing I know he's on top of me pelvic thrusting. I started screaming out and was lucky the other boy walked in and yelled out. I just picked up my clothes and went straight round to the Matron.'

Ernest told the Commissioner that when he explained to the Matron what had happened, she immediately punished him.

'She got a ruler and she went to work on my knuckles and she kept on going on them. I'm saying to her, check the story, but she said, "I don't want you telling lies about an officer who's been working here for so many years".'

A couple of days later, Ernest said he reported the Envoy's assault to the Major in charge of his section of the home.

'My mother never raised no fools, if I had of known I was going to cop it, I

wouldn't have complained, I would've kept my mouth shut. I told him the story and he said, "It's all lies, it never happened". I got a real good belting.'

On her next visit, Ernest told his mother what had happened, and believes she rang the Welfare Department only to be told she had to take the matter up with home authorities. He later heard the Matron had told his mother that she had been present when the strip search took place, and that nothing had happened.

'I suffer nightmares, I used to be a heavy drinker. I've got a bad heart, have had prostate cancer, but I've got a pretty strong constitution and sort of manage. But what I seen at that home, I will never forget.'

Desperate to escape, Ernest ran away and 'surrendered' himself to another boys' home hoping to see a doctor.

'I wanted the doctor to see the bruises, then I thought I'd be safe, but they took me straight back to the Salvation Army home. Boy did I cop it from the Headmaster, he gave me a good old

thrashing with a cane. I had even more bruises all over me.'

During the 12 months Ernest served at the facility, he said he would also often witness Envoy Peterson coming into the dormitory late at night with hot chips.

'His excuse was he was supposed to be getting bed-wetters up to facilitate them going to the toilet. I'd see him go to somebody's bed and play with the derriere and the inguinal area and other parts. I escaped his attentions because I yelled if he came anywhere near me.

When I left, I was crying my eyes out when I was leaving that place and I told

my Mum "You don't know what's going to happen to those blokes there, I do".'

Ernest said that for the next 12 years he turned to criminal activity but eventually 'woke up'. He's been married twice, and moved to the bush and for some years lived a reclusive lifestyle. Ernest has never reported the sexual or physical abuse to police.

'I suffer nightmares, I used to be a heavy drinker. I've got a bad heart, have had prostate cancer, but I've got a pretty strong constitution and sort of manage. But what I seen at that home, I will never forget.'

# FABIEN

Fabien was born in 1963. He told the Commissioner that his father was violent and abused alcohol and that when Fabien was four years old his father turned him, his mother and his siblings out of the house.

Fabien and his siblings were made wards of the state and sent to institutions. Fabien was sent to a Catholic boys' home run by the Salesians of Don Bosco. Fabien was very young for that home, which was for adolescent boys, but he was placed there because his two older brothers were there.

Fabien told the Commissioner that the sexual abuse started when he was about six or seven. Father Roberts was the Headmaster and later the Rector. Father Roberts lured Fabien into his office with lollies and chocolates. Father Roberts put Fabien on his lap, pulled down his pants and raped him.

Fabien said, 'I can still smell – I can still feel his breath on the back of my neck, holding me down, I can still hear him grunting. He told me it was normal. I couldn't break free – I tried. It hurt – it hurt so much. I still feel the pain. This went on for a while. Then he sent me to the dormitory'.

'Father Roberts said that if I told anybody he'd take my brothers away ... and I would never see my brothers again.'

Another boy was a victim of Father Roberts' abuse and he has killed himself. Fabien says that there was at least one Brother who must have

known what was going on. Several times he ran away from the home and told the police, but each time he was taken back. Once, he told a priest in confession and suffered a beating so he didn't tell anyone else after that. He only saw his mother twice during the 10 years he was there and government welfare officials didn't visit him. He said 'the priests had total control of my life'.

Fabien was also sexually abused on a frequent basis by a Brother at the home.

At 15, Fabien ran away to live with his father. He said, 'I told him [my father] what the priests did to me and why didn't he come and see me. He laughed, so I burnt his house down and overdosed on his medication and was in a coma in hospital. I survived'.

Fabien ended up on the streets, stealing for money for drugs and made multiple suicide attempts. He used drugs and alcohol, 'anything to stop me dreaming'.

Much later in his life, Fabien told his wife about the abuse. She said that it explained his erratic behaviour over the years.

Fabien has been given compensation of \$75,000 for the abuse by the Brother, who has been jailed.

He was hurt to find out that a wing at the home had been named after Father Roberts, who has died. Fabien said 'Any plaques and statues or memorabilia that involves any of these sexual abusers that are found guilty – should be destroyed and removed'.

# FRANK

Frank was a ward of the Western Australian State Government when he was placed as an 11 year old in the Christian Brother's home in Perth. He said he was sexually abused by Brother Hoffman within his first week of arrival, and the abuse continued for the next two and a half years.

Frank told the Commissioner that he'd witnessed Christian Brothers meting out punishment when he'd been resident at another home. Two boys had found a one pound note and handed it to a Brother, who accused them of stealing. 'They kept saying they hadn't stolen it, that they'd found it. We all had to go to the school hall and watch as the Brother belted them. He started out with the strap all over their bodies, then he was slapping and punching them in the face, and when they fell on the ground, he kept kicking them. From then on, all I had was fear.'

Frank woke one night to find Brother Hoffman stroking his leg under the bed covers. When Frank told him to stop, Hoffman replied, 'Don't worry, it's all a dream'. That became Hoffman's refrain as the abuse occurred, sometimes two or three times per day. 'He'd call you up to his desk with your work, then he'd hold you with one hand while he molested you with the other. You don't want to believe it's happening. I froze, mentally and physically.'

In 1970, Frank was 14 and at the end of the school year he was told that he was no longer a ward of the state. 'It was the happiest day of my life. From that moment on, I wasn't going back to school.' Frank reconnected with his family and gained an apprenticeship, successfully holding down a series of trade jobs over the following decades.

He was sorry that he'd never married and had children, but felt that the abuse had interfered with his ability to be in intimate settings. In 1990, he felt the 'wheels were starting to fall off' in his life, but didn't seek help from a counsellor till 2008. He'd developed behavioural tics, including pounding his head with his fists, as a means of trying to manage what he thought was 'pressure' in his head. He found the counselling helpful and developed strategies to manage the intrusive thoughts and behaviours associated with his anger and anxiety.

Frank applied for compensation through the Western Australia's Redress Scheme and was awarded \$28,000 in 2008. He also applied to the Catholic Church's Professional Standards Office for compensation and received \$50,000. He felt uneasy that all levels of the assessment and mediation process were undertaken by representatives of the Catholic Church. 'I thought they could have had someone independent to give a sense of balance. The whole network belonged to them. They said I could have another 10 sessions of counselling, and I thought, "That's big of you".'

Frank felt he'd followed up all the avenues of restitution open to him, however, he still felt unsettled. 'When you're young, you live for the moment, but the older you get, I don't know what it is, but it can get very dark. I wear a mouthguard so I don't grind my teeth away. I try to find things that feed my soul, like music, and I think what got me through is that I was born on the sunny side of the street. You get a lot of jokers in the pack, but hopefully you pick up a couple of aces as well.'

# GARY

Gary arrived at the Anglican boy's home in Victoria in 1959. At six years old, he was the youngest boy in the home and he stayed for 10 years. Gary remembers the home as a spartan place with strict discipline and staff members who were hard and tough, 'but you knew where you stood'. Things changed in 1964 when Frank Baxter became the activities officer and a house master. Baxter sexually abused Gary and many other boys until his eventual dismissal in 1968.


'The four years he was there I was frightened all the time', Gary told the Commissioner. 'It changed my whole life, how I viewed people, how I saw life.' Gary said Baxter would take boys to his private quarters to shower. He gave special privileges to some boys, who, Gary said, often mistook the sexual behaviour for love. Gary told the Commissioner that Baxter sexualised everything. Each day he'd sit in a chair in the communal bathroom and watch as the boys showered, making crude and suggestive comments about their bodies. He was often very aggressive and would hit boys with a cricket bat or anything else that was to hand. The sexual abuse also took place in the dormitory. Gary said he was woken one night by Baxter grabbing his genitals under the bed clothes. When Gary screamed, Baxter tried to tell him he was having a dream. 'I said, "No, leave me alone". He was fishing, and next time, the kids who didn't scream, I heard them, and I'd know Baxter had caught them.'

Gary said boys from the home attended the local state school, but didn't socialise with other students

outside school hours. 'We just went there and went back to the home. It was a very closed society. We had to be controlled everywhere we went.' Gary felt he had no power to tell anyone about the abuse. When he was 13, he absconded from the home with another boy and they were caught stealing bread by police. The boys appeared before a magistrate and disclosed that they were being beaten at the home, but didn't mention the sexual abuse. 'Who's going to listen to me? I didn't think I had rights. Don't forget my parents didn't want me, so what right have I got to stand up and say anything?'

Increasingly, boys at the home were confiding in the cook, a woman they called Granny James. Gary said he found out after he left the home that Granny James travelled to the Anglican office in Melbourne one day to report Baxter's behaviour and request his removal. She waited two days until she was seen. Soon after the cook's visit, Baxter was dismissed. 'I can't remember any day I've felt more liberated than the day he came in and told everyone he was leaving', Gary said. 'The whole joint erupted.'

Adults who worked in the boys' home were described by Gary as being generally good, but weak in character. 'If another staff member said anything, Baxter'd just dominate them. He'd say, "I'm in charge of these kids. You can't tell me what to do".' Gary said someone should have done something long before Granny James made a complaint. 'The ones with the worst education knew. The cook and the kid.'



Gary said he couldn't remember dreaming of a future when he was a child. 'There was nothing there. Every day it was just, "How am I going to get through the day?" What sort of mood is he in today?' Gary told the Commissioner that when he left the boys' home he didn't trust anyone. 'I was always looking for the negative. That was my starting point, because I can understand that. I can relate to it. Anyone being nice to you though, you don't want that. That's scary. That's

when you have to go back in your cave and hide.'

Several boys who were in the home spoke in later years about reporting Baxter to the police. Gary said he wasn't sure if he'd also make a statement. If he did, he said, he'd make it clear that he wasn't attacking the boys' home. 'They looked after me, and that's all I knew. They did the best they could, and I'm not blaming them. It's not their fault my parents put me there.'



# GLORIA

From the day in 1976 their mother ‘walked in front of a car’, Gloria and her two siblings were reliant on the State of Queensland for survival.

‘My father killed himself when I was two so we grew up with a single mother who did what she could to raise us, but if she didn’t work, we didn’t eat, and we were placed in institutions a few times while in her care. She died in 1976 when I was 10 years old.’

By late 1977, Gloria lived in a Catholic orphanage with her sister and brother before being placed in an associated family group home under the care of house parents Bob and Sandy Walker in 1980 at the age of 14.

‘Bob would come in and sit beside the bed, just talk to me and touch me and tell me how wonderful I was and how much he liked me, winning me over I suppose. That’s how it started.’

Gloria told the Commissioner the visits quickly became sexual, and within a short period of time, Bob was raping her.

‘Initially I was freaked out and knew it was a really bad thing, but over time, the abnormal became normal. I’d say no, and he’d just ignore that and talk to me. I’d say I didn’t like it and he’d just keep talking and doing what he did. I’m fairly sure his wife knew what was going on.’

The sexual abuse continued until Gloria left the family group home at the end of 1981.

‘Bob come to me one day and said we’d been caught and that we were both in

a lot of trouble and I had to pack my bags. Everybody thought it was an affair, they didn’t really want to know what was going on.’ Bob and a nun drove me to the Children’s Services flats, so he knew where I was, and he’d visit me. He’d take me out, get me drunk.’

Then Gloria ran away and she said, ‘While I was missing, police had searched the flats and found my sister’s diary. She’d written that Bob and I were having a sexual affair, and he was charged’.

Gloria said that around that time, at the age of 16, she was admitted to an adult psychiatric ward after drinking and being told she’d bashed another girl.

‘It was hell. I begged and pleaded for them to let me out, but as long as I was locked up in a hospital, I was too vulnerable to appear in court. Bob stayed in touch through the whole court case, even though it was one of his bail conditions not to contact me. The bizarre thing is I was allowed out after seven months, a week before Bob’s trial was finalised.

Even without Gloria’s testimony, Bob was convicted and given a two year good behaviour bond. Gloria said that two weeks after her release, she moved away and cut contact with Bob. As she was under the age of 18, she technically remained a ward of the state.

‘A few years later I ran into him and Sandy at the markets. I don’t know why but I gave him my address, and he came to my house. That’s when I left my baby son, rang the social workers and said you need to pick up my baby, then I went and overdosed at a creek.’

Fortunately, the suicide attempt was unsuccessful, and Gloria was able to reclaim care of her infant son.

'I started to go through drug addiction, I was in a domestically violent relationship and was on my way to jail. Eventually I rang my brother's foster parents to care for my son when he was three, and went to Sydney where I almost self-destructed. I ended up with 40 stitches in my arms - another suicide attempt. There have been many.'

After two years away, Gloria requested and was denied access to her son. Following a lengthy court battle with the family caring for him, Gloria won back full custody. By then, he was eight years old and believed the people who had been raising him were his parents.

'Jacob was a confused, angry child. I just believed if I loved and supported him enough, it would all work out. In 1998 when he was 15 years old, he hanged

himself. I found him. He never got the same chance as my other two kids. If my trust hadn't been so violated, if I had not been so damaged, he could have had what his younger siblings had - fun, security, love and joy.'

Gloria confided she's battled years of alcoholism, and after smashing everything in her apartment one night, chose to admit herself into a psychiatric ward.

'I knew if I was home I'd drink, and if I drank I would kill myself, and went back to Alcoholics Anonymous, and I stopped drinking. The bottom line is you don't get over this stuff, you learn to live with it. Some days you live with it well, some days you don't.'

Gloria received \$30,000 through the Queensland Government Redress Scheme established after the Forde Inquiry and continues to receive psychiatric treatment.

# HAROLD

Harold was born in 1957 into an Indigenous family. He was the youngest of seven siblings. When he was three, he and his brothers and sisters were removed from his family and taken to a mission in Western Australia. They were told that they 'were going for a holiday and would be coming home sometime soon'. In fact, they joined about 200 to 300 children at the mission.

At the mission, Harold says he was sexually abused repeatedly by Superintendent Joseph from the age of seven. He says that the abuse went on for about five years.

Harold told the Commissioner that it started when he was summoned by Superintendent Joseph into his office. The Superintendent grabbed Harold's private parts and asked Harold to 'make a stiffy'. Harold was scared and after about five minutes he pulled his pants up and left. On other occasions, Harold described to the Commissioner how he 'had to have a stiffy because I was getting a little bit older'.

Years later, in his fifties, Harold said he actually telephoned Joseph, who told him that the abuse 'was part of what we had to do at the mission to check the children's private areas'.

Harold said that the abuse has affected his emotional and sexual wellbeing. He said, 'I don't touch myself personally. That's part of my suffering, that long-term damage has affected me ...'

Not having anyone to talk to about the abuse has been hard, although Harold knows others who were abused in similar fashion. Some of the boys

at the mission disclosed their stories to each other. Harold said that 'in open discussion I already knew that ... Joseph had sexual - stuff - abuse with the other guys. That come out. We'd laugh about it and say, "He got you and you"... but it was still shameful, guys still hid it'.

Harold has been in trouble with the law and has had counselling for mental health issues. He says that 'no amount of money, whatever it is, is going to rectify the pain and the suffering. I've had to have a lot of counselling, which is, you know - it's eased the pain, but it will never make the pain go away, but it's given me a level of insight into the past, and that's made me aware that I'm not just doing it for myself here, I have to do this for all these guys that are out there'.

'no amount of money, whatever it is, is going to rectify the pain and the suffering'

Harold now works in the security business. He has told his children about the sexual abuse. He said, 'Yeah they know my stories. I've kept them in contact with what I'm doing. They know about the sexual abuse, they know this is going on. I've never sheltered anything from the children, and I say to the children, "Always stay strong and believe in what you can".'

# HENRIK

Henrik was born in Brisbane in 1956. He told the Commissioner that his family was drunken, violent and abusive. His father beat his mother and the children repeatedly.

In 1968, Henrik was made a ward of the State after his father reported that he was uncontrollable. He was placed in a Youth Detention Centre at 11 years of age. He likens it to being 'locked in a cell'.

From time to time, the woman in charge of the Detention Centre, Sister Jones, would organise boys for 'special treatment' by the male staff of the Centre. The boys were required to masturbate or perform oral sex on members of staff in return for lollies and ice-cream.

After six months at the Centre, Henrik was sent to a Catholic institution, run by the De La Salle Brothers, even though he was not a Catholic.

Henrik told the Commissioner that 'Brother Ivan started to befriend you ... but everything's got a price and he raped me ... probably every couple of weeks'. Other boys were also being raped by Brother Ivan. Even though he wasn't a Catholic, Henrik went to confession, believing that what you told in the confessional was confidential. After Henrik told of the abuse in confession he said, 'I was dragged out of my room and I was flogged senseless with a horse whip'. When he told his father about the abuse, his father beat him and returned him to

Brother Ivan. However, this time Henrik was ready with a knife. He put the knife to Brother Ivan's throat and said 'If you come here again I'll cut your f-ing throat'.

After about six months at the Catholic institution, Henrik was sent back to the Detention Centre. After absconding several times he was sent to a Salvation Army institution where boys were trained in farm work. He was 13 years old. There, Major Frank subjected the boys to daily abuse, making them masturbate him at the dairy where the boys were working. Henrik remembers hearing boys running from the dairy screaming, having punched Major Frank. Henrik also remembers a boy falling off the back of a truck in suspicious circumstances. Henrik believes that the other Salvation Army officers knew what was going on but didn't want to do anything about it. He left when he turned 16.

Henrik has been addicted to drugs as an adult and has been to prison. He was diagnosed with schizophrenia while he was in prison in 1975. He said that he has tried to commit suicide around 23 times.

He couldn't disclose what happened to him to his loved ones until recent years. He told the Commissioner, 'I wouldn't change my daughters, I wouldn't bath them, and I couldn't tell my wife why, I just couldn't tell my wife why, I just couldn't, you know, and that was one of the reasons the marriage broke up.'

Ian was seven years old in 1961 when he was made a ward of the state and sent to a state Government boys' home in South Australia.

He encountered physical, emotional and sexual abuse from the time he arrived until the age of 16.

Physical punishment was routine. 'The cruellest people I ever came across were in that place. One of them, Kennedy, used to carry a stick around. I once went to get more breakfast and he gave me three canes each side of my hand, because I'd wanted more. It was just like Oliver Twist.'

Ian told the Commissioner that Blackett, another of the men in charge, was the main perpetrator of his sexual abuse. 'He had a shed and it happened there. And when I was in the sick bay too, he'd come in at night. By the time he'd finished, I'd be in the foetal position on the floor, bleeding like hell, crying my eyes out.'

Ian doesn't know if any of the other boys were sexually abused. They didn't talk about it. 'A Welfare officer used to come, and there was a nurse, but no one owned up to anything. It was because of fear. I used to shake. I had no idea what to say.'

He says the fear has stayed with him nearly all his life. 'The stigma, the terror, the horror and nightmares, I'd wake up with scratches all down my face.'


Between the ages of 13 and 16, Ian absconded often from the boys' home. He lived on the streets without support and on a couple of occasions tried to

reconnect with his family. Each time however, his father's violence drove him out. At 16, Ian was admitted to a psychiatric facility where he reports being drugged and raped. Although he was seeing a psychiatrist every second day, Ian didn't feel like he could disclose the sexual abuse. Later, when he tried to report it, he was told the perpetrator had dementia and was too old.

Ian also went to the police to make a complaint against Blackett. He reports being told Blackett couldn't be prosecuted because two cases regarding him had already gone before the courts and 'the defendants fell apart'. Ian told them, 'Look at me. I'm not going to fall apart'. The matter wasn't taken any further.

Ian's had a lot of medical problems as a result of the sexual abuse he experienced, including needing multiple operations on his bowel to repair the physical damage. He has attempted suicide seven times and has experienced ongoing mental health issues that he likens to a soldier returning from war. He smokes heavily and describes himself as a functioning alcoholic.

Despite attaining an education only to the level of Grade 3, Ian built a successful multi-million dollar company which he runs with his son. He describes his wife of 32 years, Julie, as his rock. 'Everything changed because of Julie and my children and grandchildren.' He recognises the many ways he's been over-protective of them over the years, and says he was the one who enforced the rules. 'The bad cop to Julie's good cop.' He has told them about the abuse and is proud and



happy that he enjoys a good relationship with all his family. He's also grateful for his faith in God, which he says has saved his life.

Ian gave evidence at South Australia's Inquiry into Children in State Care. However, he's concerned that lasting changes still need to be made into the way child abuse is recognised and reported. He wants to see practical ways to increase understanding, and education started with children from pre-school age. He also wants to see a meaningful scheme of compensation. Most of all he wants the perpetrators held accountable. 'As victims we have to go over and over it again. In my case, for more than 50 years.'

# KEVIN

For nearly four decades, Kevin believed his mother had died giving birth to him in 1949. At a young age, he was sent to a Christian Brothers' boys' home in regional Victoria.

He told the Commissioner, 'From the age of 12, I got molested by Brother Lawrence three times a week for two years. I'm pretty sure other Brothers knew what was going on, because they seemed to facilitate his access to me'.

When a senior Brother directly asked Kevin if Brother Lawrence was molesting him, he confirmed he was and not long after, Kevin recalled Brother Lawrence being 'moved on'.

Kevin had just turned 15 in 1964 when he was placed in foster care. He was sent to live with foster parents and their 23 year old son, Stanley. He told the Commissioner that he believes the foster care arrangement was informal and unknown to the Victorian Social Welfare Department.

'I shared a bedroom with Stanley and he sexually abused me the whole time I was there. In three years no one came to check on my welfare. When I left, I didn't even know where my family was.'

In 1998, Kevin lodged a complaint about Brother Lawrence with the police.

'There were four other victims involved in a criminal prosecution against Lawrence, but he was found not guilty on all charges. Back in those days there was no DNA, there was nothing to prove that it happened. I can prove what happened. I have pain all the time

and I can't go to the toilet properly.'

Kevin told the Commissioner about feeling 'incomplete' on his wedding night.

'The system sent me to a paedophile, and by the time I left the orphanage, I didn't know what I was. Who gave them the right to take my innocence, to take my virginity? That was something I was given by God. I get married and my wife's a virgin, and here I am I've been raped by dogs. I couldn't perform, the abuse was always in the back of my head.'

Nearly three decades later, Kevin discovered his mother was alive, and had been living just 20 kilometres from his foster home, with his two older brothers and five younger sisters.

Kevin went to *Towards Healing* and to the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal, ultimately receiving \$75,000 in compensation. He said antidepressants are helping him to cope with life, and what he perceives as past regrets.

'I have two daughters and I don't know if I've been a good father to them. I haven't been able to do things with my children that I would like to have. People always ask me why I didn't run away. I did. I'd get to the front gate and stop because I had nowhere to go. My wife and I have been married for 44 years, very happily. My music's also helped me get through and I still have my church. You go outside and look up and you'll see the beauty in my church. Mine's built by the old man himself.'

# MARCELLE

Marcelle, a 60 year old teacher, fears there is a widespread community misconception that child abuse is rare or unusual these days. Marcelle was abused by her mother and step-father from a very young age and placed into foster care with the Warlow family in country Western Australia.

‘The Warlows were absolutely horrible. My foster mother was being paid to look after me, but she didn’t spend anything on me. They fed me tripe until it was coming out of my ears.’

Marcelle was moved to a nearby Catholic home in the mid-1960s. Marcelle recalls physical abuse being part of daily life in the convent.

‘The nuns were horrendous, especially to children like me who didn’t have parents visiting them. I got belted a lot. One day I was left covered in welts after being beaten with a wire coathanger for taking two apples instead of one.

I was all alone there with no one to protect me, and desperate for someone to come and see me. I thought all my Sundays had come at once when the Catholic Priest visited.’

The Priest was left alone with Marcelle on several occasions, where he would fondle the 14 year old’s breasts and make her touch him.

‘I was just shattered after that, and my self-esteem plummeted. It was a big deal for a priest to visit the home, because priests were like gods. I was filled with hope and excitement until I realised he wasn’t there to offer me solace. Of course I couldn’t tell the nuns because I would have been beaten for lying.’

In spite of her traumatic childhood, Marcelle managed to acquire two degrees and pursue a teaching career.

With counselling, Marcelle counts herself lucky for having forged what she sees as a good life, though the burden of childhood memories is never far from thought.

‘It took me five years to tell someone about the Priest molesting me, it was a very difficult thing to say but it was an important part of the healing process for me, which still continues now.’



# MARCUS

Marcus was born in 1985 in Queensland. His father died at an early age and his step-father was violent. When he was about 12, Marcus was placed in a foster home. He moved foster homes a number of times. Marcus was told that 'if this placement doesn't work out, you'll be sent to an institution because we've got nowhere else to send you' and 'it was a good place' for boys like him.

Marcus was sent to a De La Salle boys' institution in rural Queensland in the 1990s. There were cottages with live-in staff and about 12 boys in each cottage.

Marcus told the Commissioner he felt uncomfortable calling the staff 'Mum' and 'Dad' but that Brother Paul, the Director, seemed nice. He wasn't sure why the Brothers had to watch them as they lined up naked for a shower.

Marcus said that there was a lot of violence towards the younger boys from the older boys. He said that he was anally raped by a group of older boys on a number of occasions. The boys made sure that they were alone. They held him down and put a pillow over his head so he couldn't scream.

'I remember that it was really scary and I was really upset because I didn't want to be gay and I thought that that meant that I was gay and all this other stuff.'

Brother Jones approached Marcus after a beating and rubbed cream all over his bruises including his private parts. Marcus told the Commissioner he felt this was strange and didn't know whether this was right or wrong behaviour.

Marcus has struggled to have a normal life since the physical and sexual abuse at the institution. He has been in and out of prison and tried to kill himself a number of times.

Marcus told the Commissioner that he met Brother Paul sometime after the events and asked him why he had let this happen.

'He said it was hard because he had to run the place and, you know, some of the boys were naughty so they need tough discipline.'

He has had mixed feelings about accepting compensation from the Order.

'You know, - they wanted me to go to a counsellor and bill them for it - and I said, "Look, I don't want to be going and having ongoing - where I have to keep contacting you all the time. I want you out of my life. I don't want you in my life".'

# MARGARET

Margaret was 11 years old when she was placed with her brothers and sister in a Salvation Army children's home in Western Australia. She said it was common knowledge among the children that Captain Reid was sexually abusing boys and girls. 'Not only did he do it, but he set kids up to abuse each other. He'd tell them what to do, and then stand back and watch.'

Soon after her arrival at the home in 1968, Margaret was sharing a room with another girl when someone tried to get in the window. Margaret screamed, and Reid, the cottage supervisor, told her she was a 'dobber'. As punishment, he put Margaret in a large dumpster bin with the pig slops. When she still wouldn't keep quiet, he locked her in a boiler room. 'Then he set two boys on me and they did it. He also used my brother to do the same thing.'

Margaret told the Commissioner that Reid manipulated the children's behaviour until they were subservient to him. 'He made sure that everyone was sexually active in one way or another. He'd found the perfect place to be a puppeteer.' She didn't disclose the abuse to her school teachers or the welfare workers and psychologists who came to the home. 'He'd call me a "piece of trash" and make a lot of threats that I had to keep my mouth shut. The only person I would have told was the cook, but I didn't. I think my brother might have told her a bit about what was happening to him.'

The sexual and psychological abuse continued until Margaret left the home at 14. She said in the intervening three years she was always anxious

and her behaviour became that of a perfectionist. 'I became a straight A student at school and a faultless child in the home. I always did the best I could so I wouldn't get in trouble. People say to be aware of kids who are acting out, but sometimes it's the ones who are too well-behaved that are in trouble.'

In 2008, Margaret made application to the Western Australian Government's Redress Scheme, and three years later was awarded \$45,000 in compensation. She found the assessment process traumatic, particularly when a woman rang without warning and interviewed her for two and a half hours over the telephone. Margaret had wanted a support person to be available for the interview, however the woman said the call couldn't be deferred. 'They rang my brother when he was on the bus coming home from work and they wanted to do the interview with him there and then. He hung up the phone.'

Margaret had spoken with her children in general terms about growing up in the home, but said they probably only recognised the full impact of her experience when the Australian Government made a formal apology to the Forgotten Australians in 2009. 'The Prime Minister said that it had affected not only the ones who were in the homes, but their children and grandchildren as well. They heard that and said, "He's talking to us". It had affected them, of course it had, and I think they really only realised the extent when they heard that. It was only two sentences, but it meant so much to them.'

# NELLY

Despite her mother's pleas to keep her daughter, Nelly was removed from her home after her father died in 1964.

'I would have been about seven. Mum told the female missionary that she would look after me, send me to school, feed me, wash me. She said it fell on deaf ears.'

Nelly was placed in a South Australian cottage home staffed by Doug and Nancy Drake who were employed by the United Aborigines Mission, where, she recalled, their teenaged son sexually abused her from the age of about 10 until she left the home two years later.

She told the Commissioner, 'He would stealthily come into our room in the pitch of darkness, there'd be three or four other girls in the room. I believe it would happen to them too.'

Fear of physical punishment prevented Nelly from reporting the assaults, though she remembered trying to protect others in the home from both physical and sexual abuse.

'Not having your family there, no one to turn to and no one to tell, that made it hard. We were too scared to talk to each other, frightened. We were belted on a daily basis as it was, the foster parents took physical abuse to a whole new level. I'm pretty sure they knew what that young fella was up to.'

At 12, Nelly was sent to another children's home run by the United Aborigines Mission before moving on to another institution a year later.

When she was 18, Nelly worked and paid board to stay at a hostel where the Drake family had been relocated.


'The building was owned by the Save the Children Fund, a lot of children were placed there. I didn't have anywhere else to go, that's the effect of being removed, I was alienated from my community. My younger sister was about 11, and one day she came and told me she'd been raped by the Drakes's son. I'd also see sexual behaviour in that children's home, pretend sex, and Nancy Drake would be there laughing at it.'

**'In my own personal journey, I've become more determined that I don't want to see this happen to anybody else, ever.'**

Nelly said the childhood abuse she and her sister suffered has sorely impacted them both in different ways throughout their lives.

'In terms of relationships, I lack trust in men and women, I'm always on guard. My ex-partner sexually abused me, and my sister's husband did the same to her too. I don't believe in God, I'm developing my own concept of a higher power from a cultural perspective.'

After being removed from her family,



Nelly never saw some of her family members again, and she described to the Commissioner the pain of losing her Indigenous family connections, and particularly the lost relationship with her grandmother.

Nelly provided evidence to the Mullighan Inquiry and received \$10,000 after legal costs from the South Australian Government.

Today she continues to rely heavily on a psychologist for support, having been in therapy for more than a decade.

‘The pain doesn’t go away, I don’t sleep well, I’m on anti-depressant medication. I find it difficult to talk to family about it because they’ve experienced their own hardship and have their own stories. In my own personal journey, I’ve become more determined that I don’t want to see this happen to anybody else, ever.’

# NIKOLAI

When Nikolai's mother was hospitalised in 1956, he and his sister were sent from Malta to Australia to start new lives.

'My father was dead, so we came here to live in Victoria with our older brother when I was 14. About a year later I went into a Christian Brothers boys' home where I was physically and sexually abused by Brother Lucien and another Brother. My mother died while I was in there.'

Nikolai recalled he was 'busting' to report the abuse, and took the first opportunity that arose when he was released in 1959 at the age of 17.

'All I wanted to do was just tell my story, and what happened to the other boys. I went to a priest and he said they'd look into it, and when I asked if I should see the police, he said to wait until he'd done his enquiries. I went back to them frequently and was always told it was ongoing. Then I went away with my job, and never went back.'

Through family friends, Nikolai was devastated when he later learnt that two friends he knew from the boys' home had committed suicide.

'I know they were abused by the same Brothers as me, I'd spoken to one of them about it, he was a very good friend of mine. He was a terrific sportsman, someone I admired ... It got that bad when I found out the two of them were dead, I tried to commit suicide myself.'

In 2001, Nikolai contacted *Towards Healing* to report the abuse, and remembered being told none of the

records belonging to him or his friends could be found.


'I met with *Towards Healing*, I had to tell my story to a woman, it was very, very hard. I wanted to face Brother Lucien and get an apology from him. They said they'd interview him, but later sent me a letter saying he'd denied the abuse, and that he was sick and didn't want to speak to me or anyone from *Towards Healing* again.'

'I want justice, and I want it recognised that it did happen. And now that it's all come out, I will seek compensation for what they've done.'

No compensation was offered, but Nikolai was offered counselling sessions to help him deal with his grief.

'I had a good friend I could talk to at that time who was a counsellor, so I didn't go on with their offer. They didn't want to pay me and I never pushed it.'

Over the years Nikolai said he's taken tablets to ease bouts of depression, and said he's found intimacy difficult within his 52 year marriage. 'We have two girls born 20 years apart. I regarded sex as a bad thing, so that's why there's the gap. I've told my wife



a bit about it, but I don't want my daughters to know, I don't want them to suffer.'

The impact of his childhood abuse continues to affect Nikolai.

'It's very hard to explain what goes through your head and how hard it is to forget these things that have happened to you and how hard it is to go to sleep. You lay there for hours and hours and all you want to do is just sleep, and you can't. My sister always made sure I went to Church every Sunday. I tried, but I couldn't look at a priest.'

Though it's likely Brother Lucien is now deceased, Nikolai said it's important his story is heard and believed.'

'I want justice, and I want it recognised that it did happen. And now that it's all come out, I will seek compensation for what they've done.'

# RUBY

It was the 1960s. Ruby was 13 years old and she was sent to a girls' home in Sydney. She was sent there because she had been before the Children's Court which found her to be uncontrollable and exposed to moral danger.

Ruby told the Commissioner that during the two years or so that she was at the home, she was sexually abused by three male staff members. She said that Mr Smith regularly abused her in the showers and in a room called the 'donkey room'. In that room, as punishment, she had to shovel coal into the stove which heated water for the home. 'He had got me there and I would sing out, trying to run away from him, and the words that ... he said, "You're a good little girl [Ruby]. You're a good little girl. Keep your eyes closed, nobody will see us". And he'd come down and say, "And nobody will believe you. Nobody will believe you because you're the bad girl here". And that confused me, it really did. One minute I'm a good girl; another minute I'm a bad girl ... What am I? Cry, cry, cry for my mummy and my daddy ... they never heard me.'

Another male attendant raped her. Afterwards, he took her upstairs to

isolation for punishment. She stayed there bleeding, with just a mattress and a bucket. She said he told a female officer that she 'has her period'.

'She just looked at me and went and got me the pads, that was all, washed me, all the blood then gave me some bread and water for dinner, which was nice, anyway, something to eat. And then just being locked in that room for 24 hours, using the bucket as a toilet and watching, thinking, looking out the window, all I could see was the old avocado tree outside.'

Ruby told the Commissioner that 'Mr Fingers', the staff doctor, examined all the 250 to 300 girls at the home. He regularly examined their vaginas and she is positive that this was sexual abuse and not medically required.

Ruby has been very active in organising a reunion of girls who were at the home around the same time as her and has been saddened by the fact that many have died and many, like her, are being treated for severe anxiety and depression arising from the trauma they suffered at the home. She is now planning to have a book written about her experiences.

# SCOTT

When Scott was growing up in Western Australia, it was common for children from country areas to board in towns at state-run hostels, adjacent to the schools. Harold Fletcher was warden at the hostel where Scott was accommodated and over three decades, sexually abused many boys and girls, including 12 year old Scott.

Scott told the Commissioner that Fletcher's brother and sister-in-law also worked at the hostel, and as a former Citizen of the Year, Fletcher was held in high regard by the community. 'He controlled the town, he was that powerful. To anyone over 20, he probably looked like the nicest man in the world. There was no-one to tell about the abuse, and they wouldn't have believed you if you did.'

Within a few weeks of Scott's arrival in 1978, the hostel residents went on a camping trip. Fletcher shared a tent with Scott and during the night started fondling him. 'I didn't know what to do. I already knew that to be accepted, you didn't make waves. If you did, you'd get isolated, and then you were gone.' Over the next year, Fletcher regularly came to Scott's bed at night and tapped him on the foot. 'That meant you had to go to his room, and that's where he'd rape you. I couldn't go to school one day, because of what he'd done the night before. He said, "Your brother's coming soon, isn't he?" I felt so terrible that I couldn't protect my brother.'

Scott told the Commissioner that Fletcher abused many boys in his dormitory, though none of them ever spoke about it. He said Fletcher stopped abusing him after about two

years. 'Once you were a bit older, you didn't get the tap on the foot anymore. He'd move on to the younger ones.'


In 2011, Scott learned that charges of child sexual assault had been brought against Fletcher by several past residents of the hostel. 'I was listening to the radio at work and when I heard it, I broke down. I thought I've got to fix this. It was eating me away, but I had kids and was paying a mortgage and working, and there was so much going on that I'd never had time to think about it.' Scott called the lawyer involved in the case and disclosed that he'd also been abused. More victims came forward and in 2013, Fletcher's existing jail sentence was extended to a total of 22 years. 'He pleaded guilty after lots of bargaining. I had to drop this charge and that, but there were six of us by then. And I couldn't bargain with what had happened to me.'

**'It damages something that's your core. It's what you are.'**

Scott's wife told him that learning about the abuse made clear to her a lot of his past behaviour. He'd never felt comfortable touching or hugging his children and was still hesitant about showing affection to his grandson. 'It damages something that's your core. It's what you are.'

In 2012, the Western Australian Government announced a limited





redress scheme for people who had been abused as children in hostels. Scott applied for and was awarded the maximum compensation amount of \$45,000. He was disappointed that the scheme tended towards a bureaucratic process and that all types of abuse seemed to be given equal weight.

Scott told the Commissioner that he was glad the court case and negotiations with the Government were finalised, but continued to struggle with strong emerging feelings related to the abuse. 'I feel angrier now than I did before. Why did all those people who knew what Fletcher was doing keep protecting him? It was like going against the king. I hope that it wouldn't happen like that anymore, but in small towns it's hard. You need to make sure there's someone for kids to tell about what's going on.'

# SIDNEY

Sidney was born in 1934. When he was six years old, during World War II, he was placed in a Presbyterian children's home in Western Australia. It was a rural property and the children had to work on the farm and in the vegetable garden. There was very little schooling for the children.

Sidney said he endured severe physical and psychological abuse from the Matron and several other staff members. He told the Commissioner that he remembers being taunted by the staff for being the son of a prostitute.

There were about 40 children in the home, including the children of some of the staff. The son of the House Father was a powerfully built boy and one day he chased Sidney into the creek and was holding his head under the water. In self-defence, Sidney bit a chunk out of his hand or finger. This led to the boy's father beating Sidney with a belt buckle. Sidney was unable to walk for months and now suffers from a permanent back injury. No medical treatment was arranged for Sidney at the time.

Sidney told the Commissioner that he was sexually assaulted by one of the farm workers. Sidney believes that this worker had a cognitive impairment. It was Sidney's job to feed the old mare with oats and chaff and the chooks with bran in the morning. One day, when Sidney was on the ground, the farm worker came up behind him,

pulled Sidney's shorts off and raped him after smothering his backside with the mutton fat kept in the barn. Sidney was severely physically damaged, and again, no medical treatment was arranged at the time. No boy was safe from this man and every time a boy reported him, the boy was thrashed. Sidney said the staff actually saw the abuse as a form of punishment for misbehaving. Eventually, one of the older boys told his parents and reported it to the Church and the man disappeared in 1942.

It was a struggle for Sidney after he left the home in 1945, with his back injury and very little schooling. He was basically illiterate but managed to find ways to work and learn over the years and became an inventor, holding a number of national and international patents. He said that keeping busy had helped him to cope over the years.

Sidney told the Commissioner that up until five years ago, at the age of 75, he hadn't told anybody about the abuse. He said, 'I never wanted to talk about it because I was always embarrassed ... if you said you'd been raped, they'd go "Oh, you're a poofter".' At 75 he disclosed to his wife who has been very supportive, her own father having had an abusive childhood.

Sidney received a payment of \$45,000 from the Western Australian Redress Scheme. He has not sought compensation from the Presbyterian Church.

# STAN

After being relinquished by his mother at the age of two, Stan had been placed in several orphanages before arriving at the Christian Brothers' orphanage in Victoria. Brother Benton came to the orphanage in 1953, and not long after his arrival he started sexually abusing 12 year old Stan. 'It's taken me 59 years to get to the stage of being able to talk like this', Stan said. 'When I got out, I never told anyone I went to that school. I was so ashamed.'

Stan said he was sexually abused by Benton three times a week for more than two years. He told the Commissioner he didn't talk about it with other boys at the time, but was now aware that Benton was abusing others. Stan knew of two boys who later committed suicide.

One day, during a drive, Benton pulled the car over and started to touch and fondle Stan, who burst into tears. Benton stopped, but sometime later made Stan come to his room, undress and perform oral sex on him. 'I couldn't tell anyone. I can't explain why - the main feeling was being ashamed, plus there was no one to tell.' Benton told Stan that he was 'loving him like a father'. He bought him a watch and gave him money and cigarettes.

Stan met his wife, Kerry, in 1961 and they married soon after. He continued to have contact with Benton because 'I wanted to make out that everything was fine, that nothing went on with us at all'. When Benton came to their home to see the couple's new baby, Stan implored his wife not to leave Benton alone with their son. Kerry thought Stan's behaviour odd, but he didn't tell her about the abuse for another 20 years. Stan said, 'I came out of that place wanting love and I found Kerry. I didn't want to lose her'. Kerry

said that knowing the truth of what Stan had gone through had been difficult, but had ultimately made them closer.

In 2006, Stan discovered that his mother had died eighteen months earlier. They'd had little contact in the intervening years, but Stan said her death 'triggered something and I went to my doctor'. Stan disclosed the abuse and was referred to a psychologist. He was also given legal advice and it was recommended that he get in contact with the Catholic Church's *Towards Healing* program.

A senior staff member of *Towards Healing* visited Stan at home to assess his story. Stan asked if he'd heard of Benton abusing boys and the staff member said he had. 'It was a huge relief off my shoulders.' Stan asked if he wanted to know what happened with Benton. 'He said no and offered me \$20,000.' A law firm working with Stan sought \$50,000 but the Church wouldn't agree. The matter continued until 2010, when it was settled with a payment to Stan of \$210,000, which included \$30,000 for legal fees. 'I wasn't looking for payment of that type. I was wanting something that would let me say, yes, it's finalised and acknowledged. What happens to you as a young boy, that stays with you. It doesn't matter what compensation you get.' Persistence from Stan's son also resulted in Stan receiving a letter of apology from the Catholic Church.

Stan told the Commissioner that he was looking forward to his 52nd wedding anniversary. He's close to his three children and looking forward to the wedding of one of his grandchildren. 'I don't have any trouble showing love with my family, because that's what I always wanted. Badly.'

# TERRY

Terry told the Commissioner that he believes that his younger brother Tom committed suicide about 12 years ago because of the sexual abuse they both suffered in the 1950s in a Christian Brothers' home in Western Australia.

After his parents separated, Terry's mother began another relationship and surrendered her three boys to the care of the Christian Brothers. Terry was about five and his two brothers were younger. At the home Terry says he was repeatedly subjected to various forms of sexual abuse by Brother Yannick, including oral sex and rape. Brother Yannick was also abusing Tom. Terry and Tom made a pact never to tell anyone about the abuse they suffered.

After about a year, Terry told another Brother about Brother Yannick's abuse and was sent to another Christian Brothers' home and separated from his brothers. At this home, Brother Hamish abused him and whilst fondling him would tell him stories about boys who had died in mysterious circumstances at the home. Terry believed these stories were threats and he was flogged if he did not submit to Brother Hamish.

Some time later, Tom joined Terry and Terry saw him being physically punished by being put in a cage and having sticks poked at him and being kicked. Terry said that he didn't think anyone would believe that this happened until he heard that Salvation Army officers did the same thing to boys in their care. Terry said that he was required to work in the dairy and fields and spent little time in the classroom.

When Terry left the home at sixteen, he could barely read and write and was constantly in trouble, unable to hold down a job for any length of time until he met and married his wife. Before that he said 'I didn't know whether I was AC or DC, you know, gay - I had doubts'.

His wife helped him with reading and writing and, at 21, he got his truck licence. He has gone on to have a family and build up a business and owns a road train. He said that the hardest thing for him has been to trust other people.

Terry sought advice about getting compensation, especially for unpaid wages for the work he did on the farm while he was at the Christian Brothers' home. He was told that he would not be successful getting any compensation for unpaid work.

Terry later went through the *Towards Healing* process and met with the Christian Brothers. He did not have independent legal advice. Terry believed that the brothers were not interested in *Towards Healing*. He told the Commissioner that, 'this Brother says to me, "Oh well, we haven't heard anything about Brother Hamish, anything like that". He said, "It doesn't matter anyway, he's dead".'

Terry received \$37,500 for the physical and sexual abuse and for unpaid wages and a written apology under *Towards Healing* once he had signed a deed of release. He also received compensation from Redress Western Australia.

# LETTING GO. 1989

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At times I'm struggling to be free

I want to be at peace

Yet how?

I feel so unworthy and so unclean.

Yet I know I have so much to share ...

And so much to give ...

Why can't I let go of the past?

I sure as hell want to!

Maybe I'm not ready to let go ...

Just yet,

Until I face everything head on.

Maybe then ...

I can live my life in peace ...

Trust and love in myself ...

Trust and love in you ...

Trust and love in others ...

Help me please;

Don't abandon me!

# THOMAS

From three weeks of age, Thomas said he was labelled a 'bastard', made a ward of the state and placed in a Catholic orphanage. When he turned 10 in 1949, he recalled being sent to a St John of God institution for intellectually disabled boys in New South Wales. The nuns sent him there because they believed he was 'slow'. Later in life it was found that his early learning difficulties were due to his limited hearing.

On arrival at the place, 'I was told I was too smart for school so sent to work there seven days a week milking cows, polishing floors and cutting timber. I had to look after a boy. He was what they called one of the 'specials', he was severely handicapped, they had a lot of them there. I had to bath him, feed him. He'd come around with me on my chores.'

For six years, Thomas told the Commissioner, he was sexually abused by at least five of the Brothers there. He received no further education.

'I remember going to the outside toilet one night, was coming back in and one of the Brothers grabbed me and took me back to the toilet. He sat me on his lap and started to masturbate me. They were the house devil and the street angel, the public saw them as wonderful people but they were all evil and sick. They'd often dress us up as girls, it seemed to turn them on.'

In an attempt to protect themselves, Thomas recalled boys being beaten with broomsticks for bricking up windows to stop Brothers from climbing through.

Fearing they wouldn't be believed by police 'who were all Catholics', Thomas said he and others didn't report the abuse.

'The boys said, don't say anything about it cos in those days nobody would believe you. In those days you'd got to learn to respect your authorities otherwise you'd get the old steel-nosed boot right where it's going to hurt you. People would look down at you more so, so you had to keep that within your own self.'

At 16 Thomas was sent to work in Sydney, and once there, rang St Mary's Cathedral to report the abuse.

'I'll do anything to get this out in the arena, so it can never be repeated again. I'm 74 and still having nightmares over it. Even when they gave the money, there was no admission. That's the sad part I think.'

'It was the first thing I wanted to do because I still had a lot of bitter inside me, hatred you know. I got the cold turkey off them twice.'

Thomas said he turned to running seven days a week as a way of 'escaping' and married at 23.

'I met an angel in finding Grace. The amount of boys that ended up committing suicide, I'd have finished up like them if it wasn't for her. I always managed to get jobs, but could never keep them. I had to fill out paperwork and I'd say I left my glasses outside in the car, then give it to Grace and she'd fill it out for me, and that was the only way I could bluff my way through all those jobs.'

Thomas feels the abuse robbed him of his basic rights, and commenced a civil action with two other men in 1996.

'I went to my local Church and spoke to someone who knew the men who

abused me, and he said "Oh no no no, I know these Brothers too well, they wouldn't do that". Complete denial. There were pictures of the men who'd raped me on the walls in the room.'

Before the case went to court, Thomas said the Church settled and each of the men received \$50,000.

'The system we have now is not going to stop people from getting through the loophole. I'll do anything to get this out in the arena, so it can never be repeated again. I'm 74 and still having nightmares over it. Even when they gave the money, there was no admission. That's the sad part I think.'

# TINA

From as far back as she can remember, Tina recalled that the cottage father would make her perform oral sex on him at 'every opportunity'.

Tina told the Commissioner, 'Often he'd deliberately get me in trouble so I'd be punished and have to stay home with him by myself while the other children went out with his wife. So what he wanted, he was able to get. I couldn't tell you how many times that happened. There was a heater in their bedroom and he'd hold me up against it by my throat telling me if I told anybody, he would kill me.'

Tina was three when she and her four sisters became wards of the state in 1974 and were placed in a family group home operated by a non-denominational organisation in Melbourne. She said they all suffered sexual abuse while cared for by cottage parents, Neville and Lorraine.

'One time after Neville finished with me he said, "Alright, you can go and get your sister now". I don't recall having any emotion, it was just something you had to do.'

Tina was about 12 when one of her sisters told a friend they were being abused, which led to all five girls being taken to the police station and interviewed.

'Word got back to the Church where Neville was very high up and the ball went rolling from there. After the police, we were taken somewhere into the city and medically examined. Then we were taken back to the same home, but had different cottage parents.

Everything went on as though nothing had happened, and it didn't help that the community thought we were lying.'

Years on, Tina was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

'People should look at a child's behaviour, apparently I played up a lot when I was young, it has to mean something. Nobody can understand the feeling of shame, of self-hatred. I didn't know what was wrong with me until years down the track. Children just want to feel safe.'

'Everything had just caught up with me, the memories and the nightmares. I had severe panic attacks, I wasn't coping too well. I'd end up in bed for a week or two and couldn't look after my family.'

'I used to walk around looking over my shoulder. If I saw someone who looked like him, I'd get a bit iffy. It was an absolute godsend when we found out he had passed, I felt I didn't have to



look over my shoulder anymore. But I'm still very over-protective of my children because I know what's out there.'

With a history of being a ward of the state and sexually abused, Tina said she's been denied the opportunity to work with or care for children.

'I was actually informed I wasn't allowed to be a foster carer, I wasn't allowed to work with children, because I was abused and could become an abuser. Neither situation was my fault, but yet I was being punished. That stigma has affected my life unbelievably. That stigma, it's stuck, that's what angers me the most.'

In a bid to distance herself from her past, Tina took the drastic step of changing her name by deed poll but still found herself being judged by the community.

'I couldn't talk to anyone about it because as soon as people would hear that I'd been abused or that I'd been in care, no one would have anything to do with me. I became good friends with a parent at my son's school and thought I could trust her, but when I confided in her, she never spoke to me after that except to say stay away from her children.'

Tina is disappointed that nobody was forced to take responsibility for her sexual abuse, and that she never received an apology.

'People should look at a child's behaviour, apparently I played up a lot when I was young, it has to mean something. Nobody can understand the feeling of shame, of self-hatred. I didn't know what was wrong with me until years down the track. Children just want to feel safe.'

At four years of age, Vito was the youngest in his family as they sailed in 1965 from Italy to Australia to start a new life.

The family settled in Melbourne, and Vito said his name and large lunches always meant trouble at school. He was called 'wog' and 'dago', and was physically bullied by the other children. By the time he was 10, Vito and several other Italian boys were regularly wagging school. Already known to police for truancy, one day Vito was caught stealing a bicycle. After a brief court appearance, he was made a ward of the Victorian State and sent to a Christian Brothers' orphanage.

For four years from 1971, Vito remained at the orphanage, visiting his family on weekends and for school holidays. He told the Commissioner that his academic work improved and he excelled at football, becoming team captain and winning numerous trophies. He joined the choir and became an altar boy - progress Vito attributed to a Brother who he described as a good and fair man.

In 1974, a seminarian, John Upton, visited the school and soon took an interest in Vito, befriending him and his parents. Upton visited the family home often. 'Mum would say, "The Priest has been around, and he said you're doing really well at school". She was happy, because a priest taking an interest in her boy was everything.'

When he was 13, Vito was taken with several other boys by Upton to stay at a house on the coast. Upton offered to give Vito a driving lesson and drove

him to nearby sand dunes, where he gave the boy cigarettes and beer, and started touching him. 'He put his hand up my shorts, and started playing with

'Not once in the mediation did the Church mention God. They didn't ever try to understand the effects of the abuse on my life. I've got fantastic kids, but I lost my marriage, I tried to take my life twice, I haven't got a job. It was like they wanted to make sure you knew they were the superior people in this. They're very well organised.'

my penis', Vito said. 'Then he went down on me. I was dumb-founded. I'd finished the bottle of beer, so I was pretty drunk. Then he ejaculated and cleaned himself up.'

For the next year, Upton turned up at places to see Vito. 'I'd be at the

pinball parlour, and he'd park his car across the road. I'd go over to him and he'd give me money and cigarettes and take me for a drive. I didn't know what to do, you know, to stop it.' Vito said that one night he was offered five dollars to perform oral sex on Upton. 'I vomited all over him. I said I wanted to go home. He tried to put his hand between my legs and I punched him in the face.' Vito stopped contact with Upton, although for the next year, the seminarian 'stalked' him.

In the 1990s, Vito saw a television show referring to sexual abuse at his school. 'My jaw hit the ground. That's when it all just flooded back.' In 2002, he approached the Church and commenced the *Towards Healing* process. 'The investigation was meant to take three months, and it took three years. I couldn't understand why I had

to keep repeating the story to so many different people.'

Vito attended a mediation session in 2005, but said he thought the Church's offer of \$35,000 to settle his claim was 'insulting'. In 2010, he was awarded \$42,000 which represented the initial offer plus eight years interest. Vito also sought and received \$10,000 each from Christian Brothers Australia and the Victorian State Government.

'Not once in the mediation did the Church mention God,' Vito said. 'They didn't ever try to understand the effects of the abuse on my life. I've got fantastic kids, but I lost my marriage, I tried to take my life twice, I haven't got a job. It was like they wanted to make sure you knew they were the superior people in this. They're very well organised.'

# YVONNE

Following years of neglect by their parents, Yvonne and her five siblings were declared wards of the state in 1973 and placed in a Victorian State Government home. Yvonne was five.

The following year, the five sisters were separated from their brother, and sent to live in a cottage home run by a charitable organisation. The cottage parents were Ronald and Mary.

Yvonne told the Commissioner, 'Ronald would abuse us daily, but it took a while for each of us to work out it was happening to the others. I remember we'd all be outside playing, and he'd just point at which one he wanted. He'd pick the bathroom lock, so when you pulled back the curtain he'd be standing there waiting for you. One of my sisters hung chimes and things down her doorframe, so she'd know he was coming.'

When the girls hit puberty, Yvonne recalled Ronald telling them that if they got pregnant, they should say the father was a boy from their school. For five years the girls kept the sexual abuse to themselves, frightened of what might happen if they told someone.

'He'd say if we said anything, he'd kill us or we'd get separated. We used to have these welfare meetings with a social worker, and we'd all just pretend we were happy, we'd lie.'

Eventually, one of Yvonne's older sisters revealed details of the sexual abuse to her school-friend's mother, who reported it to the Pastor at the local Uniting Church.

'This Pastor told police and we had to go down to the station where we were put in separate rooms. We sat there for more than six hours, and none of us knew why we were there. The police interview felt like an interrogation, I got the feeling they thought we were lying. Then they took us for internal examinations.'

Yvonne said after being interviewed by police, Ronald and Mary left and new cottage parents replaced them.

'Nobody ever spoke to us about the abuse again, it was just "go back to school, forget it happened". We should have been protected, but we weren't.'

At 15, Yvonne gained permission to live with her older sister and her sister's girlfriend, and at 17 she entered into a relationship with a 35 year old woman.


'I'd never touched drugs until then. Never drank, started drinking. Had me first snort.'

When the relationship broke up, Yvonne met and stayed with a woman called Peggy for eight years.

'Peggy was a big druggo and we did a lot of drugs. She was shooting up and I was doing that too. I didn't want to be gay, but I didn't like men. Then one day when I was 26, I just stopped everything, I couldn't take it anymore.'

Yvonne described being unable to face intimacy without alcohol, and the financial struggle she's faced since leaving care and bringing up children.

'I don't remember getting anything



when I left care, nobody cared once you were finished there. We've gone without to feed our kids. All our life we've been looked at like shit. Many of our records are missing. There should be more information about sexual abuse in the community, so people know it can happen.' Yvonne has received \$5,000 from the Victorian Government.









# FOSTER CARE

**Names have been changed**

The real names of individuals have not been used. The names of all individuals and any other identifying features have been changed.

# CRYSTAL

Crystal told the Commissioner that between them, her drug-addicted parents had produced 23 children to various partners. In 1996, newborn Crystal and her 11 month old sister were placed with foster parents Nancy and Geoff. For their first three years in care, the sisters appeared to develop a close bond with their foster parents, who they affectionately called Nan and Pop. But Crystal's memories of those early years in the late 1990s are peppered with disturbing scenes.

'I remember clear as day I was about three and Pop grabbed me, put me in a chair in the kitchen, tied me up and put duct tape over my mouth. He did a few weird things to me, then we went into the bedroom where I watched him sexually abuse my Nan. At the time I didn't know what was happening, but it's all clicked into place as I've gotten older and it's obvious he'd drugged her so she was completely helpless.'

'I think we must have said something to Nan, but I can't remember what. Next thing we knew we were being questioned by police, and every time we said anything about what Pop had done to us they'd just say, "Nah, that can't be right he's your Pop, he loves you", we felt very scared and confused.'

In 2000, Crystal told the Commissioner, an argument between her foster parents one night resulted in Nancy taking out an apprehended violence order against Geoff and leaving with the two girls, who were then around four and five years old.

'We moved interstate and Pop came looking for us so we had to move a

couple more times to get away from him. Years later Nan told me he'd burnt all of our stuff - our photos, everything. We each left with a suitcase of clothes, and that was it.'

The sisters remained with Nancy, and rarely talked of their earlier abuse.

'My sister was affected very badly, and still refuses to talk to me about what happened. I tend to package the bad memories up into a box, and put that somewhere in the back of my mind so I can get on with things, but it's always there.'

Returning to the Queensland town where she lived as a young child is difficult.

'Every time I go there these thoughts creep into my head and they make me want to die, but I won't kill myself because then my foster father would get away with it scot-free and I'd like to see him punished for what he did to us. It doesn't seem fair he's been walking around free for 13 years while we carry those memories around with us every day.'

Crystal said that with the help of counselling she's feeling positive about her future and plans to report her abuse to police in the hope that Geoff will be held accountable for his actions.

'I'm keen to move on with my life. I've just finished my hairdressing studies so am about to start working, which I'm really looking forward to. All I really want now is for the police to take me seriously and for Geoff to be taken off the streets, so he never has the chance to hurt other kids like he hurt my sister and I.'

# GLENN

The Catholic boys' home where Glenn lived as a ward of the state offered him little by way of protection from his peers. It was the second institution he'd been placed in since leaving his grandparents' home in 1969 at the age of four.

'My mother had me at 16 and my little sister came 18 months later. She couldn't cope, she went out one day and never came back, so our grandparents looked after us. The day after my fourth birthday, my grandma had a heart attack and died at 54 years of age. My granddad was pretty unwell and couldn't keep us, so my sister was adopted out and I somehow ended up in boys' homes.'

Glenn told the Commissioner he was one of many children routinely gang-raped by older boys as a 'rite of passage' into teen-hood, while living at the home in regional New South Wales in 1978.

'I was about nine when it started, they'd get us in the shower blocks every chance they could. When I turned 15 I was encouraged to abuse the younger boys, but I was never involved willingly.'

Weekends and holidays provided some respite from the cold and abusive environment for Glenn, when he was allowed to stay with a local foster family.

'The Swans were Baptists, and very strict. They didn't encourage any crying or show any of us physical affection, but they were generally good to me. They had four boys of their own and I remember it being a very masculine environment.'

'Charles was Glenn's foster uncle, and was close to the Swan family.

'We'd often go around to Uncle Charles' place for a swim in his pool, and he'd get me alone in there and we'd play games where I had to touch his erection. I was about eight or nine when that started happening. Sometimes he'd take me to a bedroom in the house to fondle me.'

'A kid doesn't understand what those feelings are or that what someone's doing is wrong or illegal. I thought he was showing me love, but instead he stole my innocence.'

Glenn said the sexual abuse was carried on within metres of family members, including Charles' wife and two children, but that he was too scared to tell his foster parents at the time.

'I was worried that if I spoke up, I'd be kicked out and the thought of returning to the boys' home was horrible. My foster father was very close to his brother and I felt he would easily choose Charles' word over mine.'

As as a teenager Glenn began 'sexually experimenting' with an older foster

brother at which point he realised he was homosexual.

‘The Swans were very religious and very homophobic and when they found out what we were doing I got blamed for bringing shame onto the family because I was gay and I’d introduced their son to homosexual behaviour. I later found out he was doing things with other boys too, so it wasn’t my fault. Things were still happening with Uncle Charles, and as an adult I made a conscious decision to keep going with him. If I wanted to go out clubbing, I’d just go to his house and do what he wanted me to do, then he’d give me money to go out. I guess it was a form of prostitution.’

When Glenn was about 40 he told his foster father about the abuse by Charles during a heated argument.

‘I was so angry, I even described Charles’ penis to a tee. He basically accused me of making up bullshit, and that’s the last conversation I’ve had with my [foster] father, I haven’t seen him or my [foster] Mum in a decade.’

Glenn expressed regret for having missed key celebrations with the Swan family since the argument.

‘I don’t get invited to weddings or birthdays, I’ve missed seeing my nieces and nephews grow up and my parents’ 50th wedding anniversary. My foster brothers have been told the relationship with Uncle Charles started when I was an adult so I feel my parents are ignoring the truth to protect him, and that hurts.’

Glenn said his abusive childhood has made it almost impossible to form a stable relationship.

‘I’ve been on my own for 20 years, I always feel like people are trying to put one over me and I don’t trust anyone. The Swans were the only parents I ever knew, and they’ve completely disowned me. It’s not right, and I intend to make a report to police because this man needs to be held responsible. A kid doesn’t understand what those feelings are or that what someone’s doing is wrong or illegal. I thought he was showing me love, but instead he stole my innocence.’

'I'm 85 and I never told anyone about this before.'

Joyce still doesn't understand why she and her younger brother and sister were removed from the family home in 1942. 'The court said it was because of morals. The only thing I can think is because my older sisters were dating servicemen. But there was nothing wrong going on and the men never stayed in the house. Our Mum always looked after us.'

The court order placed Joyce, then aged 14, and her siblings in a state children's home. After a few months Joyce was placed with a foster family in Brisbane, from where she went to work in a clothing factory each day. They were among many families who welcomed servicemen into their homes, providing short term accommodation for them during the War.

Joyce said she came out of work one day to find one of the servicemen waiting for her with the offer to walk her home. 'I thought, that's nice, someone looking after me.' They had walked a short distance when the man forced Joyce down a dirt track and raped her. That night, he came into her bedroom and raped her again. Joyce said she didn't tell anyone because she didn't know how to nor what she would say. 'The next morning he was gone, and none of them could work out why.'

Joyce told the Commission that she asked to be moved back to the children's home, but was sent to a Salvation Army girls' home instead. She said her first sight of the building was frightening. 'When I looked up I


saw this big place with bars on the windows. I didn't know where I was going, because no one had told me. It was a terrible place.'

Life in the home consisted of six days' work in the washing and ironing rooms. Sunday morning was Church and on Sunday afternoon the girls were given a couple of boiled lollies and the afternoon off. 'I was on my feet non-stop for three years. When I had my teeth out, I thought I might get the afternoon off, but it was straight back to work.'

Joyce and other girls ran away from the home many times over the years, but they were always brought back. A Salvation Army document recorded that she'd absconded six times, but Joyce thought the number was higher than that. When a girl was brought back after running away, she'd be locked by herself in an exposed wire cage for 10 to 14 days. 'The other thing they did if you'd been gone overnight was send you to the clinic, and you had to be examined inside. I don't know what that was for. It frightened the life out of me.'

The only visitors to the home were Salvation Army officers. 'You couldn't talk to them, because they were part of it. I had no one to complain to.' Joyce said she'd tried to tell the police about conditions at the home. 'I remember them saying, "You poor little buggers. We'll take you the long way back". Then when they'd pull up at the Home, they'd say, "Here they are, they just need a good belting".'

Joyce left the home in 1946, aged 18.



She had trouble reuniting with her family. 'We were all strangers. I think my mother died of a broken heart. I'm just getting together with my sisters and brother now, at our age.' Joyce married and had five children, and has many grandchildren of whom she's proud. She said she can't believe it's 70 years since she was removed from her mother. 'I've got no bad memories of my home. I'm still mystified as to why they took us.'

# KIRSTY

Kirsty was born in 1964. She grew up on an Aboriginal mission in New South Wales. Her family was violent and when she was six or seven, she and her brothers and sisters were put into foster care with a non-Aboriginal family. She remained there from 1971 to 1973.

Kirsty remembers her foster father coming into her room at night-time whilst she lay on the top bunk, locking the door and digitally raping her. She told the Commissioner that this happened about three to four times a week. There was no one that she could talk to.

In 1973 or 1974, Kirsty was moved to a children's home in rural New South Wales. She was abused there by a staff member. Kirsty told the Commissioner that the staff member inappropriately touched her and then digitally penetrated her.

Kirsty left the home at about nine or 10 years old when her grandmother went to Court and won custody of the children.

Kirsty has overcome the abusive start to her life. She has competed at a state representative level in sports and is currently finishing a higher degree at university.

Kirsty sees herself as a strong and resilient woman but she believes she is often judged in the wrong way for this reason. She told the Commissioner, 'some people make the mistake of assuming that it doesn't hurt you still, that the hurt's gone, it's just that you deal - I deal with the hurt in a different way to what some of those other women that I know that are still in that - they're still trapped in that, you know, and that's no fault of their own, that's just where they're at'.

Kirsty has repeatedly spoken publicly about being the victim of abuse (although she only told her second husband about the abuse in 1994). She said, 'some people - you know, some blackfellas think it's a bad thing'.

# LINDAL

Lindal was born in 1959. For reasons she could never understand, she and her siblings were taken away from their parents when she was five years old.

Lindal and her brother and sister were placed in a New South Wales orphanage, then in a foster family. Her foster father Daniel Damer, a Sunday school superintendent, subjected her to sexual abuse. Lindal said, 'I was probably about eight years old where he just felt me, touched me. And it built from there where he was taking me for drives out into the bush. He'd strip me down. He'd do this ritual thing where he'd feel me up and make me smell it, and it ended up where he ejaculated over the top of me'.

Lindal told the Commissioner that Mr Damer progressed the abuse to penetration when she was about eleven. He also sexually abused his own daughter. At such a young age, Lindal said that she did not know this behaviour was wrong and started boasting about it at school. This backfired and people started treating her with extreme cruelty. No one at school, including the teachers, wanted to hear her side of the story.

The sexual abuse continued until Lindal was 12, when she was sent back to the orphanage with her siblings (except for her younger brother who stayed with the foster family). Lindal said that no one in charge of her welfare questioned whether it was a good idea to send Lindal back to the Damer's home during the school holidays. After Lindal confronted him, Mr Damer apologised and stopped his abusive behaviour.

Lindal told the Commissioner that she is convinced that it is impossible to detect child sexual abusers. She said that, 'They're just like every person. All the reports in my welfare department file are glowing reports of the Damer family'.

The impact on her life was devastating, including problems with alcohol and depression. Lindal was in and out of juvenile detention because she regularly absconded from care. She said her relationships with men have suffered in the past because she says she only knew how to have sex with them. She thought that was how you got affection.

Lindal has disclosed her story to many people now and has found that this has helped other survivors along the way. She said, 'I have helped a lot of people by telling my story, because I have been very open with my story'.

She says that she knows where Mr Damer lives and that he has not been made accountable to this day. She has received no admission from the authorities of the crimes committed against her. She said, 'What hurts me more than the actual crime is the fact that no one would fight for me'.

In 1981 Lindal says her life changed for the better when she heard the music in a Wesleyan Methodist Church and went in. The Church members helped her and her children and she says that they became her family.



# PAULINE

For five years, Pauline believed David and Karen Sinclair were her biological parents, and that their three sons were her older brothers.

'I was taken into foster care when I was three and went to live with them. I had no living memory of my mother, so just assumed that was my real family. I was abused pretty much the whole time I was there, I'd be up at 6am polishing shoes, I was always working. When they went out on a Friday night, they'd lock me in a room and I had to sleep on a wooden floor naked.'

Pauline told the Commissioner that on those nights alone, the Sinclair's 16 year old son would come into her room and sexually abuse her.

'At first Ted showed me magazines, it just progressed from there, it was terrible. There was oral - he'd do it to me and I'd do it to him, he'd penetrate me.'

Pauline remembered running away from home when she was six or seven, and being picked up by the police.

'I told them I was being abused, and they took me back and said I was a selfish little girl and I should be grateful to have someone to look after me. There were no investigations or anything. I reported it to the school as well, but nothing happened.'

When Pauline told her New South Wales Department of Youth and Community Services caseworker she was being sexually abused, he sent her to her room while he discussed her claims with the family.

'I was brought out and he pulled my pants down in front of them, put me over his knee and smacked me and told me to stop lying. They all knew about the abuse. Ted had his mates over one night and got one of them to have sex with me as well. The mother walked in and dragged me out by the hair calling me a slut, locked me in a room. I was about seven, and they thought I was being provocative.'


A few months later at the age of eight, Pauline returned home from school one afternoon to find her bags packed.

'I was taken to a place called Marden's Cottage, I was devastated. I felt that I was being thrown away by my parents, and then found out my real name was Magda, not Pauline, and they weren't my real parents.'

Pauline told a counsellor at Marsden's Cottage she'd been abused, but said still nothing was done. And as a young teenager, she told the Commissioner, she was sexually abused by a male staff member at the House.

'Jack was quite hands-on with the girls, he'd watch us in the shower, drag his hands over your shoulder and try and touch your breast. When I got my period for the first time, he was on duty and I had to go to him to get the appropriate stuff to use. He asked if I knew how to use a tampon, I was like, no, so he took me upstairs, made me pull my pants down and he inserted it.'

Throughout her teenage years, Pauline described herself as being 'a mess'.



'I tried to commit suicide on a number of occasions, took lots of drugs and was an alcoholic by the time I was 14. I left the home at 18, went to a refuge and lived on the dole. I thought I was rich and could buy all the drugs and alcohol I wanted. I ran amok pretty much until I gave birth to my son. I went to prison pregnant with him when I was 20.

Pauline said that the birth of her son was the turning point and she rebuilt her life, with a partner and two more children.

In 1998, she made a formal complaint about the Sinclairs to the police, but

said she was told there was nothing they could do. She has not received any compensation and on requesting information about compensation recalled being told she'd simply had an 'unfortunate childhood'.

'At the end of the day, I know I'm a good person. I love my kids, I love my partner, I love my job. I just think there should be proper training provided to people before they become foster parents. You should take a child because you want the child - it's not a career.'

# SANDRA

When Sandra's mother was hospitalised, her three young children were left to fend for themselves.

It was the late 1950s and at the age of four, Sandra remembers her older brother stealing their neighbours' milk and bread delivery to feed his starving siblings.

The children soon caught the attention of authorities and were made wards of the state. Sandra and her younger sister Jane were placed in a children's home in Sydney where Sandra recalls conditions were tough.

Before she turned 10, Sandra was sent to live with the Jansen family who she says were upstanding members of the local community, from outward appearances. But Sandra holds few positive memories of the time she spent with her foster parents, and recounted to the Commissioner the abuse she regularly endured.

Sandra said she was raped by her foster father for the first time when she was 10 years old, and the abuse continued for nine years.

'When they fostered a younger girl called Joan a couple of years after I arrived, he started on her as well. If we tried to protect ourselves we were beaten with a red dog collar which had silver studs on it.'

To this day, the sight of a bar of soap triggers distressing memories of the time she spent in the Jansen's house.

'Mr Jansen sometimes used to shove a bar of soap up my bum because he said I was being a bitch and needed to be cleaned out. We were subjected to soap and water enemas as well.'

Disclosure of the abuse to a parish priest and a case worker resulted in beatings from the Jansens, so severe that Sandra said she was unable to walk properly for days afterward and nothing changed.

Although she was eventually adopted by the Jansens, Sandra ran away from them when she was 19 and carries a heavy burden of guilt for Joan's suffering. She tearfully recalled a discussion she had with Joan when they reunited last year.

'She told me how she'd suffered when I left. She had to cop the rapes and everything all herself, and she said she's never forgiven me for leaving her there alone. I'll carry that with me for the rest of my life.'

Throughout adulthood Sandra's adopted name continues to taunt her.

'I go by my birth name and have tried to have that other name permanently removed from my birth certificate, but I've been told it will always be there. I'm hoping to feel some self-worth out of all this, and having that name removed from my records would be a start.'

# SHARON

Soon after her birth in 1949, Sharon was placed in the care of Shirley, a woman living in country Tasmania. Sharon remembers about 10 different children coming and going in Shirley's house over the years, and they were all sexually abused by Shirley's partner, Trevor, and her son, Wayne.

Sharon told the Commissioner that when she was eight, several older children were removed from Shirley's care. Sharon and another girl, Lisa remained, though Sharon wasn't sure if anyone knew they were there. The girls rarely attended school and no one came to check on them. Sharon said that Trevor and Wayne started sexually abusing her at about the same time as the two older children were removed. The abuse continued two to three times per week for the next eight years. 'They'd drink and carry on, and there was always a gun around, so they'd threaten to shoot us if we didn't do what they wanted.'


Sharon and Lisa slept in one of the sheds and weren't allowed in the house, except to do chores. They tended cattle and cooked and cleaned for Shirley, Trevor and Wayne, another son and daughter, as well as Shirley's grandchildren. For food, Sharon and Lisa scraped the plates for something to eat and were often made to steal neighbours' crops for food for the others.

At the age of 12, Sharon told Shirley that Trevor and Wayne were interfering with her. 'She gave me a belting and I thought, "That's it, I'm going to go to the police. There'd have to be somewhere better than

here". I walked 13 kilometres to the station to tell them, but they wouldn't listen. They put me in the car and drove me back, and said, "Don't come here again". I ran away when I was 15 because I was sick of it. I was hungry and I had no clothes. I took some things from the shop and got caught.'

When Sharon appeared in court on a stealing charge, someone must have noted she was pregnant, because soon after she was sent to a Catholic girls' home. She did cleaning and laundry chores through the day and at night cared for some elderly residents of a nearby retirement home. Sharon said it was better than where she'd been, but that she didn't receive any information about being pregnant, and wasn't really aware that she was. One evening, she developed cramps and didn't go to the evening meal. Her labour started soon after. Sharon said she tried to leave her room, but found the door was locked and she couldn't get out. By the time her screams brought attention, she'd given birth to a baby girl. The baby was immediately taken from her, and Sharon was later given conflicting messages as to whether she had survived. A death certificate stated the baby was stillborn, but Sharon said she'd heard the baby cry, and she thought there was a possibility the girl was still alive.

Sharon later married and had two children. She didn't tell her husband about the baby until the Government apology to the 'Forgotten Australians' in 2009. 'There were so many people there just like me. It was a real eye opener.' She carried a great sadness that the other children she'd grown



up with had found their birth families and she hadn't. 'I think that would have helped, to know who I was, or to know something about where I'd come from.'

In 2010, Sharon received \$55,000 from the Tasmanian State Government Redress Scheme. She said the payment meant a great deal to her. 'They believed me, and I'd never been believed before. That was the first time.'

# TREVOR

It was only down to what Trevor described as ‘luck’ that he was removed from foster care with the Piper family. He’d become a ward of the state in 1963 when he was just 12 months old, and had lived in an orphanage and at least two homes before being placed with the Pipers at the age of five.

Trevor told the Commissioner, ‘The Pipers had two teenaged daughters. They used to get me to massage their legs, and in the end I would finger them and they would play with me. A whole pile of kids lived there, and one evening we were lined up to go to the toilet and the foster mother thought I’d done a wee in the night potty. She banged me, knocked me off my feet, and I smashed my mouth open on a wooden box. It was fortunate the field officer came out the next day, and I was removed from that home.’

Now six, Trevor was moved to another foster home, with his older brother Murray and two sisters, as well as an 18 year old foster brother called Charlie. He told the Commissioner the Bollards were good foster parents, but that living in a good home ‘with regular meals’ came at a cost.

‘Charlie was molesting Murray, who was about 11 at the time. When Murray told Ma Bollard, she came and found me and asked if it was true, and I said no. I remember Murray was just crying and crying, and he said, “Why didn’t you tell them it was going on?” He hated me. They sent Murray away after that, so Charlie started on me and that went on for three years.’

From the age of 15, Trevor ran away and told of living in and out of corrective institutions. He said his behaviour was anti-social and aggressive through his younger years.

‘I struggled with myself, I didn’t know who I was or where I was going. I survived the justice system because I went through it with people I was in the orphanage with. I’d walk into these environments, and there’s my mate, there’s my mate, there’s another mate. I was told I was going to be a little toyboy, but all the people I grew up with were all in there, the whole lot of us.’

‘I received a letter through Redress. They believed me, they believed my story. I just cried and cried, that’s all I could do. All the abuse wasn’t a figment of my imagination.’

In 1993, Trevor agreed to provide a witness statement to police in support of his brother, but didn’t come forward as a victim himself. Charlie was charged and pleaded guilty to offences relating to child sexual abuse of Murray. In 2008, the West Australian Government announced a redress scheme for those abused or neglected in state care.

While waiting to tell his story, Trevor said he had an emotional breakdown.

'I couldn't believe the Government could have such a poor, poor process. I was on the edge of my seat for six months, and when the day came I rang them up and they said sorry, we don't have any counsellors yet. I ended up paying for my own counselling, which I've found has helped.'

Trevor received \$45,000 in compensation through the redress scheme, but also something he considers far more important.

'I received a letter through Redress. They believed me, they believed my story. I just cried and cried, that's all I

could do. All the abuse wasn't a figment of my imagination.'

Despite going through periods of drug dependence and an ongoing struggle with alcohol addiction, Trevor completed a university degree as a mature age student, has forged a successful career and has a wife and four children.

'I smoke like a chimney, I drink like a fish. I've done speed, smoked lots of pot. My whole life has been about what I cost, what I cost, what I cost. If a child comes into your care, you have a responsibility to care and nurture it or it leads to greater cost on society at a later date, because we all went into the prison system.'









# GOVERNMENT SCHOOL

**Names have been changed**

The real names of individuals have not been used. The names of all individuals and any other identifying features have been changed.

# FELICITY

As the second youngest of nine children, Felicity has few memories of feeling loved and cared for as a child growing up in a 'dysfunctional' family in regional Victoria. She recalled being a bright Year 6 student in 1968, when a teacher, Mr Fielding, took an interest in her.

Felicity told the Commissioner, 'He made me his pet, gave me responsibilities, he asked me to go around and babysit while he and his wife were home. Every time she left the room, he'd kiss me and touch me. We'd be at the drive-in and she'd go for food, he'd be straight in the back seat with me. He'd abuse me in his office at school as well. Looking back at photos, I was a pretty little girl, but that's not an excuse'.

The abuse included digital penetration, and Felicity recalled she didn't understand what was happening.

'I was quite naïve, I knew nothing about sexual stuff at all. I'd try to talk to my mother, but she'd say, "You'll learn that at school". I was basically free to do what I wanted as a child. He was very cagey, I thought I'd done something wrong. The boys at school would tease me and I wonder if they knew what was happening to me. The girls were nasty to me as well.'

Felicity's father died in 1970, and she left school a year later at the age of 14. By 19, she had two children.

'It was pretty full-on, my life just went from trauma to trauma, I had very few skills as the pattern goes. I moved to Sydney, mixed with wrong people, fell in a dark hole, and I didn't care. I think I disassociated from it so much that I didn't want to admit it to myself,

let alone anyone else. I managed to complete a degree as a single Mum in my 40s, and I'm very proud of that. I did the best I could, I just wanted to be shown as good somehow.'

Battling suicidal thoughts following the death of her daughter, Felicity sought professional help two years ago, hoping to find a way to feel better.

'I said nothing about the abuse for 44 years, and would use the sessions to talk about my daughter. But it just got to the point where I got so over being depressed. For five years I hadn't had a relationship. I feel like why shouldn't I have a good partner? Why am I picking those rotten men, the ones who abuse you? And what had Mr Fielding done to others? I've moved over 130 times, I didn't feel like I fitted anywhere, and couldn't go on without talking about it.'

Felicity was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and undertook therapy.

'I've been a good actor, I've helped others not myself. I always used counselling for losing my daughter, it took a long time to talk about my sexual abuse. I forgave my mother last year, finally let it go. She's 95. We have a better relationship now.'

By telling her story, Felicity hopes to raise community awareness of sexual abuse within the community.

'It's not just in church, it happens in schools too. I used to think, "Why did that happen to me, what did I do wrong?" I felt so useless. Then I think, I was 11, I was a kid.'

# GEOFF

In 1996, Geoff's daughter, Erin, told him that her teacher, Mr Edwards, had touched her on the bottom. Geoff immediately reported the incident to the primary school's Deputy Principal, who recommended Geoff provide a written complaint so the school could follow it up. 'He said he'd been worried about Edwards, and other parents had complained about things he'd done, but the school had never been able to do anything, because no one wanted to put it in writing.'

Geoff accompanied 11 year old Erin to make a report to Victorian Police. He was put in touch with a detective investigating a complaint from a 28 year old woman who said she had been sexually abused by Edwards as a child. Geoff told the Commissioner that as the police investigation grew, more women came forward with allegations. In 2003, Edwards was charged with 100 sex offences against 13 girls over a 25 year period. He was sentenced to 18 months jail and died two years after release.


The community where the family lived in Victoria was small and close-knit. The family had recently moved there for Geoff's work and was enjoying it. However, the family wasn't prepared for the town's response after the abuse had been reported. After initially being helpful, the Deputy Principal shunned Geoff. Erin became subject to taunts by students and was badly treated by other teachers. The Education Department proposed that Edwards continue to teach and Erin move to another school. 'It was like they were in complete denial. Edwards was such a big part of the community, and

they didn't want to know. He coached sporting teams and everyone knew and liked him.'

When Geoff's wife walked down the street, people crossed the road to avoid her. One day a woman came into Geoff's office and demanded to know why he was pursuing Edwards. 'I tried to tell them all that touching is part of the escalation, and it can end up really badly. I met some of his victims and it was horrific to see what had happened to them.' Even after the conviction, Geoff said many of the townspeople remained firmly on the side of Edwards. The family eventually made the decision to move out of the town. 'I didn't want to go, I loved my job, but I had to go for my family.'

'It was like they were in complete denial. Edwards was such a big part of the community, and they didn't want to know. He coached sporting teams and everyone knew and liked him.'

By contrast, the response from Police was 'excellent'. 'They were a breath of fresh air. They suggested counselling for Erin, whereas no one from the school had even contacted us. The detective said he couldn't understand



why the Education Department had knowingly moved this teacher around, considering the trail he'd left.'

The pattern of Edwards being moved between schools perplexed Geoff, and he wrote several letters to the Education Department outlining his concerns and seeking information. 'I was trying to engage them in the broader picture, but they'd write back these bland letters.' The first meeting with Education Department staff was in 2003 to discuss compensation. 'By then it was just about the money. I wanted to talk to someone about the

impact on the child and the family, but all the humanity had been taken out.' A settlement of \$18,000 was agreed to though Geoff thought the amount too small. He said by then they were all exhausted.

Geoff said Erin was now pursuing a successful career overseas. He was glad that she'd told him as soon as Edwards abused her. 'The thing I keep thinking about is the school saying they couldn't do anything unless the parents put it in writing. I don't know how true that is, but I don't think it's right.'

# GORDON

Gordon was born in 1995 in country Victoria. He was one of 10 brothers and sisters. His parents were both alcoholics and there was never any money. He remembers having 'to catch rabbits and fish for tea and stuff like that'.

Gordon started high school when he turned 12. Looking back, Gordon said that he now realised that a teacher, Mr Sommers, was grooming him for sex. He told the Commissioner, 'being from a very large, poor family with alcoholic parents we never got toys or stuff like the other kids got. So he used to buy me things like ice creams and stuff like that'.

His parents gave him permission to go on a two week trip to Melbourne with Mr Sommers to stay at Mr Sommers' parents' home while they were away. The abuse started with fondling, then progressed to oral sex. It continued for about a year after they returned from Melbourne.

Gordon says that another man, Hamish, also abused him after a night time swim at the pool when he was about 13 or 14. Gordon believes that Mr Sommers and Hamish were in cahoots. He said, 'it's a country town. They would have known each other, for sure. And I think people like that network'.

Gordon's grades plummeted and he failed the first year of high school. Gordon struggled, repeated the year and at 14 he dropped out of school.

Before he left, Gordon took the opportunity to have his revenge. He told the Commissioner, 'I asked to put on a boxing match display to earn money, with me and Mr Sommers. And it was my intention for a bit of vengeance, but I didn't say that to the teachers of course ... and they agreed ... The first couple of rounds I just played around. The third round I just went bang, bang, and knocked him to the ground and jumped on him. And the PE teacher grabbed me to pull me off him, and as he grabbed me he said, "Well done, Gordon".' Mr Sommers didn't touch him again after that. Gordon told the Commissioner, 'No, the guy didn't abuse me after that. He knew that if he tried any more I was going to hurt him'.

Gordon said he has a drinking problem and he has been in and out of mental health institutions. To date, he has never told his story to the police or other authorities.

He is currently writing a book about his experiences.

# JAQUELINE

Memories of high school camping trips and excursions to the snow in the late 1960s are forever tainted for Jaqueline. During the trips Mark Burnside, a male teacher at her Melbourne state school, seduced her and other teenage girls entrusted to his care.

Jaqueline told the Commissioner, 'He was probably in his 30s and seen as a bit of a stud, and when I was 14 or 15 he'd take me aside and make me feel special saying things like, "I'll marry you and we'll buy a farm and have a horse", that kind of thing. Then he'd find opportunities to get me into bed. I was really, really naïve, I thought the sun shone out of his backside'.

When she was 16, Jaqueline found out she was one of dozens of girls, including her sister, targeted by the teacher. In some cases she believes his victims fell pregnant and had abortions. It's only recently as a mature adult that Jaqueline has been able to reveal details of the abuse to her family, and she believes it's negatively influenced her ability to relate to others throughout life. As far as she's aware Mark was never reported to authorities.

'It's only recently I've started to understand why I sought relationships with older men from a very early age. That certainly shaped my whole life, and I now realise the impact it had on my education in the early years.'

Jaqueline became a teacher and later a professor. During her career she has been prepared to stand up for those who allege inappropriate treatment by a teacher. 'When a teacher takes advantage of their position to influence their students, it's an extreme breach of the trust that exists in that situation.'

'It's only recently I've started to understand why I sought relationships with older men from a very early age. That certainly shaped my whole life, and I now realise the impact it had on my education in the early years.'

Perhaps through my experience as a teenager, the course of action is crystal clear to me – abuse must be reported, and attitudes changed to reflect current social expectations.'



# LEANNE

It's impossible to count the number of lives ruined by a music teacher employed in regional New South Wales, according to his former colleague, Leanne.

She recalled Roger was popular amongst his colleagues when she arrived to take up a role teaching first class students in 1981, but within weeks of joining the school she noticed children behaving strangely around him.

'Roger managed the combined primary and high school band, which was regarded by the Education Department as the jewel in its crown. It had an amazing reputation, and Roger would take the students on tour to perform all around the State.'

Leanne was aware that a number of students took private music lessons with Roger both in and out of school hours.

She told the Commissioner, 'He came to the door of my classroom one day asking to see a student for band practice, but Jade refused to go with him. She gave me this funny look so I told him she couldn't go because we had a spelling test to do. Twice more he returned that morning, but I made it clear she was staying in class. When recess came, I took her outside and asked if she was OK. She broke down in tears and told me Mr Anderson had put his finger up her skirt the day before'.

Leanne told the Commissioner she reported Jade's claims to the school Principal, Larry, on the same day, but that he'd dismissed it as nonsense.


'He basically said children make stories up, that Roger wouldn't do something like that, and I should just forget about it because the band was too important. When I told him I was taking the matter to the police he said, "You will not go to the police. If you do, you will lose your job". I was determined to report it so I started to fill out my resignation.'

At that moment, Leanne said another child's parents entered the school office with two police officers to lay charges against Roger for molesting Jade and another female student.

'So all of a sudden the band was in disarray and Larry came to me and said, "You've caused all this trouble, so you can take the kids on their tour", so that's what I did. On the last day of the tour, I saw Roger's car parked outside a hall where the kids were to perform. I told the students to stay put on the bus and went inside the hall to ask him why he was there. He replied, "I'm here to see my kids perform".'

After a short but heated exchange with Leanne, Roger agreed to leave and the concert went ahead.

'On the drive back home, about seven or eight girls from the primary and high schools confided to me that they'd been abused by Roger. His court case went ahead not long after we got back. He was convicted and given a three month good behavior bond. Roger continued to work at private schools in the area, and was also still teaching students individually in his home.' Not long after, two male teachers accused Leanne of 'ruining Roger's career'.



But reflecting back, Leanne told the Commissioner, she's never regretted speaking up about the abuse. Her resolve was further strengthened following a chance meeting with a former student in 2001.

'Genevieve was a talented violinist who'd taken private lessons at Roger's home as a young child and up until she finished Year 6 in 1976. From the age of eight, she told me that to get her music lessons she had to "sit on his dick". She was known around town as a bit of a nutter, and you don't wonder why. She thought that the only way to get

her music lesson was to do that, and people have absolutely crucified her.'

Though Roger has since died, Leanne fears the cases she knows about make up only the tip of a very large iceberg.

'I cringe to think how many lives this man has affected while the town condoned his behaviour. I've lived there for 34 years and seen the far-reaching affect abuse has on families. But as long as it's swept under the rug and ignored, innocent victims won't stand a chance in life and I think that's a terrible loss for our society.'

# MEGAN

Megan's mother was grateful when a female school teacher dropped off Megan's schoolwork, and offered to watch the teenager while her mother ran errands. Throughout Year 9, in 1985, Megan battled tonsillitis and epilepsy and spent long periods at home recovering.

In retrospect, Megan believes Ria's gestures of kindness were all part of the relief teacher's grooming strategy.

'I liked Ria because she was easygoing. We shared the same faith and we'd often talk about our beliefs when she came around. I'd been raped and she was very understanding about that when I confided in her.'

One day in 1985 when Megan was 14, Ria began abusing her.

'We were sitting on the couch and she touched my breasts, then tongue kissed me. I ended up rubbing her breasts. When she left I remember feeling a bit confused and asking myself if it was right.'

Around that time, Megan explained to the Commissioner, her mother was experiencing mental health issues, and she depended on Ria to fulfil a mothering role for Megan. Often Megan would spend weekends away with Ria and her two young children.

'During the day we'd take the kids to the beach and do usual holiday things. At night Ria and I shared a double bed, and she'd kiss me and touch me. She'd insert her fingers into me and encouraged me to do the same to her.'

The abuse continued until the end of 1985 when Megan turned 15.

'I would visit her after school and play with her kids. We'd usually have sex in her bedroom. She'd orally stimulate me until I reached orgasm and then tell me to do the same to her.'

At the start of Year 10, Megan started to question what she thought of as a 'relationship' with Ria, and ultimately decided to put an end to it.


'I'd lost contact with a lot of friends my own age because I spent so much time with Ria, and she'd become possessive and jealous. I told her it wasn't normal, and we argued. As I went to leave she grabbed my arm and slammed it in the door.'

Megan walked directly to the student coordinator's office and made a complaint.

'It got back to the Principal, who called me into his office. He questioned me on my own, he was very arrogant and rude, and it came across like it was my fault. My parents were called, I left the school for a while. When I went back, I was told Ria had been asked to leave and that she'd been told she wouldn't be prevented from seeking employment at a different school if she left quietly.'

In 2011, Megan contacted police, who opened an investigation.

'The police were very good. They questioned teaching staff who'd been there at the time, and many of them had said they were in the



process of reporting the relationship. So they'd known what was going on, but nobody ever gave me any indication that my relationship with Ria was inappropriate.'

Megan told the Commissioner that in 2012 Ria was charged in relation to the abuse, and in 2013 was convicted, receiving a three year suspended sentence.

'My ability to forge relationships with women has been significantly affected. For a long time I loathed myself and used to self-harm, I slept around to prove I was normal and heterosexual, and Ria kept teaching for another 25 years right up until she was arrested.'

# NOEL

A phone call that came 'out of the blue' triggered painful memories for Noel that dated back to the late 1960s.

He told the Commissioner that in his second year at a Sydney state high school, his Latin teacher began sexually abusing him.

'Mr Marshall was also one of the cricket masters and I was a good cricketer. He was a very intimidating man, used to still wear his university gown, and was prone to fits of rage if you didn't get your work right. As a 13 year old I was very keen to please him.'

For 'the best part' of two years Noel said Mr Marshall targeted him for sexual abuse.

'There was a part of me that knew it was wrong, but I'd seen this guy march out, get the cane and hit people or get a ruler and whack them over the knuckles. Getting the cane wasn't unusual, and I was scared of him.'

When Noel 'physically matured' at 16, he recalled standing up to his teacher, and the abuse stopped.

'I told Marshall to leave me alone. At the end of that year, I was really struggling with my schoolwork, it was affecting me. At the end of the day, I had to get out of the school, I was just really uncomfortable because I still had to pass him in the corridor.'

Noel said his parents never understood why he wanted to change schools, and Noel said he could never bring himself to tell them the reason.

'I never said boo to my parents or anyone because I would have thought I'd let them down by allowing this to happen to me. Almost in a way you bring shame on them because you should never have allowed yourself to be put in this situation. You're 13 and you want to play cricket, and you want to please this guy, because he's a bully.'

'The Inspector told me they were investigating Marshall, and asked if I would provide a confidential interview in relation to it, and I did. When it came up, it opened old wounds but I thought it was the right thing to do, if it was going to help bring this guy to justice.'

Noel went on to marry and have children, and said his first wife of 22 years was never aware of his abuse.

It was only when the call came through unexpectedly from New South Wales Police in 1999 that he felt compelled to

confide in the woman who would later become his second wife.

'The Inspector told me they were investigating Marshall, and asked if I would provide a confidential interview in relation to it, and I did. When it came up, it opened old wounds but I thought it was the right thing to do, if it was going to help bring this guy to justice.'

He believes his name was provided to the police by another former student.

'I thought about it later and remembered attending a school reunion in 1981 where some of my mates refereed to me as the 'bum-boy' of Marshall, and I realised then that my abuse had been common knowledge.'

During the call with the detective, Noel agreed to give evidence, if needed, under a pseudonym. A year later, he was contacted again and told Marshall had been charged with 67 counts of child abuse relating to 10 boys over a 30 year period. All the boys were from Noel's high school.

'About 12 months on, in 2002, he rang me again to say Marshall had been granted bail, and while out on bail, he'd committed suicide.'

Noel attempted to make a claim for compensation, but was given legal advice that it would be 'like pulling teeth' so gave up his pursuit.

'My understanding is the school said "No one reported it, we have no knowledge, weren't aware of it". I do feel a bit robbed of justice.'

He described his life as being 'fruitful and happy', and Noel has enjoyed success in business.

'I'm pretty tough, so I've got through it, but that doesn't undermine the fact it's still in the back of my mind and I want an apology. I'm financially independent, I wasn't looking for a monetary response. But I think they had an obligation to say "You were abused under our watch at a state school and we have an obligation to recognise that".'

# PETER

In 1969, as a 14 year old in South Australia, Peter was asked by his teacher, Mr Morris, to stay back after school one day and help with a woodwork project. Peter remembers how pleased he was to be asked. Peter told the Commissioner that when he arrived to help with the project, he was asked to go to the storage area to help get some wood. While he was there, Morris, 'grabbed me and got his hands down my pants'. He was eventually let go, and Peter made sure he was never alone with Morris again. 'The actual level of offending wasn't high', Peter said. 'But the effect of what he'd done has had a really long lasting effect.'

Peter told the Commissioner he realises now that Morris knew how to groom children and which ones to look out for. In subsequent years, Peter spoke to other boys who'd had similar experiences with Morris. Each of them had been singled out for individual attention and after meeting Morris alone were sexually abused.

In 2001, Peter reported the incident to police. He was told that the South Australian Limitations Act prevented them taking any action. In 2003, when the Act was repealed, Peter again reported Morris to police. He also encouraged the other victims to do the same. Statements from five men were eventually considered.

Peter reported his positive experience in referring the matter to South Australian Police and making a statement. He also cited one of the police officers as being particularly helpful. The police officer worked as part of a paedophilia taskforce and

had a good understanding of the complexity of sexual abuse and was understanding and readily available for Peter to talk to.

Peter and his wife Sandra felt that the courts and court support staff could have done more. He said it was always him ringing to find out about progress with the case. His messages were often not returned and he couldn't understand why the matter was taking so long. Sandra said, 'They opened a box that allowed people to walk through, but the support hasn't been there'.

After Peter's initial report to police in July 2003, he made his first statement in February 2005. In July 2006 he was asked to make a second statement. In the first statement, Peter had referred to the school's passageway that led to the location of the abuse. In his second, he'd called it a hallway. In court, Morris' lawyer asked him, 'Well, what is it - a hallway or a passageway?' Peter appreciated the judge telling the defendant's lawyer to move on. He was also asked why he didn't tell anyone about the abuse at the time. He broke down in court and said, 'Well, I didn't have anyone to tell'.

Peter told the Commissioner he had felt frustrated by continued delays in bringing the case to trial. Morris' lawyer presented doctors' reports so the matter was repeatedly adjourned.

'Over 10 years of dealing with the justice system has left me wondering if it was all worth it', Peter said. 'But my goal has always been to make Morris accountable. I didn't care if he got jailed. I wanted it acknowledged that he'd done it and recognition of the effects.'

# RITA

At 55 years of age Rita still feels that she was naïve and silly to believe the high school teacher who told her she was 'special' and that he was in love with her.

Rita described herself to the Commissioner as a 'troubled' teenager by the time she started at a Melbourne state high school in 1972.

'When I was 14 I tried to kill myself. The teachers knew about it, and in 1973 one of them formed a habit of talking to me and asking how I was when we saw each other around the playground, although he wasn't my teacher. Mark was young, played the guitar, and a lot of the girls thought he was a bit of a dish.'

Over time, Rita said the conversations lengthened and when Mark offered to help her formulate a study plan, she agreed to meet with him at his home.

'He said he often had study sessions there and I thought it was a bit unusual, but thought he was a nice fellow. So I went and there were a couple of kids there, but they shot through when he had a word to them.'

After completing the study plan, Rita said Mark invited her to join him on the couch.

'He stretched out and I sat next to him, and he said, "Would you like a hug?" I said "Yeah, alright", and it was comforting at first then he put his hand on my breast and kissed me, put his tongue in my mouth. I turned away, thought it was yucky and he said, "Sorry, I didn't mean to upset

you. It's just that a lot of my tension is sexual and I thought yours might be too". I just wanted the ground to swallow me up.'

A couple of weeks later, Rita recalled Mark phoning her parents and arranging to have afternoon tea with her family.

'It was all very clever because he checked my progress against my study plan, made sure he was helpful. I was quite ignorant. Then one day he told me he was in love with me, and said that to him I wasn't a child, I was a woman – an intelligent, special girl destined for great things, and it became sexual. He said "this is what people do when they love each other".'

Rita said that when Mark asked her to keep the meetings secret, she agreed.

'I didn't like it and I didn't want it, but I did it so I could get the emotional support. He'd say "Tell me all your troubles". I felt responsible for protecting him. He said that by law I was still a child so no one must know, and that he could go to jail.'

The sexual abuse continued for about 18 months until Rita decided not to meet with Mark again.

'At first it would be a cup of tea and a debrief, but then it was straight to bed and straight to sex. I thought this isn't what I want. It was an unspoken bargain, I endured it to get my needs met and I wasn't getting my needs met, so I stopped going to his office to arrange our meetings.'



Rita said she then saw Mark 'become close' to other girls. When she left school at 17, she cleaned Mark's house to earn money and noticed girls coming and going, but didn't think anything of it.

'I never imagined he was doing to them what he'd done with me because he'd done such a good job telling me I was special, and I was the only one. When I look back, I feel a bit stupid, it's pretty obvious what was happening.'

In 1978, a local youth support worker called Rita unexpectedly.

'She said she'd seen things that had concerned her with Mark, and I told her about my history with him. With her support, I made a police statement. I was at the station for nine hours, and they wanted details about how he touched me and was he circumcised. It was excruciating.'

Mark was charged and police found another former student willing to give evidence, but after 'enduring' the committal hearing, both women felt unable to continue.

'The court case was traumatic, he was committed to trial, and that means a lot to us. When I found out that meant I had to do it all again, I just broke and

said "I can't". A couple of weeks later, I tried to kill myself again. I was in hospital for a while, I was very sick. The DPP decided not to continue, but we weren't given an explanation as to why.'

In 2000, Rita learnt that Mark continued to teach at a private school, and had married a former student.

'I felt a tremendous surge of guilt, there he was all these years later, still teaching. I showered for 45 minutes and howled like an animal thinking I failed so many kids. So I sent anonymous letters to everyone I could think of - the school, politicians, police. By the following March, he'd disappeared from the staff list.'

If she hadn't been abused, Rita feels her life would have turned out very differently.

'I'm 55 and have post-traumatic stress disorder. Perpetrators recognised me, it's as if you've got "victim" stamped on your head and only those interested in taking advantage can see it. I had a lot of sex I didn't want to have. There is some germ of infectious worthlessness inside of you that can fly out at any time and just overwhelm all that good stuff like it counts for nothing, because everything he'd told me was bullshit.'







# NON GOVERNMENT SCHOOL

**Names have been changed**

The real names of individuals have not been used. The names of all individuals and any other identifying features have been changed.

# ADAM

Adam said that until he was sent to boarding schools in 1951, at the age of eight, he was a happy child whose parents loved him. He told the Commissioner that he enjoyed playing as a child plays, with 'butterflies, beetles and insects and basically animals and living things, interesting leaves, rocks, etc!'

Adam started at a Jesuit college in Sydney in 1955, at the age of 12. He told the Commissioner that there was frequent corporal punishment and that he usually did not know why he was being punished.

He said that one day, Father John, who later became the Headmaster, had been watching him play-fight with another boy in the playground. The Priest summoned Adam to accompany him to a small sports storage room. He locked the door, sat on a chair and made Adam stand in front of him. Father John said 'Eh eh eh boy... did he try to knee you in the privates?' He then unzipped Adam's fly, put his hand inside his pants and fondled Adam's testicles.

Adam asked him to stop. He told the Commissioner 'I was very shaken up, but knew ... I couldn't tell anyone'.

After this, Father John acted as if nothing had happened. He regularly strapped Adam who said he appeared to get pleasure from it. Adam said that he just held out his hand to be punished and behaved as if it didn't hurt him at all. He said, it was

'basically, f... you John'. Adam's grades at school plummeted.

On another occasion, Father Michaels, who was the Headmaster at that time, summoned Adam to a room he had never seen before. Father Michaels locked the door and made Adam sit on a chair opposite him.

Adam said, 'He pulled his chair closer to me, put his right leg between mine and clamped my right leg between his legs. He put his hands on my right leg and started to slide his hands up and down my leg. At the same time, he said to me "You've been accused of cheating in the exams". I was surprised and I said "I didn't cheat Father!" At that point, his right hand had reached my testicles and I pulled away. He stopped and said "That's alright then", sat back and we stood up. I don't remember if he said any more, but he unlocked the door and I left.'

Adam described how he has struggled all his life to come to terms with his treatment at the hands of the priests. He is suspicious of authority, has anger management issues and has spent his life swinging in and out of depression. He has been unable to keep a steady job and has used alcohol and drugs to block out his difficulties.

In 2008 Adam was awarded \$20,000 Victims of Crime Compensation for the priests' sexual assaults. He believes that the Royal Commission may help him reach some closure of the feelings he still struggles to contain.

# ADRIAN

It's difficult for Adrian to remember which teacher started sexually abusing him first. In 1976 at the age of nine, he told the Commissioner, two teachers from his Sydney Marist Brothers' college took advantage of his parents' trust in them at every opportunity available.

'My parents were very much part of the Marist Brothers' social circle, they volunteered at my school and both Brother Taggart and Brother McReeves were family friends. The Brothers would often join us on family holidays at different times.'

During these trips, Adrian recalled being 'touched' and was often made to perform oral sex. He said the Brothers knew each other, but that he suffered abuse from them separately.

At one point, his parents invited Brother McReeves to live in the family home for about 18 months.

'A lot of the abuse occurred as a result of that, and McReeves was abusing my younger deaf and disabled brother as well, though I didn't know that at the time.'

The abuse continued until Adrian was about 14 years old. He told no one until he was 25, when he and his brother confided in each other.

'It took about six years to go to the police, so around 1992, and I only went because my brother said I had to help him or otherwise he was going to commit suicide. We told our parents over dinner, and the next time I saw them was when I was on the stand in court five years later.'

It took the police ages to bring charges, about four or five years, and I wasn't allowed to communicate with my brother until it was over, so we couldn't speak for years.'

Four others came forward to testify, and Adrian recalled two of them killing themselves during the course of the trial. He said Brothers McReeves and Taggart even attended one of the funerals.

Adrian said Brother Taggart admitted the abuse and received a two year good behaviour bond, while Brother McReeves 'fought it the whole way', to receive nine years in jail. His sentence was reduced to four years on appeal, and Adrian said he effectively served two years in total.

'When he was released, he must have applied to work in a school and the Marist Brothers rang me to say did I mind him working back in a school.'

Brother McReeves' application was ultimately rejected.

When the court case concluded, Adrian sought compensation from the Catholic Church through its *Towards Healing* program.

'They sent me to a psychiatrist of their choice to get assessed, fatted around for a year and a half until my lawyer started legal proceedings and they settled out of court. They came up with \$90,000 for my younger brother, and \$75,000 for me, and we had to sign non-disclosures.'

From early adulthood, Adrian described battling alcohol addiction, spending time in psychiatric and detoxification wards, and having three marriages break down.

'I've been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, I've seen psychiatrists and psychologists, but I chose alcohol and pot as my medication for about 15 years. My brother's stuffed, he was on two bottles of scotch a day last time we spoke, I'm surprised he hasn't killed himself, we don't even know where he is.'

Adrian told of recently losing his three children following a custody case.

'The orders were all about alcohol. I went into detox because I went from

drinking 10 beers a day to 30. I didn't have any problems coming off the grog, no seizures, but I probably lasted five days on the outside before I was a blubbering mess. I've tried Alcoholics Anonymous, nothing's worked.'

In 2009, Adrian asked the Marist Brothers for further help.

'They wrote back saying they'd extinguished their responsibility with the payout. I truly believe they shouldn't be allowed to limit their responsibility. I've had times like now when I've been unable to work and my sick leave's run out. I asked them again just recently, rang head office and explained the situation because I'm out of money. This time they may come through with something. I don't know.'



# ALBERT

Educational opportunities were limited in the isolated place where Albert's parents lived, so at the age of 10, he was sent to a Christian Brothers' boarding school in South Australia.

After an 'uneventful' 12 months, Albert went into Grade 5 in 1967 where he had a new teacher. He told the Commissioner that the lay teacher, Mr Black showed an interest in him almost right away.

'Mr Black was a large, untidy man who could be very pleasant, but at the same time, authoritarian and demanding. I remember he had bad breath. During class he would come up to me and say, "You have been a good boy, do you want a break?"'

Albert said Mr Black would find an excuse to take him into a private garden area to sexually abuse him, at least once a month.

'He would lift my face up and kiss me and slobber on my mouth and push his hands into my pants and fondle me. He'd push his penis against my chest, and often had damp spots in his trousers. I soon felt threatened and overwhelmed. I was quite confused and frightened, I only saw my parents twice a year, so I felt I had no one to turn to.'

When Albert moved up a grade the following year, Mr Black was no longer his teacher and the abuse stopped.

Two years later, Albert left boarding school and returned to live with his parents, and said he did well academically throughout his remaining school years.

But since his boarding school experience, he told the Commissioner, he's waged a long battle with drug and alcohol addictions.

'I spent about six months in jail when I was 25 for violence and drug possession. I've spent time in various police lockups for being drunk and causing domestic disturbance. I've abused substances. I suffer terrible nightmares, sometimes wake up screaming and terrified.'

Albert has been married twice, and said for over 40 years he had 'wiped off' memories of the abuse.

'The first marriage lasted about seven years, but it was a disaster. We had a daughter in 1982, but I haven't seen her since she was four. My second marriage lasted about the same amount of time, and when that broke down I won custody of our son. There was physical abuse in both my marriages.'

Albert never told his parents about the sexual abuse, and said his relationship with them and his younger brother suffered as a result.

He also told of 'always having problems' with people in authority, and struggling to maintain employment despite having secured a number of well-paid jobs.

Haunted by nightmares, Albert finally revealed his story for the first time to his lawyer in 2008, and spent three years in counselling before deciding to contact *Towards Healing*.

'I was interviewed by two retired policemen. They weren't delicate at all, it was like an interrogation room. They were showing me satellite images of a school that wasn't mine. Their research wasn't very good or they were trying to mislead me so I'd make an admission and they'd blow my case out of the water. They were so insensitive, there was no care.'

After the initial meeting, Albert said he was invited to attend a facilitation session with a *Towards Healing* counsellor and school representative.

'My solicitor thought there'd be a settlement, but it was purely a statement which took about three hours. Then I was left alone for well over a year, there was no contact from them but I kept on persisting. They offered me a pittance in my financial

settlement, which I refused. It went back and forth until I finally accepted \$20,000 which I split evenly with my lawyer. I expected a higher settlement considering it sent my life off the rails for 40 years. They promised a formal apology letter which I never got, the whole thing was just so traumatic.'

In return for the settlement, Albert said he signed a deed of release stating he'd take no further action against the Church.

He told the Commissioner he's currently homeless but staying with his father.

'I haven't had an intimate relationship for over 13 years, I have no friends and still suffer nightmares. I continue to smoke marijuana and drink. It helps to get rid of the bad thoughts.'

# CAROLYN

The look of fear etched on her nine year old son's face as he stood next to his teacher triggered alarm bells, but it would be nearly a decade before Carolyn would know the cause.

'I was picking Tim up from school, and noticed he had tears in his eyes. Mr Levinger was keeping him really close, and told me he'd been sick that day. Something just seemed really odd and I now believe that was the day Levinger masturbated him.'

Tim attended an elite Anglican boys' school in Western Australia, and was sexually molested by his Grade 5 teacher for most of the year 2000. An ex-teacher, Carolyn volunteered a lot of time assisting in Tim's classroom, where, she told the Commissioner, she had witnessed Mr Levinger's 'touchy feely' behaviour towards her son.

'Levinger sent Tim a cheque for his birthday which seemed strange, but we were new to the private school system which is very old fashioned and had its own way of doing things. I asked Tim if he was okay, and he said he was. I saw the teacher liking Tim as a good thing, because teachers like good students and I wanted Tim to do well. I trusted the school to have very high standards.'

Nine years later in 2009, Tim broke his silence to reveal details of the sexual abuse first to his girlfriend, then his parents.

'I spoke to the school about it and was urged not to go to police. Levinger was suspended. I took Tim to the police station to provide a statement and Levinger was arrested and charged.'

Tim was one of five victims to testify at the first trial, but since Mr Levinger was employed at the school for over 25 years, Carolyn feels that number represents the 'tip of an iceberg.'

She described the court process as a distressing ordeal.

'I learnt that the school Principal had long been aware that Levinger often behaved inappropriately with students. In fact, Levinger received three warnings about his improper conduct with students between 1999 and 2004, based on information provided by other teachers in the school.'

Following an appeal and retrial Mr Levinger was found guilty and imprisoned.

Subsequently they commenced a civil action against the school and Tim received a settlement of \$375,000 and his parents received \$80,000.

Carolyn said Mr Levinger was not the first 'sexual predator' to roam free in the schoolyard, and told how her son's sexual abuse and the school's 'trivialisation' of it has left her family fractured.

'My son spent 10 years with a monster in his head, with suicidal thoughts from the age of nine and my younger son's had a mental breakdown. Yet you still hear teachers and parents say the kids exaggerated their stories for the money. I feel betrayed, humiliated and disempowered, all because corrupt and incompetent people in positions of power at an elite institution failed in the duty of care over and over and over again.'

# CHARLIE

When Charlie told the school Chaplain he was being sexually assaulted by two Christian Brothers at the Melbourne Christian Brothers' college, the response was shattering.

'He said, "Some of us have a cross to bear boy, and that's yours." He just sort of dismissed me.'

Charlie recalled that within three months of starting high school in 1963 at the age of 11, two Brothers at the college, aged in their mid to late 50s, were molesting him.

'Brother Jude would come up and sit next to you, kiss you on the side of the head and call you one of his "little darlings," and start to fondle you. Sometimes he'd take you out to a room and make you perform oral sex on him or do it to you. He'd masturbate you, make you masturbate him.'

Over a five year period, Charlie also described being raped by Brother Jude more times than he could count.

'The other one, Brother Jonas, would sit beside you, lick his finger and insert it up your anus. I was petrified, they had like a power thing over you.'

Seeing Charlie was upset one day, the school Principal coaxed him to reveal the cause of his sadness.

'I told him about the abuse and he said, "Nope, that couldn't happen, you're lying." He called in the Deputy Principal and told him what I had said, and he didn't believe it either, and they just dismissed me.'

It was the following year that Charlie confided in the Chaplain, and having received no support or guidance, later told his Parish Priest in confession.

'The Priest sympathised, said the two Brothers were sinners, but that he couldn't do anything to help. That was when I was 15. In the end I raised it with my mother, and she just told me it couldn't happen, she didn't believe the Church could be like that.'

Charlie told the Commissioner that many of the students attending the college were from a Catholic orphanage, and he expressed sadness for those forced to live with the abuse around the clock.

'These Brothers would go over to the orphanage at night and torment those boys, plus there'd be other Brothers attacking them. The kids would run away, but they'd get brought back because they had no one to go to. All the students knew what was going on.'

For five years Charlie said he endured the abuse, until he determined to take a stand against the Brothers when he was in his final year of school.

'When I went back after the holidays, Jonas was the first one to come up and I pushed him off the chair and said "Never touch me again, you bastard." He must have told Jude because they never come near me again.'

Charlie secured a job when he left school, but said he struggled with relationships for over a decade before settling down with his wife at 28.

‘There were probably five or six years where I wouldn’t go out with a girl at all. I could never have any commitment, couldn’t get close to anyone, even mates. I had this fence around me and a general mistrust of people.’

After watching a documentary about sexual abuse within the Catholic Church in the mid 1980s, Charlie said he called the Christian Brothers’ Hotline for abuse victims that was displayed at the end of the program.

‘I told them my story and they were apologetic, but it was just, “Yes, we knew it happened and these men are known to us, they were predators, but they’re deceased now.” There was no counselling offered, they wanted to appear to be doing something, but they weren’t doing anything at all, it was all smoke and mirrors.’

Charlie gave up the Church when he left school, and remains greatly affected by his childhood trauma.

‘Every time something comes up in the paper or on the television, it comes rushing back. I might shed a tear, then bury it again, but I need something to help me cope with it because I can’t get rid of it.’

Charlie said he would like to see students receive greater education about services available to victims of sexual abuse.

‘There are predators out there. My own mother didn’t believe it, and that broke me in the end, I didn’t know what to do.’

# COLLEEN

Colleen was born with a medical condition and when her family emigrated from Ireland to Australia in the 1960s she was enrolled in a school for children with disability. She attended the school between the ages of eight and 14. With six siblings and an alcoholic father, Colleen saw school as an escape from her difficult home life.

Daily physiotherapy sessions and other services were part of the school's routine as well as the usual classes.

Staff at the school included two male orderlies whose job was to assist the less mobile students. When she was 12, Colleen recalled, a newly hired orderly began sexually harassing her and her friend Becky almost daily.

'He used to get a thrill out of running into the lift and waiting for us when we were on our way back to class after physio. When we got in, he'd push us into the corner and put his arm up our tops and things like that. I had splints on both arms, and was trying to protect myself, and he used to laugh. He was very strong.'

Colleen said the image of the orderly watching children leave school each day, still sticks in her mind.

'He'd sit there with his legs open just smirking at me, he was sort of sadistic. He'd be saying, "Come in the car with me, please, before you go. Just come in the car with me". I always felt sickened.'

Colleen said she didn't know what to do about the abuse, and simply learnt to accept it as part of her school life until one day as she left her physio

session alone, the orderly forced her into a storage room.

'It's the time I've found most difficult to live with, the room was dark and it's where all the callipers and children's aids were kept. He pushed me in and locked the door, and basically man-handled me with his hands. He pushed them into my underwear and pushed his hand inside me. I was crying and kept telling him to stop, then there was a knock on the door. Becky was calling my name, she'd come looking for me.'

At first Colleen said the orderly ignored the knock, but opened it when there was a loud thump a short time later.


'The other orderly had come and he shouted at him to get out. He never attempted that again, but still went on with the man-handling in the lift.'

The sexual abuse continued for two years until 1974, when Colleen left to attend a state high school at 14.

At 17, Colleen left school and began drinking 'extremely heavily'.

'By 19 I started to be hospitalised, I was in and out of psych wards, and that went on until I was 24. I made suicide attempts, a lot of that was probably not being able to cope with the shame and the guilt of feeling like I was a shocking person. I was from a very religious family.'

Due to alcoholism, Colleen received the invalid pension from the age of 21 and joined Alcoholics Anonymous. Five years later in 1986, she married an older man she'd met while in the program. They were divorced a year later.



Colleen found sobriety in her late 20s and has remained well.

In 2000, she decided to seek professional help and later the same year, found the courage to report the abuse to police.

‘What was difficult is that some months after that, the police rang to say he’d committed suicide. I felt sick. I’d never have the opportunity to tell him how what he did for his sexual pleasures, affected me. I had no sex education, and the great thing now is parents telling children about things that shouldn’t happen, and if they do, speak up. That’s something I never had.’

# CORNELIA

As a six year old child, Cornelia thought it was 'normal' for the Priest to expose his penis and touch her vagina while she was sitting on his lap.

'I remember there was someone else in the room and I looked to them for help, but they did nothing. I felt sick and confused, but no one was stopping it, so thought it must be ok. The feeling in the room was very heavy, it happened a number of times with other people in the room. I think one of the priests was Dutch.' The abuse by the Parish Priest occurred at the Catholic primary school she attended in regional New South Wales.

For over a decade from 1966, Cornelia told the Commissioner, she was abused by several men, including her father, the Catholic priests and a visiting teacher.

She kept the abuse to herself as a child, believing that if she spoke out, God would strike her down with lightning.

'The priests would make those kinds of threats, and I just think it's the most horrible thing to say to someone because it robs you of your faith. I was about eight years old and I strongly believed. I was told I was going to jail and prepared myself for that. It lasted years, and I was terrified.'

Cornelia only escaped her life of abuse when she left school in 1979 at the age of 17, at which point she told of actively pursuing 'risky' relationships with older men.

'I looked older and went after men in their 30s mostly. Emotionally I hated men and wanted to hurt them, so

that's what I did for years. I did fall in love when I went to uni, and that relationship lasted two years. I never had children.'

In 1986, she decided to face her childhood demons and reveal details of the abuse to a priest and her mother. She felt her words fell on deaf ears.

'My parents were very Catholic, and my mother refused to accept it. That same year I had a nervous breakdown and attempted suicide after confronting my father about the sexual abuse. From the reaction I got I thought I must be mad and really expected to be struck down by lightning even though I was 26 years old.'

Cornelia believes her childhood abuse has 'poisoned' her sexuality.

'I never knew what was happening to me until I turned 11 or 12 and we had sex education in school. I thought "Oh my God, that's what's been happening to me", I'd never had a name for it before. I think it would have helped a lot to have known a name for it, to know what it was.'

Despite years of counselling and even shock therapy, she continues to struggle with dark and confusing childhood memories.

'I often get periods of hopelessness and even last year I wished I could have ended it all but thankfully I feel better this year. I have just entered a new relationship, and have sought counselling over the years, but it can still be a struggle.'



# DANNY

At first the game of wrestling seemed harmless. It was 1990, and having visited his Year 7 teacher's home with other boys from his prestigious Adelaide Catholic school once before, Danny had no reason to mistrust him.

Danny told the Commissioner, 'Mr Lindsay sometimes came over to tutor me after school, and would stay for dinner with us, so my parents knew him fairly well. Sometimes he'd take students out bowling, or to the movies. Looking back, it was typical grooming behaviour.'

On his second visit, Danny found himself alone with Mr Lindsay.

'We were mucking around, then he stuck his hands down my pants and got an erection. He rubbed himself against me, and ran off. I still think I'm lucky in terms of what didn't happen. The same thing went on the next visit when I stayed over with some other boys, and after that I made excuses not to go over.'

Danny said following the abuse, his grades went from average to poor. Some years later, when he saw Mr Lindsay put an arm around his younger male cousin, he decided to act.

'I sent him a letter threatening to go to the school and dob him in if he didn't give me some money. When I checked my bank account and saw I hadn't been paid, I went to the school. I wasn't thinking right.'

Danny recalled meeting with the Head of the junior school to report the abuse, and explain the letter.

'He said, "Do you realise you're in very big trouble for writing that letter?" He said the police would be involved, that sort of tone. I just remember thinking holy hell, I have to get to the police station and explain my side of the story.'

After the meeting, Danny said he drove to the police station, but couldn't wait to see the detective as he had to get to work.


'They took my number plate, and next thing I was pulled over by a couple of detectives. They arrested me and took me in on extortion charges. It was pretty traumatic to say the least.'

Danny was interviewed and released. The following day, he said police arrived at his home to take a statement about his sexual abuse.

'Then my parents and I had a meeting with the school and the head of the Department of Public Prosecutions (DPP) at the time came along, he was an ex-scholar of the school and took an interest. The Headmaster went on the attack, basically accusing me of spreading rumours. He acknowledged there had been other accusations against Lindsay, but kept saying they were unfounded and that my story had inaccuracies.'

Danny said the DPP advised him the case 'wasn't worth putting through', and now wonders if the advice was swayed by a conflict of interest. The extortion charge was later dropped.

In 2011, police contacted Danny for a statement as someone else had come forward claiming they had been



sexually abused by Mr Lindsay. He provided the statement, but declined further involvement in the investigation.

‘They were asking about carpet and couch colours, and a lot of those details have just gone from memory. I’ve got a wonderful life, a great job, wife, three beautiful kids, I didn’t want to pursue a case against Lindsay.’

In 2012, the school contacted Danny out of the blue.

‘It led to a mediation process that took nine months. I got to write an impact statement, I got an apology and they paid me \$125,000. It was an indication of how seriously they’re taking it, and how scared they are. But life is good for me, couldn’t be better really.’

# DEIDRE

In 2003, Deidre's daughter, Hannah, was sexually abused by three older children while attending the after school care centre attached to her Catholic primary school in Adelaide. Hannah was six years old and in kindergarten, and the children she identified as abusing her included a 13 year old boy. Deidre immediately reported the matter to the school Principal who told her to take Hannah to the Women's and Children's Hospital. Deidre later also reported the abuse to police.

'The after school care centre had children from the age of six up to those in Year 7, who would have been 13', Deidre said. She told the Commissioner the children all mixed together in the centre and she thought they were poorly supervised.

When they'd returned home that day, Deidre said she noticed initials marked in ink on Hannah's buttock. Hannah told her mother that three children had drawn on her and that they'd also inserted sticks and chocolate in her vagina. Deidre said from her daughter's description it sounded like the older boy had also attempted to rape Hannah. The children threatened Hannah that she and her mother would be hurt if anyone was told.

Hannah's examination by hospital staff included taking a semen specimen. Some months later it was reported to Deidre that the specimen volume was

too small to be analysed. In the interim, Deidre said she didn't received any contact or follow up by hospital staff. She said, based on the result, the police weren't able to take any further action.

Deidre said she felt frustrated and angry at what she saw as inaction by the after school care centre Director after the abuse was reported. Deidre said the Director told her, 'I don't agree with you' and refused to discuss the matter further. Another parent told Deidre that if she damaged the school's reputation, she'd be sued.

'The quality of care should have changed while my daughter was still at the school and it didn't', Deidre said. 'It still hasn't.' She said that in the past 11 years the after school care centre had employed an extra worker, but 'they didn't do anything about their safety policies'. Deidre said she thought the older boy who abused her daughter was showing signs of early sexualisation and may himself have been the victim of sexual abuse. 'I think the staff should have seen that boy's behaviour, because it wasn't right. And they shouldn't have had so many ages in together in the first place.'

'They need to take the necessary steps so that children are safe, not just in the school environment, but in a child care centre too', Deidre said. 'What happened to my daughter shouldn't have. They let her down. They let all the children down, not just her.'

# GAYLE

Gayle said she'd heard a lot about sexual abuse by priests in the Catholic Church, and she wanted it known that nuns could abuse children too. When her parents were posted overseas in 1970, Gayle and her elder sister were sent to board at a Catholic college in New South Wales for a year. From the time of her arrival at the age of 13, Gayle was sexually abused by Sister Martha, a Sister of the Good Samaritan Order.

'Sister Martha was in charge of the dormitory and the abuse started on my second day', Gayle said. 'I had a cold and she told me I needed to have liniment rubbed on my chest. She rubbed in and around my breasts and kept going and going. I didn't know what she was doing. Her breathing changed and she closed her eyes, her face went all red and she didn't stop. I'm sure now that she was aroused to the point of orgasm.'

Gayle told the Commissioner that Sister Martha was cruel and vindictive towards many of the girls, but that she went out of her way to belittle and embarrass Gayle. 'I remember it was my birthday and she caned me, all the time while she was singing "Happy Birthday". There were two other girls I believe she sexually abused. One's mother was dead, and the other didn't have a father. She knew the weak ones to pick on.' Gayle said her sister sized Sister Martha up early and let the nun know she'd be in for a fight if she tried to pick on her.

Sister Martha supervised the boarders at night. 'She'd wait until everyone was in bed and then she'd come to my bed

and close the curtain and do whatever she wanted to. It wasn't every night, and you never knew when it would be. But that was her power: that she could do it and you never knew when.'

Gayle said she didn't understand the abuse at the time. 'I took sexual abuse to be rape, and this wasn't rape. I see it now for what it was: a criminal sexual assault.' Gayle said she was embarrassed and ashamed, and didn't tell anyone about the abuse until a school reunion in 1996 when she mentioned it to a friend. 'We went into one of the classrooms and the liniment smell was there. As soon as I smelt it, the whole thing came back.'

She said that it was hard for anyone to listen to her talk about the abuse, because they didn't know what to say. 'I've been a successful professional woman for years. I have wonderful children and grandchildren, but I wish this horribleness wasn't there. When someone has power over you like that, it gets in your head and is associated with all sex. I didn't know anything about sex. You keep going through it. It's harder, not easier, the older you get.'

Gayle said she still had faith in the Catholic Church, but thought it needed an independent external body overseeing its processes. 'The counsellors in schools are employed by the Church and I don't know that's always helpful. I've spoken to various priests about abuse, but I don't think they understand the nature of power. People in authority have a lot of power and they can misuse it.'

After witnessing a range of physical abuse among staff and Indigenous students at a Lutheran boarding school, George felt compelled to act.

He was employed at the school from 2006 until 2013, and told the Commissioner, 'I saw students locked in dormitories and starved, staff hitting students with shoes and chairs, shocking things were happening. One staff member even had a knife held to his throat by a student and had to go off on stress leave'.

George said incidents of abuse were largely ignored by the school staff, including the Principal, Barry Sanderson.

'I knew things needed to change, the environment was very stressful for teachers and students and my health was deteriorating pretty badly. I'd tried raising my concerns about the high level of abuse with Barry, but nothing came of it, so I submitted a report outlining my concerns to the Church administration and copied Barry in.'

George told the Commissioner, 'At the start of the 2012 school year I didn't last two days, because nothing had changed. I ended up taking a total of four months off sick and when that leave ran out I took 12 months of unpaid leave up to mid 2013. The notion of returning to the school was unthinkable, it was such a horrible place'.

During his leave, George contacted the Lutheran Schools Association to highlight his concerns, and suggest that staff employed with the school undergo criminal screening and Working with Children Checks.

'It seemed ludicrous that some of the staff hadn't even had police checks because it wasn't part of school policy. I recommended that police come to the school and take the personal computers of three staff members, including Barry, because I felt there was something odd going on with those staff that may have involved students. Barry used to take students back to his home.'


When the period of George's unpaid leave expired, he again advised the Lutheran Schools Association that he would not be returning to the school until conditions had improved.

'About a month later Barry sent me a letter stating that I'd abandoned my employment, so I rang the Lutheran Schools Association and said the real reason I wasn't going back was because I didn't agree with the way the school was being run.'

George told the Commissioner that he heard nothing further from the school until the end of the 2013 school year.

'In late December, Barry wrote and again stated that I'd abandoned my employment and I responded advising I would return to the school at the start of the 2014 since I'd heard he was leaving before then. But when I spoke to the new Principal in January, he advised me that my employment had been terminated.'

George said he hoped his information would make the community aware of the abuse he believes is still happening at schools operated by the Lutheran Church.



'In my view I was dismissed because I was drawing attention to abuse within the school and pushing for investigations to be carried out. I was driven by my concerns for student safety as boarding facilities need policies in place to protect students and staff. In the end, it cost me my job, but I truly want people to understand what's happening under the watch of the Lutheran Church, and realise that it's happening now.'

\* The stories of Gillian and Louise are related to this story (pages 121 and 144).

During four years of employment with the Lutheran Church Safe Place Service, Gillian told the Commissioner she faced a number of hurdles as a case worker hired to investigate allegations of sexual abuse within the Church.

Safe Place was launched in 1997, and was intended to provide guidance and support to victims and reporters of sexual abuse. Gillian joined the program in 2009, and said the Church quickly proved to be 'downright obstinate' about acting on cases.

'When it came to the crunch, I think the Church was only interested in preserving its reputation. My recommendations were mostly ignored.'

When teachers reported the abuse of students and staff within a Lutheran boarding school for Indigenous students, Gillian spoke to the school principal, Barry Sanderson as part of her investigation.

'Barry's reaction was pretty shocking. He started talking about the impact on enrolment numbers if allegations of the abuse went public, and then insinuated that most of the eight reports I'd received were from women who were either drunks or suffering from postnatal depression.'

She found that by not lodging mandatory reports on abuse, Barry had failed to uphold his duty of care, as had the person to whom Barry reported, and that both should therefore be stood down.

Gillian disclosed her findings to the State Lutheran Bishop and the Director of the Lutheran Schools Association and met with them to discuss action on the findings.


'I wanted to see victims of sexual abuse provided with external care, because often they'd lost trust in the Church but were in dire need of support and counselling. But the others seemed more concerned about the negative press surrounding my investigation into abuse at the boarding school.'

Gillian also recommended the Church send an apology to the victims, which she said was ignored.

'I think acknowledgement and empathy is important to victims of abuse, to help them heal, so I ended up sending the apology myself. The Bishop later asked me why I'd sent it without his consent, which demonstrates a complete lack of insight into the abuse people were suffering.'

She told the Commissioner that later a Church official said on an ABC program 'Gillian was unqualified to make recommendations about sexual abuse within the Church, which prompted her to resign from her position'.

'Before taking on that role, I'd been a parole officer and extensively worked with victims and perpetrators within the prison system so felt more than qualified to assess claims of abuse. Over four years I dealt with 72 reports, but I know there were others that the Bishop chose to handle himself.'



In every case, Gillian pointed out, allegations were only ever dealt with internally.

‘The Lutheran Church did not treat sexual abuse seriously, and that’s been really, really disappointing for me. I believe there’s a good chance thousands of children in schools, and others under their care may still be at risk today. There’s a lot of talk about caring for victims, but there’s nobody addressing their needs and wants. Victims stand completely alone, and that’s simply not good enough.’

\* The stories of George and Louise are related to this story (pages 119 and 144).



# GREG

In 2006, Greg made a report to police that as a child he'd been sexually abused by Brother Albert at his Christian Brothers' school in regional New South Wales. He didn't follow through with the police report until 2013 when he had a chance conversation with another ex-student who disclosed that he too had been sexually abused by the Brother. Both men then made new statements to police, and Brother Albert was charged with child sex offences. The outcome of the case is pending.

Greg told the Commissioner that Brother Albert was his Headmaster and class teacher when the abuse occurred in 1972. 'I was 12 years old and he accused me of talking during school assembly. He made me go to his office while everyone else went off to sport. He closed the office door then grabbed me from behind, put his hand down my pants and fondled my penis. He brushed his cheek against the side of my face and I could feel his erection at my back. I panicked and got out of there.'

Greg ran straight home and told his mother. 'She was shocked. In those days it wasn't heard of. She believed me, but she said, "It's your word against his and he's the Headmaster". I don't think she told my father and it was all shoved under the carpet.'

The day after the abuse Brother Albert told Greg that he was 'very disappointed' in him, and thereafter took every opportunity to inflict a high level of physical punishment. 'He had a two inch wide strap, three pieces of leather sewn together. I got the record for the most straps, a hundred in a year. He belted me with such malice. I can't

describe the look in his eyes. I was petrified of him.'

In 2006, when Greg made his first police report, he also engaged with the Catholic Church's *Towards Healing* process. He'd become aware that another ex-student had brought civil proceedings against the Christian Brothers in 1996 for sexual abuse. During the *Towards Healing* mediation session, Greg asked whether Brother Albert had been in trouble before. 'They said, "We're not going to answer that". Then I mentioned the other case 10 years earlier and their jaws dropped.' After an initial offer of \$5,000, Greg accepted \$40,000 in compensation. The matter was settled within a year, which Greg attributed to his knowledge of Brother Albert's prior court proceedings.

For the remainder of his school years after his abuse, Greg said he floundered and failed. 'I didn't care. Everyone else was carrying big, heavy bags to school and I had an exercise book folded in half in my back pocket.' His poor academic results thwarted an ambition to join the Navy, and he'd had a long history of low paid and insecure employment.

'I never trusted authority figures. I've done anger management courses and various kinds of counselling over the years. I've had two failed marriages and I'm lucky the third has lasted 22 years. I put my sexual abuse down as a minimum because I got away from him, and I know others didn't, but my wife says I'm still living, breathing, sleeping it. He set out to hurt me and he did. But here it is, 42 years later and I get to tell my story.'

# JACK

Jack still bears the physical burden of the abuse he endured more than 65 years ago.

He can still clearly recall his first day of school in the late 1940s. With an absent father and ill mother, he'd been sent to live with a Catholic aunt in Perth, although his parents were not Catholics.

'I was sent to a Catholic school. I was seated separately from the others and was so nervous that I wet myself, so the nun, a Sister of Mercy, hit me hard across the back of my head with a crucifix, then called the Priest.'

Jack was led to a room in the convent next door, where he detailed to the Commissioner his first memory of abuse.

'The Priest undressed me, washed me down and sexually played with me, then returned me to the classroom.'

Jack was just four years old. When his mother was released from hospital, he returned to the family home and was enrolled in a different Catholic school where he was again seated separately from his fellow students.

'I was often belted with a leather strap or hit with the crucifix, and I remember that always made me cry.'

Within a week the Priest from the first school appeared, and Jack recalled that the abusive treatment not only resumed, but escalated.

'The Priest would give me cakes to eat while he undressed then molested me

while reading passages from a red book. He'd have me repeat, "pretty boys are for God's pleasure", and insert a finger into my anus or masturbate himself while feeling my penis. The nuns started referring to me as "pretty boy", so I think they were colluding with the Priest.'

A school excursion culminated in what would become a recurring nightmare for Jack, whose sleep is still punctuated by the traumas of his childhood.


'The nuns gave me to a priest I didn't know, and he took me off in his car. He stopped near a river and removed my pants, then mouthed my penis and raped me but I think he was disturbed by someone so he drove me back to the school.'

The rape Jack endured that day at the age of five split his anus and led to a lifetime of internal physical trauma.

'The muscle between my bowel and anus was damaged to such an extent that up until a major operation in 2013, it would protrude through the anus opening and require me to push it back into my body.'

On the evening of the rape, Jack's mother discovered blood on his underpants and around his anus at bathtime, and beat him until he explained why. Jack was moved to a state school and the abuse was never discussed again.

When speaking of the strained relationship with his only child, Jack's voice broke with emotion.



'I've avoided forming close relationships with males, and that's had a far-reaching effect on my ability to connect with my son and my two little grandboys. I've always over-achieved because I felt if I didn't do well then I'd be a failure. My son recently wrote an email to his mother telling her that he respects me for what I've achieved, but said there is no love, which I believe is my fault.'

Jack has received a letter of apology from the Sisters of Mercy, and is hopeful of repairing his relationship with his son.

# JAMES

James tried several times to tell his adoptive mother about the sexual abuse he was experiencing at school. The abuse started in 1961 when James was eight years old and the abusers were several Christian Brothers at his primary school in Sydney. When he moved to a Jesuit secondary school, he was further abused by a Jesuit Priest. James' mother refused to believe him. She told him he was dreaming. Some years later, he tried again to tell her and this time an argument ensued between his parents.

He doesn't remember the names of the Christian Brothers who abused him, but James recalls clearly the layout of the Brothers' residence. 'I can tell you exactly where it was.' He was taken back to the Brothers' quarters, usually after sport. 'They started off touching my genitals and after that it was oral sex. There'd be two or three of them. Some would just sit back with their glasses of red wine and watch.'

The sexual abuse continued throughout James' primary school years. James told the Commissioner that when he moved to secondary school a priest there started with touching and feeling and 'then it went on to become more intimate'. He remembers the Priest as being an aggressive person. 'He used to walk around the classroom with a metal ruler. If someone wasn't paying attention, he'd whack them on the back of the head. I remember kids with their heads split.'

James said sexual abuse was endemic in the school, and that on two occasions he was raped in the changing rooms by boys his own age

while the Priest looked on. 'He'd be there, basically saying this is all right, just go ahead and do it.'

It was James' impression that other boys at the school were being abused, but no one talked about it. He thought that three or four other altar boys were sexually abused by the Priest. 'It was touching and then it was sexual activity in the chapel.'

After leaving school at 14, James ended up 'as a street kid up at the Cross'. This period in his life coincided with discovering details of his birth family. 'The whole thing, from the day I was born till I was 14, in my mind, I'd come to an end. I fell apart.' Intervention by staff from Wayside Chapel helped him find his feet. Later he went on to further education and secure employment.

When he was 21, James started counselling. 'Over my life, I've attempted suicide four times', he said. 'That's the monkey that sits on my shoulder.' In 2004, he weaned himself off the high levels of medication that he'd taken for 26 years. The most successful therapy he found was an intensive program through a private hospital. 'I was finally able to express all the anger in a safe environment.' James married twice and had a number of relationships, but doesn't consider himself very successful at maintaining them. 'I have a lot of trouble trusting anyone.'

James hasn't considered approaching the Catholic Church for restitution. 'I don't want to go cap in hand to them. The Church has never apologised. They destroyed a generation and have never shown any remorse.'

For most of their marriage, Jan felt Carl was harbouring a secret.

'We married young and Carl used to drink a lot with our friends. He was a typical larrikin, very funny and full of life, but there'd be times when he'd really withdraw and wouldn't talk to me. It always seemed the drinking was more than a social thing, that he was using alcohol to fix something.'

The couple had the first of their three sons in 1975, and worked to build a happy life together. Jan told the Commissioner her gut instinct told her Carl was holding something back from her, but that she never pushed the point until Carl introduced her to a woman he'd always referred to as 'Sister Phelps' during a family holiday in 1999.

'We were having this lovely lunch with Sister Phelps who had been the Principal of Carl's convent primary school in rural Queensland. I was wearing this chain with a locket, with a photo of Carl as an altar boy in it. When I showed it to her she started to cry. She kept saying, "Oh you poor boys", and that's when the penny dropped and I realised Carl had been abused. We talked for hours, and she told me a priest at the school had sexually abused a lot of children and that she'd lived her entire life with the guilt of this on her shoulders.'

Jan said Carl vehemently denied he'd been a victim, and maintained that stance for many years. 'He'd say, "It happened to others, but not me". I totally didn't believe him, but I left it. In no time his business started to fail dreadfully and we were in debt to

nearly a million dollars. We had to sell our home and our car, but we managed to hold onto the business.'

As the couple struggled to recover financially, Jan said a group of sexual abuse victims contacted Carl asking him to make a report to police. He refused, and she later heard the case had fallen through due to lack of evidence against the Priest.

'Carl still denied, denied, denied he was involved. The police contacted him again in 2004, and he went from saying nothing happened, to nothing much happened to him, and that's when *Towards Healing* came into it.'

**'In his goodbye letter to me he said he'd tried very hard, but the dark clouds kept coming over him.'**

Jan recalled Carl's anger over the *Towards Healing* process being long and drawn out. She told the Commissioner Carl received \$24,000 in a settlement, before sharing some words he'd written in 2007:

*Why didn't the Church believe so many people who all had the same story. Why didn't the Church kick O'Malley out? He has been fed and watered, all because he said it didn't happen. What can you do for my sons to explain the Church's inaction caused a rift between them and*

*myself. It's too late for my father and me, do you care? If it wasn't for my Jan, I probably would not be here now.*

In November 2013, Carl, her husband of 40 years, committed suicide.

'He was so loved. Carl was a generous, funny and kind man who gave everything of himself to family, friends and clients and was very involved in our local community. Over 1,000 people turned out to his funeral and those who knew him would say he wasn't a depressed person. In his goodbye letter to me he said he'd tried very hard, but the dark clouds kept coming over him.'

As a nine year old, Jan said Carl reported the abuse to his mother, who then told his father.

'His parents did nothing and the abuse carried on until Carl was 12 years old. People need to be believed, and know there is going to be an action to follow because that never happened with Carl. When Sister Phelps went to the authorities, she lost her job, while the Priest was just moved on to another parish. I just need to know for his sake that if it happens in the future, someone will be accountable and someone will take action. Not enough people spoke up for Carl.'

# JASON

The school sports coach, Mr Tallow, often took students from the Patrician Brothers' Catholic college in Sydney to watch live games of footy, and Jason felt lucky when his turn came up.

It was 1987. Jason's father was recovering from a nervous breakdown and his mother was often busy looking after his disabled brother, so trips and excursions were rare for the then 12 year old Year 7 student.

He told the Commissioner, 'After the game, Tallow drove me to Kings Cross where he pulled up to talk to a prostitute. Afterwards, he drove me to a spot near my home and made me masturbate him and give him oral sex, he told me it was what older kids did in sex ed. I could see my house, I should have got out and ran but I didn't.'

Further trips to sporting matches were promised if Jason kept the abuse secret, which he did. Then a few weeks later, a Brother from the school collected Jason from his French class to 'talk about sex education.'

Jason said Brother Rex, who was in his 30s, took him to an area that was out of bounds and out of view from the main buildings, and told him that people who love each other have sex, before showing Jason how to masturbate.

'Brother Rex suggested he knew what happened with Tallow. He asked me who I loved, then unzipped his fly and started masturbating. Then he grabbed my hand and made me masturbate him. He started moaning and I remember crying, then I kicked him in the shins and ran back to class.'

At the end of the French lesson, Jason saw Brother Rex standing by his classroom door.

'My French teacher called me to the front of the class and told me I was to stay behind. Then I got the strap. That probably had a greater impact on my adult life. From then on, I became a very compliant student. I didn't tell my parents because I didn't want to burden them, they had enough on their plate.'


Throughout high school, Jason achieved top marks academically and excelled in sport. But memories of the abuse refused to fade, and by his mid 20s he described himself as being alcohol dependent.

'I married at 23 and that only lasted a couple of months because of the alcohol, and I still go through periods where I drink. Around the same time I joined the police force and threw myself into my career.'

Jason later remarried and had two children, but when he learnt his nephew was to be sent to the same Catholic college, it triggered a severe reaction. In 2011, he penned a suicide letter to his family detailing the abuse, and drove to a nearby beach where he planned to drown himself.

'My parents were saying "Isn't it great Brother Rex is still there", they didn't know. I didn't know how to deal with that, but I knew I had to protect my nephew.'

Fortunately Jason was found before carrying out his intention and received counselling. Within a couple of months he decided he was going to 'take on'



his childhood abusers, and lodged a statement with police.

'I was the first person to speak, but at least 10 others have now come forward. Brother Rex was convicted to seven years in jail.'

Tallow faced child abuse charges in 1989, but wasn't convicted. He'll stand trial again this year to answer charges relating to Jason and other students. The school's French teacher is also due to defend similar charges in court, relating to other students.

Over nearly three decades, Jason has battled with depression and anxiety.

With support from his parents he has now commenced a civil action against the Church.

'I'm seeing a psychologist, but if it wasn't for my kids I probably wouldn't be here to be quite honest, I don't ever want them to know what happened to me. I'm very protective of them. I think one-on-one teacher meetings should be limited, and as far as the investigation, it took too long. It took over a year from when I made my statement for them to be charged, and I don't think that's good enough.'



# JENNY

Jenny's parents ran a sheep station in Victoria. The eldest of six children, she was sent to board at a Catholic school in country Victoria in 1964 at the age of nine, seeing her family on school holidays and occasional weekends.

Jenny told the Commissioner the sexual abuse she suffered at the boarding school was perpetrated by Monsignor Wheeler. He organised with the nuns for the girls to help him with chores at the presbytery. 'We started off washing his car and it was great. He took us all for a drive, three or four of us, and bought us soft drinks. At first it was all fun. Then he started doing things like rubbing himself against me while I was waxing the car.'

Wheeler was soon inviting the girls to sit on his knee for driving lessons. He started fondling behaviour and soon, Jenny said, 'He had his hand down my pants, and he interfered with me. He'd say, "Who's going to steer the car today?" After the first time, I always said I'd steer, because my cousin who was younger was there and I didn't want him doing that to her.'

Jenny said her mother was told about the abuse in 1968 through her aunt. 'She believed the groping bit, but not that he'd done anything more. She was such a staunch Catholic, she didn't want to believe it.'

Jenny's mother reported the abuse to the nun in charge of the boarders, and thereafter the girls weren't left alone with Wheeler. Later, Jenny's mother took her to the police to report Wheeler's abuse.

Jenny said she understood that the police received about 14 other reports

of abuse by Wheeler. No charges were laid against Wheeler and he was moved overseas.

In 2000, Jenny sought advice about taking civil action against the Church, but was told by a law firm it would be too difficult. Another lawyer referred her to *Towards Healing*. 'They offered counselling, prayers, words, but they were all token gestures.'

In 2008, James Burns introduced himself, telling Jenny he was there to help her with the *Towards Healing* process. He told her what had happened to her was terrible. 'He said, "I'm on your side". But when I went to the interview, there was Burns sitting beside the Bishop. It was pretty clear what side he was on.'

Jenny described the process as difficult. She wanted to know first if the Bishop believed her. 'He said he did and I thanked him. Then they said, "How much money do you want?" I asked for \$40,000, but they said they couldn't afford it. The Bishop said, "The Parish is going bankrupt because of the payouts we've had to make". He wanted to pay me \$20,000.' Jenny was left alone in a room 'to think about it' and when Burns and the Bishop returned they again asked how much she wanted. Jenny told them \$30,000 and they agreed. 'And that was the last I saw or heard of them', Jenny said.

Jenny said she found *Towards Healing* intimidating. She also thought the police had failed her, the other children and any others that came after. 'They failed everybody in the end by not pursuing it, not just me.'

In 1984, Joe was teaching at a Christian Brothers' school in South Australia. A student asked him if he could get another teacher, Mr Taylor, to stop bothering him. Joe asked what he meant by 'bothering him', and the boy replied, 'He rings me and he wants to catch up with me all the time. He's bothering me and I want him to stop'.

Joe told the Commissioner that Taylor was an assistant boarding master at the school, aged about 21, though he acted much younger. 'He was like one of the kids, rather than an adult.'

Joe reported the student's comment to his immediate superior, Greg, also a boarding house staff member. Greg rolled his eyes and said, 'Leave it with me'. Joe heard nothing further about the matter and assumed it had been dealt with.

Nine years later, the Headmaster, Brother Owen, called a staff meeting, during which, Joe said, staff were told that 'an obsessed mother' of a student who had been abused was seeking assistance from her local parliamentary representative to mention the school under parliamentary privilege. Taylor had been charged with child sexual assault in relation to the woman's sons and the matter was before the court. The boys' mother wanted the school to be called to account.

Joe said the school went into lockdown. In his 30 years' experience teaching there, it wasn't uncommon for matters that were potentially damaging to the school to be managed in this way. Even now, Joe said, 'on paper


they don't run the school, but they still run it', through the organisational and management structure.

Joe became depressed and anxious at what he saw as a failure to deal with Taylor's behaviour years earlier. He viewed the school's management of the mother's grievance as unethical, and cited a 2004 media interview, in which the school's spokesperson stated that the school hadn't known about Taylor's misbehaviour until after he'd finished at the school. According to Joe, this wasn't true, or if it was true, they had turned a blind eye.

After leaving the school where Joe taught, Taylor was employed for two weeks at another school before being asked to leave because of inappropriate behaviour, which included inviting boys back to his room. Taylor was successful in gaining a position at a third school before his history became known and his employment terminated.

Joe said he learnt in 2012 that Greg was under investigation for an incident of child sexual assault dating back 30 years. This upset Joe as Greg was the person he'd trusted in disclosing the Taylor incident several decades earlier. In Joe's eyes now, Greg had a likely link with Taylor.

Joe told the Commissioner that he thought the school's culture today was still one where it was hard for child sexual assault to be recognised, reported and properly dealt with. He reported that all staff underwent mandatory reporting training, but it largely consisted of going through a



series of slides on a computer. Staff answered the relevant questions before moving on to the next slide. Upon completion, the computer printed a certificate. Occasionally, a speaker came to the school, but Joe didn't think there were adequate opportunities for a student to report child sexual assault or for a teacher to recognise behaviour changes in a student that would indicate trauma.

Although it was better that reporting could now be done outside the school rather than 'up the line', Joe said

much more work was necessary to understand and recognise the patterns of child sexual abuse. Joe said children were more likely to use social media to communicate than talk to each other or to teachers. He also said more work was needed to include those who weren't the primary victims, but whose lives were still deeply affected by child sexual assault.

# JOSEPH

Brother Matthew was a De La Salle Brother who'd previously taught Joseph's father at a New South Wales boarding school. In 1967, when Joseph was 12 years old and attending a De La Salle college in Sydney, Brother Matthew took him out of the classroom and sexually abused him in an isolated stairwell. 'He made me stand on a step above him, and he said we were going to do something my Dad used to like. I had to undo my fly and he put his hand on my penis. His other hand was under his robe moving back and forth. Then he told me to get dressed and go back to class, and he said I wasn't to say anything to anyone.'


Joseph told the Commissioner that the abuse occurred several times and followed the same pattern, until one day when his teacher asked Joseph in front of the class what had happened with Brother Matthew. The teacher persisted in her questioning, but Joseph was too embarrassed to say anything. He didn't know whether she subsequently took any action, but he wasn't abused by Brother Matthew again. 'From that day on, I never had another issue. It makes me think she talked to the Principal or did something to make him stop.'

In 2011, Joseph's wife attended a private retreat and recognised another participant's behaviour and personality characteristics as similar to Joseph. That participant had experienced child sexual abuse. When she mentioned it to Joseph, he acknowledged to her for the first time that he'd been abused by Brother Matthew. In the intervening 30 years of marriage, Joseph said he'd been diagnosed with depression and had battled severe alcohol and

gambling problems. 'I was working two jobs and drinking 20 schooners a day. If I went into a pub and no one was there, I'd head straight for the pokies. At one stage, I put \$70,000 through in six months.' He said he'd lost three houses and all his superannuation to gambling. He had trouble keeping a job beyond two years, because of difficulties with managers and figures of authority.

Joseph told the Commissioner that he'd never disclosed the sexual abuse although he'd attended numerous counselling sessions over the years for his gambling and alcohol addictions. Soon after the conversation with his wife, Joseph attended a retreat at which it was recommended that he notify his parents and police of the abuse. He said his mother was devastated and asked why he hadn't told them at the time. His father told him that he'd never been 'got at' by Brother Matthew because he'd been warned by other boys. 'I thought, "Well if you knew about him, why you didn't warn me?"'

Police ascertained that Brother Matthew died in a Queensland retirement home in 2008 at the age of 92. They suggested that Joseph get in touch with the Catholic Diocese Office near his home for further advice. He rang and was given information relating to police reporting, options regarding civil action, and the process if he wished to pursue the matter through the Catholic Church's Integrity Unit. Joseph initially considered going through the Integrity Unit, but decided to take civil action after reading that the Catholic Church and police had had a Memorandum of Understanding in place for many years. 'I didn't know what that meant. The offender should face



whatever they have to. The other thing with the Catholic Church is they kept moving people around and hiding them. Someone should look at who did that, because they're as guilty as the offenders.'

# JUSTIN

Brother John Nelson, a teacher at the Victorian Marist college that Justin attended, befriended Justin's family over several years in the early 1980s. He became a father figure to Justin and his grooming behaviour included saying that he was keeping Justin out of trouble. 'He used to say, "You are going to end up in jail".' Justin remembers Nelson starting rough play with him when he was 10 years old. 'He was stroking me and putting his hands in my pants. It was sort of tickling, but as I got a bit older it became more dominating.'

In 1987, when Justin was 12, Brother Nelson encouraged Justin to visit him in another state. Brother Nelson had become Principal of a school there. Justin told the Commissioner that Nelson sexually abused him several times during the visit. He said he didn't tell anyone because his mother wasn't well and he didn't want to upset her, and at the time he was having difficulties at school. He also didn't know if anyone would believe him and, with encouragement from Nelson, Justin was contemplating becoming a priest.

When Justin was 18, he heard one day that Nelson was coming to the family home for a visit. 'That's when it clicked', he said. 'I'd repressed it from 14. That's when I spoke up to my stepfather.'

Justin's mother and stepfather immediately rang a senior cleric in the Melbourne Diocese who knew the family well, and told him the whole story.

He told Justin's mother that he'd get help for Nelson. They heard nothing further, and when they rang again they were repeatedly told he was unavailable.

In 1993, Justin and two other men made statements to the police about Brother Nelson's sexual abuse that resulted in him being charged, pleading guilty and receiving a suspended sentence. Justin said the senior cleric from the Melbourne Diocese was questioned as part of the police investigation and had denied knowing Justin's mother and that any conversation had taken place with her about Brother Nelson's behaviour.

Justin's mother said that she and her children had lost faith in their religion, and that she felt like a failure as a mother. 'I placed my full trust with him as a Marist Brother in the Catholic Church. How naïve I was.'

Justin is concerned that Brother Nelson still has the opportunity to work with vulnerable people. 'I want to know that he's not in a position of trust.' He thinks it's unfair that someone who pleads guilty to child sexual offences doesn't receive a custodial sentence, and he'd like an apology from the Catholic Church. Justin said the sexual abuse had affected him deeply. For many years he's been unable to maintain a job or relationships and at various times he's lived on the streets. 'I was out of control for a decade with alcohol and drugs and half-living. I've got maybe two friends. People don't understand me. I don't understand people.'

Justin said he now wants to be part of the cure, not the problem. He's been trying lately to learn what it means to be a man. 'I read something, and it said the definition of a man is a nurturer and carer. I can see that. I don't know how I'm going to get there, or what it even means, but over time ...'

# TO THE BASTARD. 1990

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'Let me help you'

You said

'I'll improve your breaststroke'

Bastard

You wanted to stroke my breasts

When they were yet to fully form

'You do all I ask

'Cause I'm helping you win'

Bastard

You just stuffed your hands in

I was at your whim

'Come early in the morning'

Training you called it

Torture and filth - I felt it

Bastard

I feel it now - five years after the deeds

Of desperation on your part

I've tried to doubt it happened

Pretend I imagined it all

But the memory remains

Bastard

Must I live forever with this weight

On my mind and body

Not telling a soul?

I wonder does SEXUAL ASSAULT

Mean anything to you

Bastard?

To me it means you

Bastard.

# KEN

By under-achieving at school, Ken hoped his parents would remove him from the Marist Brothers' college in Victoria that he began attending in 1962. Ken told the Commissioner that leaving school was the only way he believed he could escape weekly sexual abuse at the hands of the Principal from the age of 11.

'From the very first week of that school year, Brother Royson was sexually molesting me. I will never forget the first time it happened. I was totally at a loss and confused as to what was happening to me.'

Ken described being taken to the Principal's office and having 'strange things' done to him.

'He'd make me stand in front of him - undoing my trouser button, then fly, pulling my trousers and underpants down, and then fondling my genitals for five minutes or so. Then there'd be digital penetration, while he pleased himself.'

Ken felt unable to tell his strongly religious parents, and when his mother noticed his grades falling, Ken's plan backfired when she arranged for him to be privately tutored by the Principal.

'He'd threaten me saying, "If anything leaves this room, you will pay". I was terrified of the man. He'd get me at morning tea break, lunch, after school in these tutoring sessions. My confidence was shattered, and it cost me an education. I don't for one second believe I was the only boy being molested there either.'

For three and a half years, Ken said he endured the sexual abuse, and would often fantasise about suicide. He also 'did terribly' academically, and would often receive physical punishment for his poor grades.

'My relationships with my family have improved since I've told them. They've been amazingly supportive. I wasn't a bad father, but I know I could have been better.'

'I was terrified of Royson. He'd sing why you were getting it while hitting us with these thick, heavy 12-inch rulers until your knuckles and the back of your hands were bleeding. And he'd smile. He bloody enjoyed it.'

In 1965, when he turned 15, Ken's parents allowed him to leave school. He went on to marry and have two children, never telling a soul what he'd suffered until a morning news story that aired in 2002 triggered a deep emotional reaction in him.

'This Bishop was on television stating there was no abuse happening, and that the Brothers had been involved in horseplay and just hugged the



boys. I came close to having a nervous breakdown watching and hearing it, full-well knowing it was a lie.'

After seeing the report, Ken revealed his childhood abuse to his wife of 28 years, his two children and his mother.

'My relationships with my family have improved since I've told them. They've been amazingly supportive. I wasn't a bad father, but I know I could have been better. When I told my mother, she defended "her" Church. I felt utterly betrayed again. In her eyes, the Church could do no wrong.'

Around the same time, Ken lodged a statement with police and recalled being told an investigation wasn't possible since Brother Royson had died five years earlier.

In 2003, Ken attended a meeting requested by a senior Marist Brother.

'I think the police had contacted the Marist Brothers, and this Brother came from Victoria with a lawyer to see me. It felt very business-like. What struck me was the lack of empathy and

understanding. He told me he'd worked with Royson and seemed quite fond of him. They didn't want to go to court and offered me \$26,500, which I gave to my kids. It was dirty money.'

Ken also accepted counselling through *Towards Healing*, but only attended two sessions.

'The counsellor was a nice German lady, but she'd forget my name and didn't seem to know why I was there, so I gave it up.'

Ken told of battling demons relating to his past trauma every day, and believes he was sorely undercompensated by the Church.

'I would have liked to have seen a lot more compassion and a lot less concern for their Catholic brand. The amount I received was an insult, and shows a complete lack of understanding for the enormity of what victims have been through. There hasn't been one day in 50 years I haven't been affected by these criminal actions in some way.'

# LEN

Len grew up on a farm in western Victoria and in 1971 followed his elder brother, Pat, to board at a Jesuit college. Len said Father Barclay was called names by the boys because he was always trying to touch them. The Priest was in charge of the hurdling team and would massage boys' thighs up to their buttocks, telling them he was assessing their hurdling potential. Barclay's room adjoined the junior school dormitory and Len saw him come in after lights out and sexually abuse one of his classmates. 'I asked what Barclay had done and he said, "He grabbed my dick".' Len said Barclay had once tried to rub up against him and he'd told him to 'piss off'.

Len told the Commissioner that he joined the Jesuits in 1974 at the age of 21. During his novitiate he told his Provincial Superior about his and other boys' experiences with Barclay as children. 'It was on my conscience, that I'd done something about him when I was a kid and hadn't done anything since. The Provincial just nodded. There was no surprise or response; he didn't say anything.'


In addition to vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, Len said the Jesuits took an additional vow of obedience to Papal Authority. 'The Provincial was the Pope's representative, so his word was the Pope's, which was the same as Jesus talking to you. He was the highest authority, greater than any legal and moral power.' In 1994, a new Provincial spoke at a meeting of priests and seminarians and told them that he'd been dealing with a lot of child sex abuse complaints against priests. 'He said that if we were accused of

anything, we weren't to make any admissions and should refer the matter to him. He said if we made an admission it was possible we wouldn't be covered by the Church's insurer.'

A year or so later, another priest told Len to let his brother know that Barclay was no longer allowed to teach sport. Len thought it an odd comment as he'd never referred to either Barclay or his brother before. He surmised later that Pat had been sexually abused by Barclay while a boarder and had made a complaint about him. In the late 1980s, Len rang Barclay to confront him about the sexual abuse. 'He said, "I don't know anything about this"'. All he would say was that he was deeply unhappy during his time at the school.'

After Len's initial disclosure in 1994, he'd raised the matter with a third Provincial when he was making plans to leave the seminary in 1996. I said to him, 'I want you to know I'm not leaving because of my experience with Barclay as a boy'. Len said the Provincial didn't know what he was talking about, and told him that their discussion was only about him leaving the seminary. 'He said that if I wanted to talk about Barclay, I'd have to make another appointment. I just thought, "You're all mad", and I left.'

Len knew that a detailed file was kept on every priest and seminarian, and he didn't know if his previous report had been documented. 'I think they made a deliberate decision not to write anything down, so there could be no trouble about it later.'



Len told the Commissioner that the Catholic Church often responded to child sexual abuse reports by painting a portrait of the accusers as enemies of the Church. He thought this was also why allegations were never followed up. 'I think people who aren't supportive of the Church wouldn't be drawn into the abuser's web. It's the children from families who are most trusting and faithful that are the most vulnerable.'

# LISA

Ray Newman, her Grade 1 teacher at a Christian non-denominational school in Melbourne, started sexually abusing Lisa in 1986 when she was six years old. Despite Lisa reporting the abuse to other teachers, Newman remained teaching at the school until his retirement six years later.

Lisa told the Commissioner that Newman abused many boys and girls, but seemed to target her more than other students. He would take her from the classroom to an adjoining room and recite sexually explicit stories, which he then had her write out. He also removed Lisa's underwear and fondled her genitals. If she complained, she was beaten repeatedly. Newman continued this pattern of abuse for the three years he was Lisa's class teacher, and sought her out for further abuse from Grade 4 onwards. Each year, Lisa would ask to be placed with a different teacher. 'I'd be screaming and crying, saying "Please, please", but they'd still put me in his class.'


Newman told Lisa that she'd be taken away from her mother if she told anyone about the abuse, and made her sign a statement that she wouldn't. Despite this, Lisa repeatedly reported Newman's behaviour to other teachers. Several times she was called to meetings where a group of men she thought to be senior Church and teaching staff asked her to tell them details about the abuse. She said they told her that her mother had been informed about the abuse and had chosen not to do anything or attend the meetings. Lisa's mother was shocked when the abuse was disclosed to her many years later.

At the meetings, Lisa also reported her knowledge that other boys and girls were being abused by Newman. She told them that girls were made to sit between Newman's legs during class while he rubbed his erect penis on them. If a girl asked to go to the toilet, she'd be told to stand and urinate on the floor beside her desk. Newman would then take the girl's underwear, wash it and hang it up in the classroom. 'Sometimes there'd be 10 or 11 pairs of girls' knickers hanging there.'

'I wanted the school to be accountable for what had happened. They knew about him before I got there and they let it go on for years.'

Lisa said she felt believed by the staff, but thought they didn't know what to do. 'I don't think they wanted to deal with it. It was a Christian school and they seemed to want to protect themselves and the school's image.'

In 2000, Lisa's sister became aware that Newman was suspected of sexual offences against children. Lisa disclosed her own experience of abuse to her sister, mother and grandparents. They informed Victorian Police and after investigation, Newman was charged and convicted. Lisa was disappointed



with the sentence, and that the judge hadn't let her read out her victim impact statement. 'She said it wasn't important. It took a lot for me to write it and I wanted to read it out. I wanted them to know what effect the abuse had had on me.'

In late 2000, Lisa joined with 63 others in a civil claim against the school. When the matter reached mediation in 2007, only five people remained as litigants. Lisa was awarded \$250,000 including \$88,000 for legal costs. She also

signed a confidentiality agreement. 'I felt like they were silencing me again. I still couldn't talk about it.'

During the criminal and civil proceedings, Lisa learnt that there'd been complaints about Newman's behaviour dating back to 1983, but that it had never been properly addressed. 'I didn't want the money. I wanted the school to be accountable for what had happened. They knew about him before I got there and they let it go on for years.'

When Louise accepted a position teaching Indigenous students at a Lutheran boarding school in 2010, she saw it as an opportunity to help students forge productive and fulfilling lives. Instead she faced an ongoing battle to protect herself and the students under her care.

Louise told the Commissioner, ‘a lot of them felt unwanted by their parents and many came from backgrounds where English and literacy skills were poor, so coming to school probably felt safer to them than staying with their communities’.

But for some students that wasn’t necessarily the case. When a distressed 12 year old student told Louise he’d witnessed the sexual assault of a blind classmate she reported it to the school Principal, Barry Sanderson, expecting those involved to be punished.

‘Barry spoke to four boys aged around 14 or 15 who admitted they’d pushed Todd up against a wall and groped him, but Barry suggested to them it had happened “by accident”, and they all agreed. The way the Principal dealt with them was disgusting, it was just brushed over.’

That night, Louise made a mandatory report of the incident to police, who attempted to interview Todd four days later, but he refused to speak. She later discovered Todd had been assaulted a second time by the same boys. She felt that his abuse was linked to the aggressive behaviour he demonstrated towards staff, which was largely ignored.

‘A few weeks after being assaulted himself, Todd grabbed a boarding house parent from behind and slammed his erection into her. She was left with deep bruises on her arms, but Barry just wrote it off as an accident.’

When teachers reported incidents to the authorities, Louise said Barry did his best to ensure students were not available for police interviews.

‘Police had to provide a few hours’ notice if they were coming to interview students, and Barry would take them off in his car for hours, so they wouldn’t be at the school when the police came to interview them. Then nothing would be done. It was only when Todd grabbed my breasts when we were walking to school one day and then did it again in the classroom that Barry decided to send him back to his community.’

Louise lodged a report with police about the assaults on her, hoping it would ultimately lead to Todd receiving psychological help.

‘Todd desperately needed help. He was abusive and he was being abused. Barry accused me of making a mountain out of a molehill, and said I shouldn’t have gone to the police. I felt really bullied. The police were unable to find Todd anyway, so nothing came of my report.’

Louise rang the Lutheran Church Safe Place Service in late 2013. Safe Place was set up to assist those wanting to report sexual abuse.

'They made me feel validated and cared for, but I didn't trust the Lutheran system.'

Afterwards, a Lutheran Professional Standards officer and a Lutheran school Director invited Louise to meet with them and she aired her concerns about the welfare of children in the boarding school.

'Nothing has been done since that meeting back in November. The Church has prepared an information kit that basically advises that if anyone's contacted by the Royal Commission, they should seek advice from the Lutheran Professional Standards Unit first. In my experience if the Church receives information it doesn't like, it effectively ignores it and that has to change.'

Louise understands Barry's contract with the school hasn't been renewed, but still holds concerns for the welfare of students there and now fears other teachers in the school may be reluctant to step forward to report incidents of abuse, having watched the effect it's had on her and her family.

'I've been on worker's compensation since October 2013 because I'm suffering post-traumatic stress disorder. My income has been halved, so my family is struggling financially because I chose to stand up for what's right. I'd like to see the Church take responsibility for the protection of its staff and students so this culture of allowing abuse in schools comes to an end.'

\*The stories of George and Gillian are related to this story (pages 119 and 121)

# MARIE

Marie attended a Catholic girls' high school in Sydney and was sexually abused by her science teacher, Mr Lee, in 1974 when she was 16 years old.

Lee had a private office away from the school, and he'd invite Marie there, making her promise to keep it a secret. 'He started off playing games with me and after a while we were having intercourse.'

Marie told the Commissioner she later became aware one of her classmates, Maryann, was also being sexually abused by Lee. She thought other girls were too. Marie said she thought the nuns were aware of Lee's behaviour during his time at the school. 'Sister Clarice warned us about being in the science room, and Sister Philomena questioned Maryann several times. Sister Mary used to pull us aside and ask how we were.'

Marie said both she and Maryann stopped contact with Lee when they found out about each other's experience. 'He started ringing us up. By then the sex had become very rough and coercive.'

In 2005, Marie chose to participate in the Catholic Church's *Towards Healing* program. Her initial contact was positive. 'I felt acknowledged', she said. 'The woman was lovely. I made a statement and was given booklets. I didn't really know though, what the process would be.'

Marie wanted the Church to acknowledge it had failed her in its duty of care. She said at some stage in the *Towards Healing* process the issue

of compensation was raised and when Marie expressed interest in seeking further information, the approach changed. 'Everything went downhill. It became very business-like and contact with me ceased for months on end. They said you couldn't get an apology until the compensation had been worked out. They also said I could go to the police, but that if I did, I couldn't go any further with *Towards Healing*.'

Marie didn't take up their offer of counselling, because it was with someone affiliated with the Catholic Church, and 'It all felt too close.'


In 2006 an assessor for *Towards Healing* contacted Marie and asked her to make a statement. He asked for primary evidence of the abuse, and Marie presented several diaries she'd kept from when she was 16. Maryann and Marie's sister were interviewed, as were three nuns from the school. Lee was also interviewed and denied the abuse.

Marie said the assessor's report stated: 'The Church will be at high risk of other girls coming forward'. In October 2006 he noted, 'On the balance of probabilities, the complaint did occur'.

In July 2007, *Towards Healing* requested Marie undergo a psychiatric assessment. She didn't know why. The psychiatrist she saw wanted to know details of the abuse, and Marie found this distressing. 'It was so cold, and very odd. I felt like I was having to prove that it happened. It was like a judgement.'

In December 2007, two years after she'd contacted *Towards Healing*, a





mediation session was organised. 'More people got involved, people I hadn't met before, and I still didn't know what the process was.' Marie engaged a lawyer to assist in negotiations; however he had no experience with *Towards Healing* and she thought he was out of his depth.

Marie presented the victim impact statement she'd been asked to write. 'I felt like it fell into a black hole in the middle of the table, and that's where it stayed.' The issue of how much money she should be paid couldn't be decided. 'They'd say things like, "It's not worth that".' A payment of \$55,000 was eventually agreed, including \$5,000 for her lawyer.

Marie didn't think *Towards Healing's* written apology was sincere. 'They said they were sorry it happened, but they were hollow words. They didn't mean anything.' When Marie told them she wasn't happy with it, they suggested she write her own for them to consider.

In February 2008, she signed a confidentiality agreement. 'In hindsight if I'd known what was involved in *Towards Healing*, I wouldn't have done it. They're good wordsmiths. You can play a lot with words, but you need a separate system for justice, not within the system that caused the injustice. You have to have an independent body.'

# MARK

Mark was 13 when he was sexually assaulted by Brother Brendan at a Christian Brothers' boarding school in Queensland in 1975.

Mark told the Commissioner he was called out of his Year 8 homework class one evening and told to go and see Brother Brendan. He didn't know why. He said Brother Brendan was standing behind a row of lockers out of sight of others, and told Mark to pull his pants down.

'He stuck his finger in and then he undid his fly, and that's when I managed to wriggle free and I ran from there screaming, "Rape! Rape!"' Mark said the first person he saw was Brother Gerald who looked at him and starting laughing. Brother Gerald didn't ask Mark why he was distressed, but Mark was sure he knew the reason.

Mark ran back to his homework class and told the boy who was next in line to see Brother Brendan what had happened. 'I said, "He's just done something sexual to me and he wants to see you, but don't go".'

Mark reported the abuse to the Principal, Mr Burges, and to his father who came the next day to the school. Mr Burges took Mark's father into his office and told Mark to wait outside. 'My father was furious. He was foaming at the mouth.' Mark didn't know what Burges said to his father, but he thought there was a denial and an appeal to his father's deep faith not to take the matter any further.

Mark remained terrified for the rest of the year and for all of his time

at school. He knew of eight or nine other boys who were abused by Brother Brendan. As dormitory master, Brother Brendan was responsible for supervising the boys' bedtimes, and making sure they were showered and dressed. 'He used to walk around at night pretending to be checking on us. I never slept.' The following term Mark was moved to another dormitory overseen by a Brother he said was a good man. In the last term, he was moved to a third dormitory under the supervision of Brother Damian, who Mark said was known by all the boys to be a sexual abuser.

When Mark returned to school the following year in 1976, he was taken aside by Burges who told him that Brother Brendan had died during the holidays.

Twenty years later, Mark discovered that Brother Brendan was still alive, and that Burges had lied to him. He went to the Queensland Police and reported the sexual abuse perpetrated on him. Brendan was charged in November 1998 and two days later committed suicide.

Mark told the Commissioner the impact of the abuse on his life has been immense. 'I haven't been able to keep a relationship, or a job, or even a place to live. I've lived in 30 places in just the last 10 years. I used marijuana because it helped me forget.'

Mark describes being highly vigilant around young people. He says he tries to protect those he sees who are neglected or have difficulties, and his siblings say this has placed him at serious risk and made him vulnerable

to exploitation over the years.

With his siblings' support Mark approached the *Towards Healing* program wanting an apology and acknowledgement that the abuse had occurred. 'They said, "We're not suggesting this didn't happen", but they didn't want to admit the abuse.' He said *Towards Healing* didn't work for him. He subsequently received compensation from the Christian Brothers because

the story of charges against Brother Damian was in all the newspapers.

Mark said he thinks Burges was aware of the complaints about the Brothers sexually abusing boys at the school. He wonders about the damage done by Brother Brendan in the years between him being abused in the 1970s and charges being laid 1998. He's very angry that he was lied to.

# MARTIN

Martin wonders what he may have achieved in life if he wasn't tormented by the physical and emotional scars of a sexual assault he suffered at the age of 12.

He told the Commissioner, 'I was in the schoolyard with a couple of other boys, and we walked past Brother Roy, of the Vincentian Order, who was the grounds-keeper at the Catholic high school. We were supposed to be in class so he called us over and I made a bit of a comment which didn't go down too well with him so he threw coolant all over me. Then he told the other boys to get going to where they should be, but sent me to wait in the arts room'.

Within moments, the Brother appeared carrying a towel and handed it to Martin, telling him to clean off the coolant.

'When I'd finished drying myself, he put me in a headlock while he took off my pants. Then held me down, raped me and cleaned me up with the towel afterwards. I was in a lot of pain for days after and bled a lot anally, but I couldn't see a doctor because I knew if I told anyone they wouldn't believe me, that's how it was in the early 1960s. I've had ongoing issues with my bowel ever since.'

Martin counts himself lucky for meeting his wife of 40 years, Mary.

'I was fortunate to meet a nice girl and marry her because she and our two boys have kept me going, and my wife has put up with my mood swings over the years. It really hit me when the boys grew up and moved out of home, that's when the nasties crept in, which were the memories of abuse I'd managed to suppress for over 30 years.'

Martin told the Commissioner that a news report he watched about two priests accused of sexually abusing young children triggered him to take action against his abuser.

'I've never slept well, I have terrible nightmares, and there've been times when I've been too mentally unwell to work. Brother Roy completely destroyed my life. I mean, I was shit because of him, I've really suffered badly so I wanted him to be punished in some way.'

Brother Roy was charged by police for the abuse of Martin and another former student at the school, and ultimately sentenced to seven years in jail, with a non-parole period of three years.

'I had to sit and listen to a judge tell the courtroom all the wonderful things he does when he's not molesting children. It's impossible for me to calculate how much I've lost and will continue to lose emotionally and financially, and that sentence is all he got for what he's done to me.'

Martin also expressed disappointment over the lack of support services set up to help those in his situation, and is hopeful the system will be improved to better help victims of abuse.

'That school's responsible for a lot of suicides and has really led to deaths through other means. I always feel very guilty about a friend because we confided in each other about our abusive pasts, but he'd gotten into drugs and drinking. A few years ago he died of blood poisoning and he was only 40-something. He never made a life for himself and now it's too late for him, but maybe others can be saved.'

# MAURICIO

Mauricio was taught by Sisters of Mercy at his primary school in Melbourne, but said he didn't see much evidence of mercy in the Assistant Principal, Sister Christina. In 1970, when Mauricio was in Grade 1, he and other children were caught running in and out of the girls' toilets. Sister Christina lined the children up and took them one by one into a room to be 'interrogated'.

'I was locked in a cupboard, and a few others were taken up to another floor. Then she came and started questioning me. She led the questions and answers, and wanted me to tell her sexual stories. After that day, she'd bring me to the room by myself and get me to make up sexual fantasies for her. If I didn't make her happy, she'd punish me.'

Punishment included Sister Christina hitting Mauricio's naked buttocks while he stood on a desk. He told the Commissioner that one day the Principal walked in on one of the beatings, stopped briefly, and then left without comment. The sexualised stories and beatings went on for several weeks, and the abuse also involved Sister Christina making Mauricio masturbate in front of her.

Not long after the Principal witnessed the abuse, she and Sister Christina came to Mauricio's home and told his parents that he'd been misbehaving. 'My father defended me while they were there, but as soon as they left, he belted me - very badly. I told my parents the truth, but they didn't believe me.'

Mauricio told the Parish Priest one day

about Sister Christina and the sexual stories. 'He went and asked the nuns, and they said I was a liar. He gave me another beating in front of them.'


By Grade 5, Mauricio was getting into fights and performing poorly at school. A teacher he respected couldn't understand his change in behaviour and said she'd speak to the Principal about him. 'I don't know what was said, but the teacher came back crying. That's the first time I noticed that something had changed in me, and that whatever it was couldn't be talked about.'

The relationship with his parents, particularly his father, remained difficult throughout Mauricio's childhood and adult life. Several weeks after his father died in 2004, Mauricio was driving with his wife and child when he nearly crashed the car. 'I knew then something had gone wrong and I had to do something.'

Then 40 years old, Mauricio started seeing a psychologist. He also contacted the Catholic Church's *Melbourne Response*, not realising that several of his childhood classmates had done the same.

'The *Melbourne Response* people were very helpful', Mauricio said. 'They explained the whole process to us. There were five of us from the school by that stage, and they told us we could go to the police at any time.'

Sister Christina and the Principal attended the group mediation session. Mauricio said the Principal burst into tears, apologised and said she'd been unaware of what was going on. Sister



Christina refused to look at anyone. The *Melbourne Response* findings were that it was likely the abuse had occurred. 'We wanted the Sisters of Mercy to apologise in writing, but they wouldn't.' Pressed by the *Melbourne Response*, the nuns eventually issued a statement of regret. 'I wanted an apology and they danced right around it. We got compensation, but it wasn't about the money.'

Mauricio had disclosed the abuse to his wife before they married, and she'd been supportive in his struggles with employment, and mental health and substance use issues. 'The damage was with my parents. My father never knew, and my mother didn't believe me until the end of the *Melbourne Response* process. She had to wait till the Church admitted it and then she said sorry. I'd like it if the nuns said sorry.'

# MELANIE

Life in a Lutheran boarding school was lonely for 14 year old Melanie, whose childhood had been spent mostly on her parents' remote Queensland farm helping raise her three younger sisters.

'Within weeks of my fifteenth birthday in Year 10, a senior Pastor who was also a sex education teacher started sexually abusing me. When he tried to penetrate me and couldn't he said, "Girls like you have very strong hymens and need to be surgically cut". He told me he could arrange it with a doctor. I was absolutely petrified.'

After suffering months of abuse, Melanie attempted suicide by overdosing on painkillers. She was referred to a psychiatrist.

'I threatened to tell my psychiatrist about the abuse, but the Pastor laughed and said nobody would believe me over him. He always went with me to the appointments and went in first, by himself. I became paranoid thinking he and my psychiatrist were planning something, so I kept my mouth shut about the abuse.'

'The Pastor lived on the school campus, and arranged for me to stay with him and his wife, saying he'd be able to keep a better eye on me that way. He was abusing me every day, and I suspect his wife knew what was going on but chose not to do anything about it.'

In the middle of 1981, at the age of 17, Melanie told the Headmaster and a senior Church official that she'd been sexually abused by the Pastor and demanded that they remove him from the school and keep him away from children. She said 'nothing was done'. At

the end of 1981, Melanie cut herself with a razor in a second suicide attempt.

'My parents never understood, they thought the Pastor was so kind. My Dad would give him meat and fuel to repay him for taking an interest in me.'

Melanie refused to return to school, and with her family relationships in tatters was left with little choice but to support herself.

'I ended up selling myself for a few months, then met and married my husband when I was still quite young. He's been very abusive towards me throughout our marriage. I went straight from one abusive situation to another, but I am very proud of the four beautiful children we've raised, and they know about my past.'

In 2000, Melanie reported the abuse to the police and the Pastor was arrested, charged and committed to stand trial.

'He admitted having sex with me, but argued I was over 16 and had consented. The jury found him not guilty, it was one of the worst days in my life. All the hell I went through over those years, and he walked free.'

A month after the trial, Melanie accepted a written apology from the Lutheran Church and its offer to pay for her psychological treatment. She also received \$40,000 in compensation.

'They showed me a letter written by the Pastor admitting all he'd done to me, and apologising to the Church. I wasn't allowed to take a copy, and just seeing it made me feel sick to my stomach. I wonder how many other girls he freely abused while the Church stood by and did nothing.'

# NATHAN

In 2011 when Nathan discovered a series of text messages sent to a school soccer coach from his 16 year old daughters' phone, he confronted the Queensland Seventh Day Adventist school sports teacher.

'Toby denied there was anything going on with Emily, and put it down to a schoolgirl crush. Deep down I suspected he wasn't telling the truth, but I couldn't be sure and didn't want to risk this coach being sacked and having his name forever tarnished if he was innocent, so I accepted his explanation.'

Nathan told the Commissioner that eight months later his wife Peta discovered a text exchange between the school soccer coach and Emily, as well as images that rang alarm bells.

'It was obvious she was being groomed to take part in sexual acts with him, and most of his texts had come late at night or early in the morning when he'd have known Emily would most likely be alone.'

Nathan reported his suspicions of abuse to the school Principal later that morning.

'The Principal seemed pretty shocked but was very supportive, and suspended the coach that day. He then arranged for my wife and I to attend a police interview where we were told the coach couldn't be charged, because our daughter was over the age of consent by Queensland law so therefore his actions weren't criminal.'

Though disappointed in the outcome of their meeting with police, Nathan and Peta's concern turned to the wellbeing of other students in Toby's soccer team.

'That coach had been with the school for five years, so who would know how many other 14, 15 or 16 year old girls he'd managed to groom and sexually abuse in that time, right under the nose of other teachers and senior members of the Church. I pushed for an investigation so other victims would have an opportunity to come forward, but that never happened.'

Around the same time, the school Principal contacted a senior member of the Queensland Seventh Day Adventist Church, who visited the school to interview Emily.

'He seemed mainly interested in establishing Emily's age when Toby sexually abused her for the first time. They knew if she was 15, it would have been a crime, and that would have made them look bad. Looking back I think the school was more interested in protecting its reputation than Emily's wellbeing.'

Within a couple of weeks, Nathan learnt Toby had been dismissed. He said parents received a letter stating Toby had left for 'private and personal reasons' and that his departure was 'regrettable'.

'The letter demonstrated the school's complete denial, and fear of the reaction from the school community if parents found out the truth. There wasn't a hint of concern that a teacher



had been taking advantage of a student in their school, where parents are thinking their children are safe and well cared for.'

In the weeks after Toby's dismissal, Nathan said the Principal visited the family a few times, and advised their school fees would be taken care of for the remainder of the school year.

'He seemed keen for us to forget that our daughter was sexually abused, and would say things like, "This too shall pass" or suggest we were looking for answers that weren't there.'

A few weeks ago, Nathan said his daughter confided she was still recovering from the hurt she experienced as a victim of sexual abuse.

'She went to sleep and woke up a different person the day after she was abused, and will never be the same again. She's suffered depression, she's been suicidal. The soccer coach breached our trust in him over and over again and he may have lost his job for it, but Emily's the one who's ended up paying the true price.'

# NEIL

When Neil was growing up in the 1950s, Catholic families like his were hopeful that one boy would become a priest and one of the girls a nun. Against a background heavily steeped in religion, Neil said it wasn't possible to tell his parents that he was being sexually abused by Father Marcellus. 'My parents reinforced the same discipline as the school,' Neil said. 'If I copped a beating at school, my father would give me six of the best as well.'

In 1960, at the age of 10, Neil started Year 4 at a Franciscan college. Father Marcellus was his sports teacher for the first year and his class teacher for the following two years.

'I was very impressionable and I wanted to do well for Mum at home. Father Marcellus was looking after me and I thought, "He's a nice teacher".' Neil told the Commissioner that he was upset one day at a swimming carnival because his clothes had got wet. Father Marcellus offered to help Neil and fondled his genitals while towelling him. 'From then on, he was clever how he could take you to sport and always end up touching you.'

Father Lucius, another priest at the school, entered the sports room one day and saw Father Marcellus sexually abusing Neil. 'He told Marcellus to get dressed and go back to the Friary. Then he gave me the thrashing of my life. I was naked. He said I was a dirty little bastard and a shame to my family, and asked why I was doing this to Father Marcellus. I said I was only doing what he asked me to. When I got home I was upset and told my Dad I'd got in a fight so then I got another belting.'

Expelled from the school for disruptive behaviour soon after, Neil went to three more schools before starting an apprenticeship and pursuing a successful career. He described himself as a workaholic and perfectionist, 'which is exhausting because you've got to keep going all the time'.

'I want justice, not only for the victims, but for the partners and all those others affected as well.'

Neil married in 1971, but didn't tell his wife, Carol, about the abuse until 2009. He'd been taking painkillers and medication for depression and anxiety for years, and one night took an overdose of morphine. 'I just wanted the pain to go away,' he said. Neil said he and Carol had since grown closer and she'd told him that she now understood much of his behaviour over the past 40 years.

In 2009, Neil informed the Franciscan Order about the abuse and was given details of *Towards Healing*. He also made a report to police. Neil said that while individual police officers were helpful, he felt the process was fragmented and over several years he had to tell the same story to many different people. He was discouraged at being told too much time had lapsed since the abuse; there was insufficient evidence; and the age of

the alleged offender precluded further action. He later found out that age and time lapses aren't factors in the consideration of criminal matters.

When he was told in 2012 that the case had been closed, Neil said he kicked up a stink, particularly because Father Lucius hadn't been interviewed in the intervening years. When Fathers Marcellus and Lucius were interviewed in 2012, both denied knowledge of Neil or the abuse. 'I'd rung Marcellus in 2009,

just to see if he knew me and he said he did.' In a subsequent phone call, Neil confronted Marcellus directly about the abuse, and the Priest told him, 'If you're going to talk like that, get a lawyer'.

Neil was looking forward to mediation through the *Towards Healing* process, and was hopeful that it would provide acknowledgement that the abuse had occurred. 'I want justice, not only for the victims, but for the partners and all those others affected as well.'

# OWEN

For 50 years, Owen was shadowed by memories of Brother Matthew sexually abusing him, but he'd never told anyone. In 2012, news of the Royal Commission coincided with a dinner party at which Owen disclosed the abuse to his wife and their dinner guest, who happened to be a counsellor. He said the counsellor had grown up in the same Sydney suburb as him, and they'd been talking about the De La Salle college Owen had attended. 'I don't know what it was. I hadn't even told my wife, and next thing, I'd blurted the whole thing out. Everyone was shocked.'

Owen told the Commissioner that Brother Matthew started sexually abusing him in his first year of high school in 1961. 'He picked me out to get the strap three or four times a day, and I always got extra chores to do. He once made me take his strap to a boot-maker to get a piece of lead sewn into it.' Owen said the boys referred to Brother Matthew as 'mad', particularly because the aspirin powders he openly took in class seemed to cause marked and aggressive behaviour changes.


Owen said one day he was sent from the classroom and taken to the toilets by Brother Matthew. 'He threatened me that I'd get the strap if I didn't touch his genitals. First it was through his robe, then later it was masturbating him. After that it was anal intercourse. I was terrified the whole time.' The abuse occurred two to three times per week and continued for three years until 1964.

The school sports master recommended to Owen, a strong swimmer, that he keep fit over winter

by attending football training. 'While the other boys were on the oval, he'd take me aside in the grandstand and put his hand down my shorts and fondle me. He said it was healthy for young boys. That went on for about 18 months.' Another Brother singled Owen out for physical abuse, taking him to quiet areas of the school grounds and punching him. 'I couldn't tell my parents about any of it because they were working to put me there, and they wouldn't have believed me.'

Owen's wife thought his disclosure went some way to clarifying behaviour she'd seen and heard over the previous 22 years. Owen had often expressed strong opinions in discussions about the Catholic Church, and before they married he'd experienced homelessness and drug and alcohol addictions. Throughout their married life he had difficulty keeping jobs, particularly when it looked like a promotion or other positive event was imminent. Owen's children were also told about the abuse. 'They were shocked, but they understand now why I've been a bit of a crazy person in my life.'

In late 2012, Owen was diagnosed with cancer and, he said, given an estimated three to six months to live. He was encouraged by the medical treatment he'd received to date that was ongoing and eliciting positive results. In 2012, he also took legal advice and sought compensation from the Catholic Church. 'I wasn't interested in the money side of it, and I nearly pulled out about 20 times. I wanted an apology, and them to admit the abuse happened, but all they'd say is that I was at the school at that time and so



was he.' The Christian Brother who assessed Owen's claim told him that Brother Matthew had died in 1992, and that he 'wasn't surprised' about the report of sexual abuse. In 2014, Owen was awarded \$275,000 plus costs.

Owen said he would have liked to know what his life would have become if he hadn't been sexually abused. 'I'm saddened every day that things could have been different. My father was an academic and lectured at university. I think I could have done anything. My sister became a professional and I became a drunk.'

# PATRICIA

The sexual abuse Patricia's two brothers experienced as teenagers continued to have effects on the extended family decades later. 'Our family went from being a conventional Catholic family, with all the kids involved in Church activities to what we are now, which is devastated.'

Patricia told the Commissioner that her brother, Gerald, was abused by a boy three years his senior when he was in the Scouts and aged 13. 'He went off the rails, and he'd often run away. Once he rode his bike 150 kilometres to get away from home. No one knew at the time what was wrong. Over his life, he's had a history of violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and failed marriages and relationships. He's had three children and the eldest is more like a parent than he is.'

Another of Patricia's younger brothers, Brian, disclosed his abuse to her in 1997, when he'd returned to Victoria from Perth for their grandmother's funeral. Brian asked Patricia to drive him to the Christian Brothers' school where Brother Fallon had abused him in the early 1970s.

'He went in and told the Principal about the abuse, and the Principal asked him if he wanted to take it any further. He said he didn't, that he just wanted them to know so they'd put things in place to look out for the children.'

Patricia didn't know if the school subsequently took any action, but said that as a teacher herself, she'd have asked questions and investigated Brother Fallon on the basis of that type of complaint. Brother Fallon died in a nursing home in 2004, aged 89.

In the early 1980s, Patricia entered a convent to become a nun. She left after three years, married and subsequently had children. She maintained a strong Catholic faith and continued to attend Church, though she struggled with elements of the hierarchy's conservatism and what she saw as its inability to acknowledge child sexual abuse.

'They say it's isolated, only one or two people, but it's bigger than they want to admit. My best friend at school, my two brothers and my cousin were abused by Church people, and the Priest who ran our youth group was jailed for child sex offences. I worked overseas with the Church, and I've seen deviant sexual behaviour by priests there. Even if they say it's a small number, it's the cover up and duplicity that concerns me.'

In the late 1990s, Patricia's mother was told that Brian and Gerald had been sexually abused. 'My mother believes steadfastly in the Catholic Church,' Patricia said. 'She says, "If the Pope says something I'll believe it. If he changes then I'll change". Even so, she said there were sufficient warning signs with some of the priests and brothers for the Church to do something early on. She's angry that those people used the cover of the Church to access children.'

In her local Parish, Patricia said a recently appointed priest had installed an old-style confessional box, but that the school Principal wouldn't allow any of the children to go into it. 'I'm still a person who believes in reform and I define myself as a Catholic, but it's problematic.'

# RAYMOND

Every weekend, when Raymond's parents drove away after visiting him at the South Australian boarding school, the 12 year old would run for as long as he could beside their car, screaming for them to take him home.

Raymond told the Commissioner that over the course of his first year at the school in 1963, as a 12 year old Year 7 student he was molested and raped by Andrews, the Principal of the Marist Brothers' college.

'The first time, Andrews was behind me feeling my penis and testicles, then he pulled my pants down and it hurt like buggery. He stopped because I was making a lot of noise. After, I realised blood was running down my legs and into my little slippers so I hid in the boiler room and could see my pyjama pants were very covered in blood. I tried to wash them but I couldn't so I buried them in the boiler burner. When they were discovered missing, I was told they cost money and caned for losing them.'

Raymond said he would have been too embarrassed to seek medical attention from the school matron, and 'wouldn't have known the words' to say to his parents, so kept the abuse to himself.

He described going from being near the top of his primary school class, to failing his first year at boarding school.

'I was the most caned kid in the school. Sometimes I'd even skipped showers to make myself smell a lot so I would be unattractive, but it didn't work.'

The abuse only stopped when Andrews

left the school suddenly, and two years later at 14, Raymond left school.

'I became very promiscuous with men, I thought I was worthless. Then I got a lucky break and started a good career and met my wife. Before we married I told her about the abuse. I started having suicidal thoughts in my early 20s and I thought it wasn't fair because we had three young kids, so I went to the doctor and was put on medication that worked. But I've always felt no matter how much I succeed, I'm never good enough.'

Raymond contacted police in 2007, but felt he was being 'fobbed off'. In 2009, he met with *Towards Healing* to disclose his abuse, and said he was advised Andrews wasn't lucid enough to make any comment.

'Then one day I saw the Church had just honoured Andrews with a mass, and I watched the speech he made at this mass where he spoke of the lives of the boys he'd touched, which I thought was a pretty bad choice of words. I'd been told he had dementia, but when I saw the pictures I thought, this guy's not suffering dementia.'

With his initial plan to pursue the Church reignited, Raymond again contacted *Towards Healing*.

'Andrews said it was a crock of shit, but out of the blue, someone else contacted them and they noticed the modus operandi was too similar. Here they had someone from a different part of Australia telling them the same story, it was always, "It's part of my responsibility as head of the school to

see that you're developing properly as a young man," I think the Church must have known because he shifted around a hell of a lot.'

The Church made a \$75,000 settlement. Very few of Raymond's family members have retained their faith. When he revealed details of his childhood abuse to his parents, he said they were both 'gutted'.

He doesn't know how many boys may have been sexually abused by Andrews, but Raymond knows of at least one.

'Troy was my best mate at school. I knew he'd been with Andrews one night, and when he came back I could hear him sobbing in his bed. I went and climbed in with him and was hugging him. We woke the next morning to the chorus of "Poofers, poofers, poofers" and that stuck for quite some time. Troy died last year, he drank himself to death.'



Ross was unsure why he and another boy had been called to the Principal's office at their Christian Brothers' school. When the two 11 year olds arrived, Ross recalled they were told to strip all their clothes off.

'Brother McEvoy hit us until we cried, then when we cried, he nursed us back, and that's when he molested us. We were both naked us two boys. After our first bashing, the other boy said if we don't cry, he won't get to cuddle us and then he won't touch us. But the second time I couldn't take it, I cried. Looking back I realise crying made him more violent, which aroused him more, so the violence with the act became a pattern.'

It was 1969 and, Ross told the Commissioner, his life as the eldest son of devout Catholic parents was 'incredible' and complete growing up in a town where the Church played an important role in community and family life, until Brother McEvoy arrived.

'I was an altar boy, and being groomed for the priesthood. There'd be parish picnics and they were a big deal. Brother McEvoy was well liked, he would often come around to my parents' place for dinner, my father adored him. He and another Brother would always come in via the backdoor and visit us in our bedrooms before our parents knew they were there.'

Though he can't remember specific details, Ross believes both men would use the visits as an opportunity to sexually abuse him and his siblings.

Ross told no one of the sexual abuse at the time, and said it only stopped when Brother McEvoy moved away after spending five years in the rural Victorian community.

'Brother McEvoy hit us until we cried, then when we cried, he nursed us back, and that's when he molested us. ... Looking back I realise crying made him more violent, which aroused him more, so the violence with the act became a pattern.'

He revealed details of the abuse to his parents in the 1980s, and said they were 'devastated' to learn about what he'd been through at school.

'My life was beautiful until I was 11, then I got expelled in my final year and went to jail just after my 18th birthday. My life was miserable after that, littered with failed relationships. I've married twice and just celebrated my 25th wedding anniversary, but my wife wants to leave me because underneath I have problems, I've never looked

after myself, I'm still reeling from these intimate invasions.'

Brother McEvoy is serving a jail sentence for crimes committed against children, but Ross said many of his victims suicided long before he was sentenced.

'He was walked before the court a few times and the Church has paid a lot of money to support him, but he's shown no remorse, there's been no apology, he's refused to say sorry or show any signs he feels he's done something wrong. I know of others abused at school, but they're dead. It takes a hell of a lot of strength to take your own life, and people must be doing it because they feel they're better out of the way.'

For the past 20 years, Ross said he and his wife have provided foster care for over 60 children through the Department of Human Services.

Drawing on his own experiences of physical and sexual abuse, Ross describes himself now as an advocate for children.

'I've been to jail to visit these kids as young adults. We haven't got it right in the way we help people recover. I became disengaged, I didn't care what people thought. I realise how much harm that did to the first half of my life, and I became very miserable. We have this incredible love for a young child whose been abused, but because we're unable to help them promptly, by the time they become a teenager, they become the most reviled people in our community. I want that to stop.'

# SAMUEL

Samuel was born in 1973. His parents were separated and he lived with his mother. In 1986 he commenced high school as a boarder at a college run by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Samuel thrived there, playing football, joining the brass band and cadets.

Samuel told the Commissioner that things changed at the start of Year 9. Samuel had spent time swimming, fishing and water-skiing on the lake and had developed 'pelican itch'.

Father Devon, who was his dormitory master as well as a music teacher and football coach, called Samuel to come into his office. He then asked him to take his clothes off, including his underwear. He then made Samuel lie on the bed and proceeded to rub calamine lotion into his groin area for a long time. After that, he rubbed the lotion into Samuel's buttocks and anus for a long time. Samuel remembers Father Devon breathing heavily while rubbing.

Samuel was too intimidated to call for help. For the next few nights, Samuel slept in his locker rather than his bed and he ignored messages from Father Devon, sent through other boys, to come and have more lotion applied. Samuel made sure that he was never alone with Father Devon.

From this point, Samuel's behaviour deteriorated, he got into trouble at school and felt increasingly isolated.

In 1989, when Samuel was in Year 10, Father Devon left the school and there was talk that there had been a complaint about him. Samuel felt that he could now speak and he disclosed the abuse to the school counsellor and then to another staff member. They said that no one would believe his story because of his past record of bad behaviour. He also told his mother who did not really believe his story (his mother now regrets that she did not believe him).

Samuel left the college at the end of Year 10, finishing Year 11 and Year 12 at a local Catholic school. By this stage, he was living in a youth refuge because his relationship with his family had deteriorated.

He was drinking and taking drugs and tried to commit suicide in 1995 but his wife called an ambulance.

Samuel has now made a complaint to the police and has consulted a law firm about a possible group civil action, separately from any criminal proceeding.

Samuel told the Commissioner that 'I am not concerned about compensation, my biggest hope there is that it will force the school and the Church to take these things far more seriously in the future, and not treat kids as they treated me'.

# SEAN

In 1994, Sean was sexually abused by a teacher at his Anglican boarding school in Sydney. For many years he had little memory of the abuse. 'I spent 10 years trying to suppress it, because I didn't want to admit it happened. I can't remember all the details, only that it was quite rough.'

At 12, Sean came to the boarding school as an academic and sporting high achiever. He missed his home and family though, and was often upset. He told the Commissioner that Mr Olsen, the music teacher, took him aside after his first class and was kind and caring. Several other teachers spoke to Sean's parents and suggested that Mr Olsen take Sean under his wing and look after him. 'They said, "He's got a rapport with Sean. He lives on the campus. He's got a wife and Sean's welcome in his house". Mum and Dad thought it was a nice gesture.'

Sean said the abuse started nearly straight away. 'There was me and another boy. I don't remember all of it, but I know it wasn't pleasant. It was worse, much rougher, for the other boy.'

Sean's behaviour at the school and with his parents changed overnight. He said he became violent and aggressive, and rang his parents crying so many times that he was banned from using the telephone. 'I went from a normal child to a little monster. I was always fighting. I was unmanageable.'


Sean remembered the school nurse trying to help him, but said no one ever asked him the right questions. After one term, Sean's parents took

him out of the school and enrolled him at another one near their home. His behaviour worsened however, and he started drinking heavily. At the age of 14, he was prescribed antidepressants, and was taken by his parents to numerous counsellors. Sean said he couldn't disclose the abuse because at first he was so ashamed, and in a short time he'd repressed it so much that he was unable to admit it.

'I'm becoming more of a whole human, because I hated myself. I've hated that 12, 13 year old boy with a passion this whole time.'

From the age of 18, Sean continued to drink and get into fights, moving house many times and unable to hold down a job. Relationships were volatile and upsetting. 'Certain triggers would come up and I'd overreact. I didn't know why I was doing it. It was the same sort of behaviour that I'd had as a child. What I learned as a child I carried through as an adult.'

When Sean gave up alcohol in 2009, memories of the abuse starting coming back, and he saw how it had affected all aspects of his life. Around this time, he contacted the Principal of the school to ask if Olsen still taught there. When told that he did, Sean told the



Principal about the abuse. A short time later Sean was contacted by police officers and asked if he wished to make a statement. He didn't. 'That call came as a shock. I just wanted the Principal to know what Olsen had done, and to say he shouldn't be teaching there.'

Sean said he didn't want to take the matter further, because he knew it would be difficult to prove the matter in court. He was also concerned that the school had significant power and resources behind it, and he didn't. Memories of the abuse also still felt too new to him to be discussed in public.

He said he was slowly coming to terms with acknowledging the abuse. 'I'm becoming more of a whole human, because I hated myself. I've hated that 12, 13 year old boy with a passion this whole time. I hated him because I felt he should have had more street smarts. Now I see that kid did the best he could. I've realised that he fought, kicked, screamed and did things to get out of that situation. It's only recently I've been able to look at it with a different view.'

# STUART

In 1972, Stuart became a boarder at an Anglican college in regional New South Wales. The following year Phillip Jarvis arrived from Queensland to take up teaching, sports coaching and assistant housemaster duties at the school. Stuart said Jarvis was well liked by the students and organised interesting outings and entertainment nights for them.

'I was 14, and a bit of a loner,' Stuart said. 'I was walking around the school grounds bored one day and I saw Jarvis in the sports room. When I said I was looking for something to do, he said, "Do you want a shag?". I didn't know what to say, but I wanted to pretend I knew about the world, and I said, "Yes". Next thing we were under the table and he fondled me. Then he started to suck my penis. He asked me if I wanted to suck him and I said, "No".'

Stuart told the Commissioner that Jarvis again abused him while driving to a camping weekend in the outback. He'd thought Jarvis' car was safe because another boy, Terry, was also present. However, Jarvis gave the boys cigarettes and suggested that Stuart and Terry both participate in sex with him. 'We were all fondling each other in the front seat of the car. Then he took us to a lake and said we should go skinny dipping.' Stuart said he was in the water and looked to the embankment to see Terry performing oral sex on Jarvis.


Jarvis sexually abused Stuart over the next few months. Two weeks before the end of term, Terry mentioned what had happened on the camping trip to other boys, one of whom informed

the Principal. The boys' parents were contacted and Terry was removed immediately from the school. The Principal told Stuart's mother that Jarvis would be counselled, and that he'd help her in finding a new school for Stuart. 'My mother thought otherwise. She said, "Why should my son have to leave while this predator gets to stay with all these boys?". She told him that if further abuse occurred he as Principal would be a party to it.' It was agreed that Jarvis stay for the next two weeks but not return the following term.

'Why should my son have to leave [the school] while this predator gets to stay with all these boys?'

Stuart has had difficulties with managing his anger and was often impulsive in his behaviour. As an adult he found solace in another Protestant Church. One day he disclosed the abuse to his Pastor who asked if Stuart had reported it to the police. 'I told him I hadn't, and he said that every person has to face the consequences of their actions. He said that I had the power of justice in my hands.'

In 2005, aged 43, Stuart reported the abuse to police. Terry corroborated Stuart's story, but didn't want to report his own abuse. At the same time, three men in Queensland came forward with



accounts of being abused by Jarvis in the 1970s. Jarvis was charged in New South Wales and convicted after pleading guilty.

Stuart's experience of the court process was positive, though he would have liked to have been guided through it by someone with personal experience of sexual abuse. He received \$35,000 in Victims Compensation, and didn't contemplate suing the Anglican Church. 'I think they did what they thought was the right thing at the time, except Jarvis was offered counselling and I wasn't. Hopefully, it would all be different if it happened today.'

# LOST. 1998

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Sadness engulfs me  
tears slide silently down my face  
no sound, no thoughts  
lost in the valley of shadows  
my body aches in pain  
a painful memory almost buried  
yet surfaces strident & authentic

I want to scream  
but what is the point  
my voice is unheard  
and now almost lost  
amongst the thundering of the pain

I feel lost & frightened  
lonely & confused  
the tears streak slowly  
down the course of their journey  
across the desert of time  
depleted and endless  
a river searching for the sea.



# SUSANNA

In 2010, Susanna reported an incident of sexual abuse to the police. She'd been a 16 year old student attending a performing arts high school in 1989 when her dance teacher, Ben Hodges, sexually abused her.

The sexual abuse started with Hodges giving Susanna massages. He'd told her that she needed massage for a stiff hip. 'He'd massage my right inner thigh, and he'd be sitting next to me, and then he started inserting his fingers.' Susanna said the abuse escalated until one day Hodges exposed his erect penis and tried to insert it in Susanna's vagina.

Susanna said that when this abuse occurred, she'd run from the classroom screaming and crying. She told another teacher, who replied, 'I can't do anything about it. You have to speak to the Principal'. Susanna then went to the Principal's office and was told, 'Don't be silly, he wouldn't do that'.

Susanna told the Commissioner that others' attitudes towards her changed after she reported Hodges. 'No one would speak to me. I was pushed to the back of the class, and the teachers always acted funny around me. But after that he didn't touch me.' Susanna said her classmates were invited to a meeting at which Hodges was present, and asked if they had experienced any inappropriate behaviour from him. They all said no.

Response by police to Susanna's report in early 2010 was, she thought, thorough. 'They investigated it and were supportive and professional. I was exhausted, but I felt like they believed

me.' In October that year Hodges was charged with sexual offences. Four other girls had also come forward with allegations of abuse against Hodges.

Susanna also initiated a civil claim against Hodges. The school made a cross-claim against Hodges and denied receiving notification of the abuse at the time it occurred. Susanna underwent seven medico-legal assessments, during which she was accused of making the abuse up. She found the process difficult, but was determined to continue.

In the criminal proceedings, delays and adjournments meant the charges against Hodges weren't heard until late 2013. Susanna didn't know why, but the matter was dismissed by the magistrate, and didn't proceed to trial.

For more than 10 years Susanna had blocked memories of the abuse. During that time she'd travelled widely, married, and worked overseas as a dancer before forging a professional career. However, she'd also experienced mental health issues, and had been hospitalised several times with severe depression.

She said that if the school had believed her when she first reported the abuse, it would have made a huge difference to her life. 'If they'd reprimanded him and brought my parents in and provided counselling, it could have all been nipped in the bud, and I would have known what he did was wrong and inappropriate. If they'd done that at the time, none of the rest of this would have happened.'

When his wife died of cancer in 1969, Syd became a single father to three boys, and said her death had a particularly harsh effect on his youngest son.

He told the Commissioner, 'Shane was only three when she died, it was very hard on him. He'd always worry when I dropped him at school and be so pleased to see me when I picked him up'.

In 1978 when Shane was 12, Syd placed him at a St John of God special school for boys with behavioural disorders, based on the recommendations of a psychologist. Shane lived at the school through the week, returning home to his father each weekend.

'He had a high IQ but had behavioural difficulties and bipolar which was relatively undiagnosed at that time, so putting him in that school was a medical decision rather than a religious one.'

Syd recalled that Shane would often complain of being ill when it came time to return to the school, and similar to when he was a young child, would beg his father not to leave him there each Sunday night.

'When I'd walk him to his dormitory, he would say, "I don't want to be here Dad", and he would tense up, I could feel it. Sometimes after dropping him off I'd drive a few kilometres away and just wouldn't be happy, and I'd turn around to go and get him, but there'd be a Brother there who'd say, "Don't worry, we'll take good care of him", so I'd leave. I wish I'd taken him home.'

Years later, Shane told his father the

Brothers would punch him and other boys in the stomach to stop them from telling anyone about the sexual abuse.

'But he was so pleased when you picked him up, he wouldn't display anything you could pick up that he was not well.'


In 2007 when Shane was 46 he told his father about the 'terrible things' he endured while boarding at the school, including being raped over 200 times by Brothers who worked at the school, and by other students.

'Shane told me one of the Brothers would encourage boys to push each other down and rape each other in front of 10 or 15 of the boys, and three or four other priests. They'd try and fight them off, some of the boys were bigger, and with three or four of them, there was no way in the world you were going to fight them off. They engaged in group sex, and child-on-child sex and the priests would encourage it.'

For two years, Syd believes Shane suffered regular and severe physical and sexual abuse at the hands of those charged to provide him with care and protection.

Syd reported the sexual abuse to police within six months of Shane's disclosures.

'It took them three years to listen, they said he'll have to report the abuse himself and that took some time. I went to the St John of God Order and met with a Bishop who offered what I thought was a pretty insincere apology



and Shane's since received \$230,000 from the Church.'

As a result of the trauma, Syd said Shane's education suffered and he failed to complete his higher school certificate. Syd said that the abuse clearly increased Shane's problems.

'He said he didn't tell me at the time because he was ashamed and embarrassed. I used to think I'd failed because a mother would start asking more questions. He's taken cocaine to ease the pain. I'm not making excuses, but that's just the way it is. He's in jail at the moment, he's serving an eight and a half year sentence.'

Regarding the impact on himself, Syd said he was grateful for the support of his other sons and close family friends.

# TRACEY

It seemed strange to Tracey that Mr Edmunds asked her to come to his house for a music lesson on a Saturday, but her parents believed him when he said his school schedule was booked out for the year. He was a music teacher at her Uniting Church school in Melbourne.

‘My parents were teachers and assumed that all teachers were good, so I just went along with it.’

Tracey told the Commissioner that Mr Edmunds would sometimes touch her inappropriately when they were alone.

‘Sometimes he’d touch my arms when he was teaching me how to play the flute, and pretend he was trying to improve my posture but it felt very sexual.’

One day in 1987 and nearing her sixteenth birthday, Tracey walked out of one of these private music lessons with Mr Edmunds.

‘I’d had enough of him touching me, so I left. But he persuaded me to come back that afternoon, which I now realise was so stupid. I went back and he raped me. At the time I felt frozen, but as soon as I could get myself together I ran home. I jumped into the shower, and could see his vivid fingerprints on my arms in the bathroom mirror.’

Tracey kept the rape secret until her best friend Sally revealed Mr Edmunds had been asking her to go to his house for a private music lesson.

‘That’s when I knew I wasn’t the only one being targeted, so I told Sally what he’d done to me and we decided to say something.’

‘My school was protecting its own interests, they didn’t care about my family. It’s been so hard on my parents, and for years I’ve felt a sense of shame, like I was a dirty person. I feel very guilty because so many other girls suffered later in other schools. I think maybe I could have stopped it.’

The two Year 10 students reported the rape to a school counsellor, who immediately informed the Principal.

‘We were called into the Principal’s office and he told us Mr Edmunds would be sacked never to work in a school again. My parents were called and told about my rape, but the Principal urged them not to go to the police, so they didn’t

because they trusted the school to handle it.'

Later Tracey learnt Mr Edmunds was suing the school for unfair dismissal, and she and Sally were asked to give evidence at a Tribunal.

'Mr Edmunds sat a metre across the table smirking at me. That day was almost as traumatic as the rape itself. His lawyer went to town on me, and nobody stood up to defend me or stop them accusing me of making the whole story up, they read parts of my diary. It was a very distressing experience.'

Tracey was devastated to later learn the school agreed to pay Mr Edmunds a sum of money and provide him with a reference as part of a settlement deal. She told the Commissioner that he went on to

work in State schools and continued to abuse girls.

'My school was protecting its own interests, they didn't care about my family. It's been so hard on my parents, and for years I've felt a sense of shame, like I was a dirty person. I feel very guilty because so many other girls suffered later in other schools. I think maybe I could have stopped it.'

'My anxiety levels have improved since I started seeing a wonderful psychologist. For a decade after the rape I couldn't sleep through the night and now I can. But my life has been ruined. I ended up in a physically abusive relationship for 20 years because I felt I didn't deserve better. I've tried to kill myself, I've abused alcohol, I've starved myself, I've done everything to punish myself for what happened.'

# WALTER

Walter was born in 1950. Walter's step father ran a hotel and his mother decided that he should go to boarding school because she felt a hotel wasn't an appropriate place to bring up children. Between the ages of seven and 12 he went to a Catholic college run by the Salesians of Don Bosco. Walter was not visited often by his mother and usually spent the holidays at the school rather than going home. Brother Joshua was in charge of his dormitory and Walter described how the Brother would go to boys in bed, pull their pyjama pants down and hit them on the bum with a rubber strap. The boys called this being 'got' by Brother Joshua.

Walter told the Commissioner that when he was about 10, Father Jack suggested that he come to his room to help him with exam papers. Father Jack's room didn't have a door, just a curtain across it. Walter was flattered at being asked to help. Father Jack fondled his genitals through his pyjamas and kissed and cuddled him, saying to Walter, 'This is what true love is about'.

Walter was confused and angry about what had happened and his grades at school plummeted. He just wanted to get away from the school, he hated it with a passion. When he was 11, he ran away and lived for a week in a wooden box behind a service station. The school took him back because of his mother's situation but he was only there for another 12 months or so. His mother had a bad heart and knew that she was dying so she arranged for

Walter's father to have custody and Walter went to live with his father in New South Wales.

Walter has struggled with anxiety, depression and panic attacks throughout his life and has had great difficulty relating to males. He said, 'I was afraid of men in early adulthood. I overcame that as my children grew up, I started to mature with them and I realised that they're not all bad ogres'. Walter found it helpful to concentrate on his studies during his twenties and to throw himself into his work - as a distraction from the memory of the abuse.

Walter married at 19 and disclosed the abuse to his wife when he was in his twenties and going through a difficult patch. About 15 years ago he told his half-sister and she spoke to the police. Walter didn't want to take it any further. He said, 'I probably didn't feel like going through court proceedings or anything like that in relation to something that had happened so many years ago. I thought it was futile'.

Then his half-sister followed through by ringing the Catholic Church and he was contacted by a senior priest in the Salesian Order. The Church did not offer any further help or counselling but did suggest that Walter might want to contact the police. Walter received some comfort from this 'sort of' admission of wrongdoing by the Church. However, as time went on, Walter became angry as he heard the Church denying on a wider scale what was happening.

# WARREN

Having battled alcohol and cannabis addictions in the past, Warren has rarely been able to hold down a job and wonders how his life might have panned out, if he hadn't been sexually abused when he was 11.

He told the Commissioner that while attending a Christian Brothers' college in Victoria he was molested and raped by two Brothers when he started at the school in 1986.

'I was invited to a meeting with Brother Lee and Brother Carmichael. They asked about my family life and how was I enjoying school. I thought it was nice to get some attention, I was just a naïve little boy. There was some kind of wink or something, cos the next time I was invited to come back they proceeded to masturbate me and put their finger up my bum. They said it was "our secret".'

During a third meeting, Warren said he was raped by each Brother in turn, before an older Brother was brought into the room.

'Brother Lee put a condom on the third man, but he was unable to penetrate me.'

Warren described being in pain and bleeding anally in the days following the rapes. He believes he was one of several boys being sexually abused by the men, and said it only stopped when Brother Lee 'took pity' on him.

Warren finished Year 12 in 1991, and maintained silence about his abuse for 13 years until 2004 when he told a counsellor. The following year, he told his parents.

'I came from a good Irish Catholic family and grew up going to church, and when I told my family they were mortified, just horrified.'

With his father's support, Warren approached *Towards Healing* in 2005, and described the process as 'deceptive' and 'like being raped again'.


'I was told I'd be meeting with the Director of Counselling, but that person was actually an employee of the Christian Brothers. The assessors deciding whether my claim was valid turned out to be Catholics, which raised the concern of conflict of interest.'

Warren said at one point he was even offered a pastoral meeting with the two men who'd raped him.

'It felt like they were about to open the door and let the tigers in the room. When the outcome came through they said "Sorry, it didn't happen". Paraphrase, "You're lying". Apparently I'd provided the wrong dates or years and the priests just denied they'd known me at that time.'

When his claims were rejected, Warren discussed his concerns about the *Towards Healing* with a senior member of the Order.

'Brother Rogers was unresponsive and told me the alleged events couldn't have happened because they had no other complaints about Brother Carmichael or Brother Lee, but that turned out to be untrue, there had been other complaints.'



In 2008, Warren provided police with one of 15 victim statements that would see Brother Lee charged with over 40 child sex offences. He was convicted and jailed in 2011.

‘I want the Church to be held accountable for deceptive, cruel and selfish behaviour. I want them to show explicitly and in writing what they’re doing to fix the wrongdoings of the past. Forget apologies, they mean nothing when coming from compulsive liars. Hit them in the back pocket where it hurts the most.’







# COMMUNITY

**Names have been changed**

The real names of individuals have not been used. The names of all individuals and any other identifying features have been changed.

# BARBARA

Camping trips and adventures are part of the scouting lifestyle, and when Amy graduated to a Sydney Venturer Scout Unit in 2002 at the age of 14, her mother Barbara continued to feel her daughter was safe during excursions.

But at 15, Barbara told the Commissioner, Amy said that 'something was happening' with an older, male Venturer leader, and Barbara hugged and expressed support for her eldest daughter.

'I spoke to my husband who was a scout leader at that time and he felt that Keith may have just looked at her the wrong way. He knew Keith through the scouting community, so I started to think Amy may be attention-seeking or jealous of her younger sister.' Amy also told police, who advised the Department of Community Services (DOCS).

'I received a call from DOCS but by that stage Amy backed out of wanting to pursue anything because she was feeling we didn't believe her, and so the abuse continued for another two years.'

Wherever there was an opportunity, Barbara believes Keith took advantage of the then young teenager.

'Amy's father was physically and verbally abusive to her at home, and Keith became her close friend. He'd tell her she was very beautiful, and that she didn't deserve to be treated like that. He was the father figure she didn't have and that's how he got by with being alone with her in the car, he'd talk to her about her family problems.'

When Amy's behaviour changed radically, Barbara arranged counselling.

'She was doing things like rocking, head-banging, cutting herself but she never revealed anything to her counsellor. Schizophrenia runs in my family, so we thought she might be suffering a mental illness.'

One night in 2005, Barbara told the Commissioner, police came to the family home and took Amy away without explanation. By that stage Barbara said her husband was no longer 'on the scene'.

'There was no support to explain what was happening, they just took her, it was a really horrible experience. The next morning a detective came over to explain someone had reported her sexual abuse and told me Keith had watched Amy dress and undress, as well as touched, kissed and licked her body and digitally penetrated her.'

Barbara said that after enduring the abuse for three and a half years, Amy was in a fragile mental state and ill-equipped to cope with the ensuing court trial.

'My daughter gave evidence, but was unfortunately quite hysterical at the time and couldn't speak very well. Keith didn't have to speak at all, the inequity of it all was totally ludicrous and going through that court case was as bad as the abuse itself.'

Keith was found not guilty, but Amy received Victims of Crime

compensation. Barbara said Amy's chances of leading a normal life have been ruined.

'It's taken away her childhood and ability to form normal, intimate relationships. She's not been able to join the workforce, has post-traumatic stress disorder and is bipolar. She's quite obese because she's eaten herself into oblivion, doesn't like social situations, like she's just a total disaster.'

Amy attends regular therapy sessions, and Barbara explained that the financial strain of her ongoing psychological and medical appointments is a constant burden.

'I'm living with the consequences of not taking action earlier, it affects my work and my home life.' But the greatest disappointment for Barbara is the scouting community's response following the trial.

'They had a beach party to celebrate after he got off, with scout leaders and venturers. And what support did we get? Nothing, nothing at all, they were all on his side.'

Barbara would like to see the Scout Association take its duty of care to young members more seriously.

# DONNA

Donna grew up in a house of extreme neglect in a country area in Tasmania. She was one of seven children and both parents were violent and heavy drinkers. From the age of six, Donna was sent with her sisters to a camp for underprivileged children each school holiday. 'From that first visit, the only kindness I knew was when one of the staff took me to town on the last day and bought me an ice-cream.'

On the first night in the camp, Donna was told she wasn't well. She was given something to drink, and recalls waking up in a large bed with a man lying on top of her.

'He really hurt me and then I passed out because of the pain. I remember waking up back in my own bed and someone swaddling me with a towel, because I was bleeding.' Donna told the Commissioner that she was given more medication and she wasn't allowed to go anywhere. 'The next two nights I was left alone, but I was made to stay in bed. I couldn't walk. I remember crying, wanting to go home, and a nurse came in and gave me a walloping with a cane. The third night it happened again with the same man.'

Donna said the man put his hand over her face to stop her screaming and crying. 'It was terrifying. The same thing happened again.' She thought the man may have been a groundsman at the camp. 'To this day, certain smells, like motor oil, I can't be around. That smell send chills up the back of my spine.'

A note came home from the camp saying that Donna had been sick, and was naughty, and that they might


not have her back. When Donna tried to disclose the abuse to her mother, she was beaten and told that if she repeated her lies, her mother would tell everyone that Donna had had sex with a priest. 'She used to call me the devil after that.'

'You can't undo what's done, but you can stop it going on.'

The same man abused Donna over several years when she went to the camp. When she was 11, Donna told her maternal grandmother about the abuse. Her grandmother was sympathetic and believed Donna, but felt that if she took any action, Donna's mother would prevent them having further contact with each other.

Donna's mother died in 1973. The following year, when Donna was 14, her father made her leave home. He then treated one of Donna's sisters as his 'wife', and they later had a child. Donna left the state but returned several years later to remove her sister and the child. The police told her father that if he left the women alone, they wouldn't press charges.

Donna told the Commissioner that she'd struggled with alcohol and drugs and abusive relationships throughout her life, but she was in a good place now. She had secure employment and was close to her children and her grandchildren. She hadn't ever told



anyone or reported the sexual abuse, even though she'd seen psychologists over the years about other things. After hearing about the Royal Commission, she'd recently confided in a chaplain she knew, 'because she doesn't take notes'.

Donna suggested that people working with children should go through a central national screening process. 'That way, nobody gets under the smokescreen anymore. You can't undo what's done, but you can stop it going on.'

# FIONA

In 1973, when she was 15 years old, Fiona started playing basketball at the YMCA centre near her home in suburban Sydney. She and her friend, Ann-Marie, were approached by David, the centre manager, who told them he could improve their confidence and playing ability by doing massage and chiropractic therapy. David took the girls to a room upstairs in the centre and sexually abused the girls over many months.

Fiona told the Commissioner that David was very convincing. 'He massaged our backs and neck and seemed to know what he was doing.' She said it wasn't long before David was getting them to take their clothes off and also to massage him. 'He'd roll over and he had an erection. We looked the other way.' David told Fiona that her fallopian tubes were blocked and suggested she masturbate. 'Then he'd ask if it was working.' Ann-Marie's stomach was massaged after David told her she had constipation.

One day Fiona was taken into the room alone. David asked her to undress and lie on the table. 'He put his hand on my genital area, then he was moving his hand in and out of my vagina. It was very rough and unpleasant, but he said he needed to do it because of my fallopian tubes.' When David stopped, Fiona was bleeding. 'He said that was normal and I should go home and shower. So I dressed and walked home feeling very dirty.'

Fiona said she felt that she should have seen what was happening and stopped herself getting into that situation. 'I was convinced it was my fault and that

I was stupid.' She discussed it with another friend the next day, but didn't otherwise disclose it at the time. 'My friend and I were confused as to what had happened. We both thought I couldn't be pregnant, but we agreed that I'd lost my virginity. We didn't think it was rape, but we didn't know.' Fiona said she was terrified and didn't go back to the YMCA. She didn't know if Ann-Marie suffered further abuse from David. 'He picked me because I had low self-esteem and he could see it straight away.'

Fiona told the Commissioner that she put the abuse behind her until 2005, when she was struck one day by a group of 15 year old girls at a riding club she was involved with. 'I thought, "What was I doing at that age?" These girls were sexually developed, but they didn't understand.'

In 2006, Fiona sought psychiatric help for problems now impacting upon her and her ability to be with her husband and three children. 'I fell to pieces. I couldn't sleep. My blood pressure was up. I was taking sleeping pills, Valium and anti-anxiety medication. I was a wreck.'

Child protection discussions that Fiona remembers as a 15 year old were focused on stranger danger. She didn't disclose the abuse to her parents or other adults, because she wasn't sure how abuse was defined. In later years, she moved interstate and didn't think the police would be interested. She also didn't know if she'd be believed. 'I thought, "How can I prove it?" I didn't know if I could.'



Fiona thinks if posters in private areas like change rooms had described what was and wasn't appropriate behaviour it might have helped her better understand David's grooming behaviour. She said prominent photos outlining staff members' names, titles and roles might also have alerted her to something being wrong.

Fiona couldn't understand how David was able to take two girls into a secluded room without it attracting the attention of other adults. 'There should have been someone asking, "Why is David disappearing upstairs at 4 o'clock in the afternoon with two girls?" There should have been somebody thinking about that.'

# GARTH

In 1975, when Garth was eight years old, he attended a Lions Club camp and one of the leaders, Jim, told Garth's adoptive mother that he could help Garth with his hearing problem. Garth was deaf in one ear after contracting whooping cough.

Over the next three years, Garth would catch the train to Jim's unit where he would be sexually abused. Garth told the Commissioner that Jim was also abusing other children, including one of Garth's younger brothers, and eventually one of the other boys disclosed the abuse to his mother and she contacted Garth's mother. The parents reported the abuse to the police and Jim was charged. Garth says that Jim was convicted but then acquitted on appeal. Garth's mother was angry because he had not disclosed the abuse to her earlier.


It was his mother's anger that caused Garth to remain silent when, several years later, he was sexually abused by Brother Robin at a college run by the Salesians of Don Bosco Order. When Garth was in Year 7 or 8, Brother Robin abused him for 12 months. Brother Robin ran a boys' club at the college. The club offered table tennis, trampolining and other social activities. Brother Robin asked Garth to assist him in setting up equipment and then took him to his bedroom in a cottage next to the tennis courts and required Garth to massage him with talcum powder. This became a regular occurrence and included masturbation and oral sex. Once, Brother Robin took both Garth and his younger sister back to the cottage and made them both massage him with talcum powder.

The abuse came to an abrupt halt when Garth was hit by a car and hospitalised. He was then admitted to a psychiatric unit for twelve months. Whilst there, he disclosed details of the sexual abuse by Jim to his psychiatrist. The following year he went to a De La Salle boarding school, which he said was a good experience. It was only in Year 11 that he disclosed Brother Robin's abuse to a school counsellor.

'They knew I had run out of options. They knew I didn't have the emotional capacity to continue. They knew I did not have the funds to continue.'

Garth told the Commissioner that it was at this time he started to struggle with his sexuality. He said, 'I classify myself as gay and I had a 10 to 15 year battle thinking, "If the abuse didn't happen, I wouldn't be gay," and I couldn't separate that and it made me angry'. He has also struggled with alcohol and problem gambling and is unable to maintain relationships.

Garth says that in the early 2000s, he disclosed Brother Robin's abuse to his mother and approached the Catholic Church. He was discouraged from reporting to the police and was sent to a Church-appointed psychiatrist for assessment. Garth has never seen



the psychiatrist's report but believes that it stated that most of the damage was caused by the first abuser, Jim. In addition, the head of the Salesian Order told Garth that they did not believe him because Brother Robin said on his deathbed that he never abused boys, only girls.

In the end, the Church gave him \$8,000 after legal fees and no apology. He said 'They knew I had run out of options. They knew I didn't have the emotional capacity to continue. They knew I did not have the funds to continue'.

Garth said that, '*Towards Healing* needs to focus more on the damage to the victim than on their appearance to care. Previous abuse that has occurred outside the Church should not be used as a weapon against the victim'.

More recently Garth's life has changed for the better since he located his natural family and moved in with his natural brother in another state and has been receiving therapy for his drinking and gambling problems.

# GRANT

A warning from his older brother to stay 'the bloody hell away' from their Parish Priest, Father Jerome, may have helped save Grant from experiencing the same degree of sexual abuse his two brothers and two cousins suffered.

'When I was 12 I went to a movie night at Father Jerome's house, it would have been 1987. Nothing happened to me, but one of the other boys disappeared with the Priest for quite a while. When [my brother] Corey found out I'd gone there, he was furious, basically gave me the heads up that I shouldn't go near him, and that probably protected me in the end.'

But it was impossible for the Year 7 student to avoid the Priest entirely. Grant and his two older brothers were altar boys at their local Catholic Church, and while changing into their robes, Grant recalled Father Jerome 'groped' his penis.

'I just stared at him, angry sort of thing, and he stepped back. I think Corey tried to tell our Mum about Father Jerome grabbing at boys genitals and stuff, but he told her it happened to someone else, so she thought it was made up.'

While in their 20s, Grant told the Commissioner that his two older brothers were living together and 'losing themselves' to drugs and alcohol. Grant said that Corey 'never wanted it to be known that he was abused. I asked him on numerous occasions, and he said, "Nah, it never happened to me". I asked him directly more than once. He was always a bit of a wild child, always pushing against

authority. It would have explained his treatment of people at times, and his general attitude towards life'.

In 2005 at the age of 33, Grant's brother Corey committed suicide.

'He was a great bloke to hang around with, but busted on the inside, simple as that. We found him hanging in the shed. I've only heard after his death that he had told a former girlfriend and his wife about the abuse. His kids were five and six when he died. None of us has explained any of this to them, why he died. It's something that's going to have to come out later on.'

Grant is married with a family of his own, and now also cares for his brother's widow and young children. He said the sexual abuse has had a 'profound impact' on his family.

'Two of my cousins were abused by Father Jerome as well, and they've tried to suicide, so has my other brother. He's tried a few times. The stuff with Father Jerome was probably happening to him for three years. He's only had two relationships in his life, and they were minor ones. He's off the drugs, but he's still trying to find himself.'

Through his own research Grant discovered Father Jerome had been accused of abusing children before being transferred to his rural Western Australian community.

'From what I understand, they found out he was abusing kids in one area, and the Catholic Church has taken him to penance or whatever they do, then sent him to my town, then shipped him

off to an island when things started to happen here. I feel the Bishop at the time had an idea something was going on, I think he helped hide it. He was very involved with Brother Jerome and the Parish.'

Grant believes shame and embarrassment prevented his brothers and cousins from ever reporting the abuse to police, but said one of his brothers successfully pursued a claim for compensation from the Catholic Church, after reporting his abuse through its *Towards Healing* program.

As for his own abuse, he's 'written off' that section of his life, describing his own childhood as 'great'.

'I'm here to be a witness for my brothers and cousins, because they won't come forward. If I don't do it, no one else is going to. I hate the whole institution of the Church, Corey hated it with a passion. The whole thing not being treated as a criminal offence, has destroyed hundreds of lives I'd say. Look at my family and how it's affected us, it goes on and on. I want the Church to be made legally and morally responsible, they should be treated as a criminal organisation. Protecting paedophiles is the worst of the worst.'

# HEATH

If there had been 'better systems' in place in the early 1980s, Heath believes he may never have been 'groped' by his Sydney scout group leader during a camping trip when he was a 12 year old boy.

'There were victims before me, worse victims. Other scout groups obviously didn't tell ours who this bloke was and what he was doing, he'd offended twice before coming to my scout group, they had no idea of his history with children. Their ability to communicate within their own organisation was in my mind, nil.'

Heath's father died when he was just nine, and he's learnt that Mr Jones preyed on 'fatherless' boys.

A few weeks after the abuse Mr Thompson, a senior scout leader, took Heath aside for a private conversation.

'Mr Thompson asked if I'd been interfered with by Jones, and I said, "Yeah". Apparently one of the other boys had been abused and told his mother, so Thompson started pulling everyone in. When six other boys came forward, Jones resigned, but I never went back to scouts after that.'

Heath recalled Mr Thompson offering him and his mother an apology, and reminding them both about the meaning of 'Scout's Honour'.

In 1996, Heath disclosed his abuse to a police officer who was a close friend, and was advised it 'wasn't worth pursuing'. But in 2013, Heath decided to lodge an official complaint with police after watching a television

report featuring claims of sexual abuse against the former scout leader.

Mr Jones was charged and received an 18 month suspended sentence after pleading guilty.

'It was hard to sit through that. I was shocked he pleaded guilty, but it's good, it justified the events happened. He apologised to me from the stand, he was pulling all stops out to lessen the severity of his sentence. I waited 30 years because I was told to forget about it. Mum saw a psychologist who said to let it go and not go to the police, don't ever talk about it ever again, so we didn't. That's what they did in the 80s.'

'Of those six other boys abused in my scout group ... one has committed suicide, that's what really cut.'

Heath understands that Mr Jones had previously served a two year jail sentence in the early 2000s for sexually abusing a young scout.

He is currently considering civil action against the Scouts.

'I've got to decide if I've got the mental strength to go through the whole thing, and I think I will. I'm not worried

about the money, I just want to sue the Scouts. There's a pattern on what Jones did that's unacceptable, and people should have acted. My assault shouldn't have happened.'

There was a time through his 20s when Heath felt 'pretty angry' with the world and he has at times suffered depression and even contemplated suicide. But having worked extensively with a psychologist over the years, he told the Commissioner, he counts himself as fortunate.

'It hasn't stuffed my whole life up like it has the others. Of those six other boys abused in my scout group, we've tried to find them, and found that one has

committed suicide, that's what really cut. My life is good. Got a great job, I've been with my wife since '97, I've got my kids, a house, I'm lucky.'

With mandatory reporting laws in place, Heath feels children are better protected these days.

'Back in the 80s it was totally different times, I think it was opportunities, endless opportunities, and the Scouts' priority was their reputation. Jurisdictions, over time have learnt where their failings were, and have made adjustments. In the past I didn't want anybody to know what happened to me, but now I'm happy to put myself out there.'

# HOLLY

'I've been waiting to speak about this for a really long time.'

Holly said she'd never previously had the opportunity to talk about the sexual abuse she and other children suffered while in family day care at the home of Kevin Rogers in regional New South Wales.

In 1996, when she was seven years old, Holly and her three younger siblings started going to Rogers' home before and after school, on weekends, and during school holidays. 'I think he targeted single mothers. We didn't have a dad, and Mum worked three jobs. She really needed care for us. Rogers said he'd charge her half the fees, and he'd do things like let us live in one of his houses in town when we got kicked out of our own house.'

Rogers had two adjoining houses. His wife and three children lived in one while he took in children and lived in the other. Holly told the Commissioner that there were usually about 10 children at his home. 'He abused us all. There wasn't any secret about him doing it in front of the others, but he said if we told anyone, something terrible would happen to our mothers. He threatened us with the people we loved and needed the most.'

Holly said the abuse started with Rogers touching her. 'He made me touch him and then it was penetration. By the time I was 11 it was penetration everywhere. I refused once and he went straight for my siblings. After that it wasn't about right or wrong. I just preferred it to be me than my sisters and brother.' Rogers filmed the children

and at times made them available to other men.

Family day care was overseen by the local council and Holly doesn't understand how it allowed Rogers to care for children, nor how education authorities gave him access to children through 'camps' in the school library. After a complaint from one of the children, he was stopped from going to the school, but apparently no investigation was undertaken. In 1993, Rogers had been charged with child sexual assault offences, but a check hadn't been done by the local council when he set up the family day care service in the town. Holly said that the state government department had also sent a letter to the local council telling it to investigate Rogers, after receipt of a report of children sleeping in his bed. The council took no action and the department later said that its own staff had followed correct procedures.

'I've been waiting to speak about this for a really long time.'

In 2002, Rogers committed suicide after being charged in relation to sexual assault of a 14 year old girl and Holly said her aunt asked her if she had been assaulted as her mother was too upset to speak. Holly said 'No'. Later that evening however, she wrote a note in which she disclosed the abuse. 'My mother was so distraught. To this day she still punishes herself. We both know it wasn't her fault. It wasn't the school's



fault either; it was the system's fault. He should never have been allowed to work with children. Something was wrong somewhere.'

Neither Holly nor her mother were interviewed by police and Holly spoke to them for the first time in 2008 when she was 19 and seeking more information about what had happened.

Holly said she wanted it known that many people had suffered as a result of Rogers' abuse. 'I want to speak

for them and for everyone else who's been abused in childcare.' She knew of many difficulties faced by other victims and had experienced years of anguish herself, but was now studying at university and working with young people. 'I've got my life together. This year has been a good one, and if you have one that's good you work towards the next and make that good too.'

# HUGH

Hugh grew up in a loving family in Tasmania. Hugh met Oscar, a Scout leader, in 1982 when he was between 10 and 11 years old and joined the Scouts.

Hugh told the Commissioner that ‘this guy just basically infiltrated our family in a sly and underhand way ... he got under Mum and Dad’s radar, it was a strange relationship where he would take my older brother Henry and me out to meals to restaurants and things’.

Hugh’s family never questioned their relationship. Hugh said, ‘I think Mum looked at it as him being nice, as him, you know, as in looking after her boys and taking them on trips to things that she probably couldn’t afford, she was already trying to feed four boys and maintain a family of six’.

In describing the way in which Oscar worked on the family, Hugh said ‘they work on the parents to start with, whether it is consciously or subconsciously, I don’t know. They gain the parents’ trust, the parents give their trust and then they turn their back for a minute and think everything’s fine, I can leave them with Oscar for a weekend and nothing is going to happen because I trust him. I’ve judged him, I’ve seen him, I’ve met him, and then once the parents sort of either turn their backs or do their own thing, that is when they make their move.’

Hugh described Oscar throwing parties and having sleepovers at his house where there were always young 10 to 12 year old boys around. The boys were encouraged to consume alcohol, smoke marijuana and play card games. They

were then subjected to sexual abuse by Oscar. At other times, during Scout camps, Oscar would sleep in tents with the boys and abuse them.

Hugh was a ‘straight A’ student at school, became head prefect and did several university degrees and married. In his early 30s, his successful life came to an abrupt halt after a chance encounter with Oscar at a concert. Hugh had a complete breakdown, going home and losing control, punching the wall and ending up under the bed. In the course of this, Hugh revealed to his wife the abuse he had suffered.

When Hugh sought advice from others, they told him not to bring up the past. Sometime later, he met another man who had been abused by Oscar and they decided to go to the police. When their approaches to the police seemed to be getting nowhere, Hugh and the other man went to Oscar’s house and Hugh physically attacked Oscar and smashed up his house.

He told the Commissioner, ‘and I go to jail for it, right, and I do three months ... and he got eight months’ suspended sentence, \$450 victims of crime, put on the sex offenders register for three years. So work that out and stay sober? That’s the justice system’.

Hugh says he was seen as a hero by the other prisoners. ‘Everyone knew my case before I went in there. I walked in as a hero, the paedophile basher. I had murderers coming up and shaking my hand. “Good on you, mate. What you did was brilliant. Unbelievable. Good on you”.’

He said, 'there were so many prisoners who'd been sexually abused, so many cases of physical abuse ... so often they would say, "Yep, that happened to me, that happened to me". And this is where the people end up'. In 2008, when he got out of jail, Hugh received \$30,000 compensation under the Victims of Crime Assistance Scheme.

Hugh says that the abuse wrecked his life. He said, 'I didn't plan to be 35,

destitute, and living in jail by that age, divorced, businesses sort of broken down, mental illness, bipolar'. Hugh's father accompanied him to the private session and his mother provided further insights into the ways in which the consequences of the sexual abuse have affected everyone in the family.

# KATHRYN

Kathryn thought it was strange that Mitchell returned from his bike ride half an hour earlier than expected. Having been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder as a young child, Mitchell required ongoing supervision. In 2012, Mitchell's parents organised for the then 16 year old to spend one afternoon a week with a carer from their local disability support service.

She told the Commissioner, 'Everyone at the disability service in regional New South Wales told me that Mitchell really liked Harry, who would have been in his early 20s, so we agreed he could take Mitchell out for respite care. But when Harry came to pick him up, Mitchell had this look on his face of "Oh no", and I could tell he didn't like him at all'.

When Mitchell returned early from the bike ride with Harry, Kathryn said he appeared distressed, and she later pressed Mitchell to find out why.

'Mitchell communicates very well by typing, and he disclosed that Harry had been sexually abusing him in the toilets at the disability service, and showing him pornographic videos involving young boys. Mitchell wrote:

*Harry said, 'Here Mitchell, get a load of this!' It was a video on his phone. Then he tried to have some fun by feeling me for a while. Dreadful decision, he felt my penis. I did not know what to do'.*

Kathryn believes Mitchell was 12 when Harry started sexually abusing him. She reported the abuse to police, and Harry was stood down from his job at the disability service.

A month later, Mitchell disclosed further sexual abuse at the hands of 'men from church'.

'No action was taken against any of the men, the police have disempowered my son. ... [They] seemed to think well he's got a disability, no point doing anything, can't get a conviction, so they didn't follow through the investigation.'

'Mitchell used text to communicate, and told me two Ministers at our Christian fellowship church had been sexually molesting and raping him since he was 13. Our church was a large building and Mitchell would often go missing. My husband and I would be running around looking for him, and while we were running around, these two men had him in a room. They put a hood on his face, tied his hands with felt, and then attacked him during worship sessions while all these bands were playing. I tried those doors many times, but they were locked. I didn't even think Mitchell could have been in there.'

Again, Kathryn said, police were notified but concluded prosecution would not be possible for either case, as an assessment found Mitchell to be severely autistic.

'No action was taken against any of the men, the police have disempowered my son. He was violently assaulted and the Joint Investigation Response Team (JIRT) seemed to think well he's got a disability, no point doing anything, can't get a conviction, so they didn't follow through the investigation.'

Kathryn feels JIRT's approach to interviewing Mitchell weakened any hope of mounting a strong legal case.

'Mitchell's non-verbal. He can type, he can comprehend, but he needs time to build trust with people and

tell his story, so really needed multiple interviews. The police did one.'

The family has applied for compensation on behalf of Mitchell, but are still waiting for a response. One of the Ministers that Kathryn believes was involved in the sexual abuse of her son, continues to work at another church in the area.

Mitchell attends school on a part-time basis, but still holds fear for the safety of his family following the abuse.

'Mitchell thinks one of the Ministers will come and shoot us, because they threatened to kill us if Mitchell told. He tells me he feels defeated, he calls himself "Mr no-hope for justice". He's angry that he's written a statement 60 pages long, and it's come to nothing.'

## KELLY

Every day Kelly is reminded of her childhood trauma, as at the age of 26 she wages battle against the effects of an incurable disease.

Kelly joined the local Sydney under-10s soccer team in 1996, at the age of eight, and told the Commissioner that with her mother's encouragement, she spent a lot of time with the team's coach outside of game time.

'My Mum was an alcoholic and when she had a boyfriend, she didn't want me around. So she was happy for Mike to take me overnight during the week, weekends and holidays, and he'd rape me. He had his wife there in the same room, even in the same bed sometimes.'

When Kelly complained of being 'very sore' between her legs when going to the toilet, her mother took her to the doctor.

'I had thrush and he said there was only one way a kid can get that, but Mum didn't do anything. It kept coming back for months. I would sometimes bleed after being raped, but I didn't tell my Mum about that because I thought I'd get in trouble.'

Kelly said she didn't report the abuse at the time, for fear of being blamed.

'My niece, who was two years older than me, came to Mike's one night, and he tried it on her but she told him she'd tell her Dad if he did anything. Later that night, he came in where we were sleeping and she saw. The next day she told her Dad, my brother, and he rang my Mum. She screamed at me asking

if it was true, and I was so scared I told her it wasn't.'

After months of pleading and making up excuses to miss training sessions, Kelly said her mother allowed her to leave the soccer team when she was 10 years old. About a year later, a teacher intercepted a note, meant for a classmate, which mentioned the abuse.

'I was sent up to the Principal and she asked if it was true and I said "Yes". She wasn't very nice about it, I was made to feel like I was in trouble. No one asked if I was ok, I think they thought I was making it up.'

Kelly recalled the police and Department of Community Services becoming involved, then later attending the police station with her mother to make a statement.

'Talking about the abuse, I couldn't even say the words "Yes, he was inside me" and that sort of stuff. It was very intimidating. It was hard to tell someone what I wasn't ready to say. I had Mum, but she wasn't really a Mum. If she hadn't been with me in the room I probably would have told police more, but I didn't want to get in trouble when we got home.'

Kelly remembers attending a hospital for an internal examination sometime after making her police statement.

'They just took me and told me I had to get undressed and they had to do a swab down there, and that was it, they didn't prepare me for any of it. It was just as bad as what happened really.'

The next time she saw the police was on the day of Mike's hearing in 2001.

'The police didn't prepare me for what would be questioned in the courtroom. I was 12 and didn't know what the other solicitor was going to say and that we'd see Mike there, that sort of stuff. I wish someone had taken the time to sit down and explain the process.'

Mike was found not guilty, and Kelly believes he continued to coach young children in soccer.

In 2004, she fell ill and was taken to the hospital emergency department where test results revealed the devastating cause of her ill health.

'I'd been really sick on and off for years with constant diarrhea and infections, and that day I was told I was HIV positive.'

When Kelly was discharged a few weeks later, police visited her and she said an officer advised that 10 others had come forward to report being sexually abused by Mike, and were all found to be HIV positive.

'Straight off the bat he said there was nothing I could do because he'd already been found not guilty from me, and couldn't be charged again cos of double jeopardy law.'

Kelly lodged two claims for victims of crime compensation, 10 years apart - one before her diagnosis, and one after, but both were rejected due to 'lack of proof' of her abuse.

'It's been a frustrating process at times and a support person or advocate would have been helpful because I didn't really have anyone there for me.'

# PATRICK

As a junior employee at the regional New South Wales works, Patrick didn't question the authority of two older employees in their 40s, when they told him to step into a private room with them.

He told the Commissioner, 'They told me to pull my pants down, and then one of the men anally raped me while the other watched on, then the other one took his turn. I didn't know what was going on, I was just a boy. It went on for about two years'.

It was 1967. Patrick was 14 and employed as a messenger boy when the abuse started, and his prolonged absences during his morning mail rounds went largely unnoticed. Every day he dreaded going to work, knowing what may happen.

'They used to orgasm in me, and then I had to walk around bloodied all day with their fluids leaking into my pants and everywhere. It still breaks my heart, how do you even begin to get over that?'

Though Patrick often worked alongside his uncle, he could never bring himself to reveal the abuse.

'My Dad was institutionalised for most of my life and my uncle stepped in and became like a dad to me. He got me the job at the factory, and he loved me so much, it would have killed him to know what was happening to me, so I never ever told him.'

A manager took Patrick aside one day and directly asked if he or anyone he knew was being abused by the men who had been raping him. Patrick replied that he was, but told the

Commissioner he was told nothing after his disclosure.

'I suspect now those two men were abusing other kids and that's why I was asked if they'd touched me. Not long after, the two men resigned and were never heard from again. I was never asked to what extent they'd abused me or offered any medical assistance. Life went on as if nothing had happened.'

Later in life, Patrick sought professional help to navigate through the pain caused by his earlier trauma. He also reported the abuse to police and was told the two men he'd named were dead.

'I've suffered depression and anxiety throughout my life, and that's impacted my ability to parent my three boys. I think their younger years were pretty tough with me because I didn't know how to deal with my anger and grief, but I've worked hard to repair those relationships over recent years and spend a lot of time with my wonderful grandchildren.'

Patrick has lodged a claim for compensation with the Victims Compensation Tribunal, and said while an award of money would help him pay for counselling there is no dollar amount that will heal his emotional scars.

'All these years I've blamed myself for what those men did to me, and it tears me apart when I read about the same thing happening to other kids. My prayer has helped me survive and the Lord says you don't have enemies, but what do you do - forgive them? I don't know.'



# STEVE

In 2000, Steve made a statement to police detailing the sexual abuse perpetrated on him in the 1960s by his then swimming coach, Les Barnes. The abuse started when Steve was 11 years old and continued until Steve could drive and was no longer reliant on Barnes for lifts to training.


Steve told the Commissioner that a friend suggested Steve make the statement for a Task Force set up by NSW Police to investigate child sexual abuse. The friend told Steve that Barnes' name had come up as part of the investigation. Steve said he hadn't previously reported the abuse because he felt ashamed. Over five days, Steve gave police details of his own abuse as well as the names of 30 other children he believed had been sexually assaulted by Barnes at the Sydney swimming club.

Steve said Barnes would always isolate and befriend boys before abusing them. He gave them money and they were reliant on him for lifts home from training. The sexual assaults took place in Barnes' car and in the swimming pool change rooms. Barnes sometimes paid Steve to keep watch outside the change rooms while he assaulted others. He also tried to get Steve to procure boys for him to assault. Steve didn't tell his parents or other adults because he didn't think they'd believe him. He thought from some comments that people knew about Barnes' abuse of children. However, because Barnes was an Olympic swimmer and highly regarded, nothing was done. Steve found out in later life that his brother had also been sexually assaulted by Barnes.

Several months after making his statement to the Task Force, Greg was told by the investigating detective that the claims couldn't be substantiated. The detective said none of the people Steve mentioned wanted to come forward, though Steve knew from his friend that several others had made statements about Barnes. The detective asked Steve to sign an acknowledgement that the matter had been investigated and he didn't want to take it any further. 'You could have knocked me over with a feather', Steve said. The detective advised Steve he could make a civil claim against Barnes.

Some years later, Steve was invited to do a television interview about Barnes, and he repeated his allegations of abuse. He was surprised by the public response which cast Barnes as the victim and Steve as someone seeking financial reward. Steve said Barnes was still active then in swim coaching and held an elevated position in the community, such that no one wanted to hear it. 'He was eulogised as an icon of Australian sport and his network reached far and wide. He was on a pedestal.'

Steve told the Commissioner that a few months after the television interview, officers from the Police Integrity Commission (PIC) approached him and asked about the Task Force interview in 2000. They wanted details of the location of the interview, who'd conducted it and what information Steve had given. Steve asked for a copy of his previous statement and other documents, but was told the files had been lost. He hadn't kept his own copies because he was afraid his children might find them. The PIC



officers told Steve to leave it with them, but he heard nothing further.

He hoped the Commission would be able to investigate Barnes and find out what happened to the Task Force files. Steve said, 'I'm hoping and praying that it will give an unequivocal account of what a monster this man was'.





# CHURCH OR PLACE OF WORSHIP

**Names have been changed**

The real names of individuals have not been used. The names of all individuals and any other identifying features have been changed.

# ALAN

The day his trust in the Church was broken stands out clearly in Alan's mind. A Catholic priest had come to his family home in Melbourne offering support to 15 year old Alan and his father following his mother's funeral in 1966. He remembered initially feeling comforted by the priest's presence.

Alan told the Commissioner, 'My father had just lost his partner of 25 years, and I was glad Father Robertson was there for him. Later the Priest took me out to his car supposedly to comfort me - I can still see the shoulders of his black robe covered in dandruff. He was a little man, and just reeked of tobacco. He started rubbing my leg in a sexual way and started groping my genitals. I sat there like a stunned mullet, then something suddenly clicked and I jumped out of the car'.

Alan made a conscious decision not to tell his father about the incident with Father Robertson, and he told the Commissioner that almost 50 years later, he still regrets his silence.

'I sometimes wish I'd spoken up because I think of the grief this bloke must have inflicted on so many other kids and maybe I could have stopped it, but deep down I know I would not have been believed against a priest, they were revered back then. I probably would have been belted.'

Alan lost his faith following the abuse, and feels robbed of the spiritual life he may have enjoyed if not for the priest's actions.

'Some may see it as a one-off event, but what Father Robertson did to

me had a profound impact on my life and I'm still outraged. I never went to church after that unless there was a birth, death or marriage. I was quite a bright fellow, but developed a problem with authority and was asked to leave the school at the end of the year. I suffered confusion over my sexuality that took years to resolve and perhaps worst of all, my father and I became quite alienated. The secret came between us.'

In early 2013, Alan contacted Broken Rites and said he was advised to contact the police.

'The police were extremely helpful, and I gave evidence against Father Robertson at the committal hearing. It was a very confronting and grueling process, but satisfying because I felt he was finally being brought to justice. I wasn't the only one there providing evidence against him either, there were quite a few others, and I understand the trial will be later this year.'

Alan expressed concerns to the Commissioner about what he sees as the Catholic Church's apparent lack of care for those who've experienced sexual abuse within its community.

'I don't see any steps being taken to stop this sort of thing from happening again, there's no compassion. All I've seen is pushback from Pell and his mates. They just don't seem to get it, people's lives have been destroyed and their response is to move heaven and earth to protect their assets. You'd think when you get such a volume of people standing up and complaining, the Church would ask itself - "can they all be wrong?"'

# AMANDA

Amanda and her family were members of a Queensland Independent Christian Church founded by Bruce Wilson, a former Methodist minister. Amanda's mother had been present from the Church's beginning. She helped realise its growth from a small room to a series of church buildings and later a large property. Amanda said members were attracted by Wilson's charisma and air of authority. 'He could read people's vulnerability. My mother had a serious mental illness and she was preyed upon by Wilson.'


She told the Commissioner, 'He really was an abuser by proxy. He'd tell my mother I was evil by nature, and that I had demons that needed to be expelled. My mother felt guilty that she'd had me before she was married, so she believed him'. Amanda said that Wilson regularly performed 'exorcisms' on her to 'rid the demons'. The exorcisms started early and escalated in 1972 after Amanda turned eight. 'He'd say that for the demons to leave my body, I had to "manifest them" - allow them to do what they wanted, so they could be removed. Wilson said it was okay if I touched him on his crotch and that I could suck his penis if I wanted to. All the time, he was telling my mother that this was what was needed to get rid of the demons. It went on for years, him trying to get me to engage in sexual behaviour with him.'

Whenever Amanda refused Wilson's suggestions, she was severely beaten by her mother. The refusals also fuelled Wilson's claim that Amanda was possessed.

When he preached, Wilson regularly claimed that women in the congregation had tempted him, and were therefore vehicles of Satan who had to be evicted from the group. Amanda remembers many women leaving for this reason. 'I think Wilson had been thrown out of the Methodist Church, and he'd created a new empire where he could be a victim, not a predator. Everyone felt for him and not the women.'

Amanda was disappointed that a counsellor appointed to help her instead accepted Wilson's behaviour. The counsellor was a member of the congregation, but had previously been a member of the police force. 'He should have done something', Amanda said. 'But he was under the spell too. He'd pray and say that it was my mother who had the demons not me, so they played us off against each other. They said if I told anyone else about the abuse, "the kidnappers", which was the welfare, would take me away and I'd never see my family again.'

When she was 15, Amanda's father took her and her two brothers to live elsewhere in Queensland. Amanda's two younger sisters stayed with their mother. Amanda reported the abuse to Queensland Police in 1970 when she was 16. Then and in subsequent years Amanda said she was advised that charges could be brought against her mother for assault, but there wasn't anything with which to charge Wilson. 'There's a lot of calculation in these crimes, because they deal with the whole moral and emotional conflict of victims. To seek justice from Wilson,



I have to see my mother prosecuted first, and I'm not going to do that.'

'He put himself up as an oracle of God', Amanda said. 'And he wasn't accountable to anyone. Independent churches should have to report to someone and meet the same conditions as other people who work with children. No one knows what's going on inside these places.'



# ANDREW

Father Flanagan held a privileged place in the small regional Parish in Western Australia, including within Andrew's devout Catholic family. 'When Flanagan opened his mouth, everyone listened. He was highly educated. Everyone told you it was an honour if he came into your classroom to teach.'

In 1972, Andrew's mother returned to work as a nurse at the local hospital. She and his father often worked early shifts, and at the age of 10, Andrew was dropped at school an hour before it opened. Father Flanagan had become a regular visitor to the family home, and one day Andrew went to see him in the presbytery. 'He was in his shaving jacket, and he took me into his bedroom and said, "Get into bed with me". Then he put my hand on his penis and told me to stroke it. I can remember his penis up against my bare buttocks, and I can remember afterwards, but I can't tell you exactly what happened.'

Andrew recalls walking out of the presbytery as other children arrived at the school. 'I was devastated, but I just sort of melded into the rest of the day and life went on.' Life, though, became increasingly difficult for him. 'I went from being a good kid to an awful student. My behaviour was terrible, and the solution was to put me in Father Flanagan's care, so he had a vested interest in my misbehaviour.'


When the family left for Perth in 1974, Andrew felt an enormous sense of relief. Within a year however, Father Flanagan also moved to Perth, and again sought out the family. Andrew told the Commissioner that he made

sure he was never alone with Flanagan, and he rebuffed all offers of friendship. He said Father Flanagan then started stalking behaviour, turning up at his Catholic high school, following the 12 year old home from school and turning up unexpectedly in unusual locations. 'I'd be surfing with my mates at a remote beach, and suddenly he'd be there in the changing room toilets.'

In 1975, during a heated argument, Andrew told his mother about Father Flanagan's abuse. 'She went white and left the room. Then she went to speak to the Headmaster.' The next day, the Headmaster took Andrew aside and told him that it was rare for a priest to behave like that. 'I'd been in a lot of trouble at school, and the subtleties of what he was saying were, "You'll have another chance if this goes no further".' Andrew said his schoolwork and behaviour improved as Father Flanagan's stalking behaviour and visits to the family home stopped.

Andrew said that he's still coming to terms with the impact of the abuse. In the past he's often been angry to the point of violent outburst, largely directed at his wife and children. 'One day, I woke up and realised something wasn't working. I made up my mind that I had to change.' He told his wife about the abuse in 2002, and his children in 2012, and is still grateful for their understanding.

Andrew said his father was extremely distressed when he learned of his son's abuse in the early 1980s. 'My father was a professional, and he realised the depth of the betrayal of me, and of the whole family. He saw that he'd been



made a fool of. To be betrayed and conned like that was terrible for him.'

It has become apparent to Andrew over the years that Flanagan abused many boys. 'Out of 70 kids in my class there were 10 suicides within 10 years of us leaving. I don't know how many were abused, but I know one who went from the most promising student to bottom of the class. Now he's serving a life sentence for murder. It's people like him that the Catholic Church should go and find and get to tell their stories. Otherwise we'll never know how much damage was done.'

# ANGELA

From 1981 to 1985, Angela's mother was receiving treatment for cancer. During that time members of the local Uniting Church in country Victoria visited the family to help out with household chores and getting the children to school. Aged 11, and the eldest of four, Angela took on responsibility for keeping the household together while their father was at work. She thought one of the Church members, Alf Cowan, used the family's situation as an opportunity to sexually abuse her. 'Looking back, he preyed on our vulnerability. I was 11, starting high school and we'd not long moved to the town, plus Mum was in hospital for nearly a year.'

Cowan was an elder in the Church and his wife taught Angela to cook and sew. 'She was lovely and kind and helped me with so many things.' Angela told the Commissioner that Alf initially came to the family home with a group, but was soon visiting on his own. 'He'd done a lot of massage courses and used to rub my mother's feet, then Mum said he should massage me because I wasn't sleeping well.'

Angela was 11 when Cowan first sexually abused her under the guise of giving a massage. 'He did the massage in the lounge room with towels and sheets over me, but he was touching all over, inappropriately. He was doing it in front of the others. Over the years he got bolder so when no one was there, it was oral sex.'

Angela told the Commissioner that she didn't disclose the abuse because Cowan was doing a range of duties for the family, including picking up

her brother from infants' school. She also didn't think anyone would believe her. 'He seemed so nice and it was happening in the lounge room in front of people. My mother wasn't well, and by then I thought all the bad things in the family were my fault.' Angela also felt a strong attachment to Mrs Cowan and didn't want to risk upsetting her.

'Looking back, he preyed on our vulnerability. I was 11, starting high school and we'd not long moved to the town, plus Mum was in hospital for nearly a year.'

In 1991, Angela responded to an invitation by Victorian Police to report incidents of historic child sexual abuse. She said police took her call seriously; however she was undecided about pursuing the matter and was also unclear about some details of the abuse. Angela said that she'd called police because by then she had children herself, and she was concerned that the Cowans might have grandchildren at risk. 'I gave the police his name and address. They said they could go and interview him, but there might be no point if I didn't want to take it any further. I didn't want to, but I thought it

important that they have his name.'

In 2012, Angela felt anxious and depressed and couldn't get out of bed. She worked in a professional job and apart from her husband, hadn't disclosed the abuse to anyone else. She sought help from her doctor who prescribed anti depressants and recommended counselling. Angela told the counsellor about the abuse, and found the sessions helpful, but couldn't afford to continue them beyond the Government-funded allocation. 'We were under a lot of

financial pressure and I didn't want counselling to add to it.'

Angela hadn't contacted the Uniting Church about the abuse, because she thought that Cowan wasn't an employee and therefore not their responsibility. She also still had misgivings about upsetting Mrs Cowan. 'The type of abuse is different to what you see on television. It's from someone who looks like one thing, but he's working out which children are vulnerable, and that's who he's preying on.'

# BETH

Beth was sexually abused by Father Kevin, the Priest at her local Catholic Church in Melbourne for five years from the age of 13. Beth lived with her mother but remained connected with her father and would visit him after school.

Beth told the Commissioner that the older priests at the Church shunned her father. They'd previously called him a drunk and told him to pay his rent. They'd also once denied him communion in front of the rest of the congregation. In spite of this, her father was a deeply religious man.

In 1974 Father Kevin was 23 years old and newly arrived in the Parish. Father Kevin listened to her father's stories and drank with him. Beth initially found it annoying that Father Kevin encouraged the drinking, but thought that this was his way of reaching her father.

Beth said that after a short time, Father Kevin started paying more attention to her. She was pleased because she trusted him and felt safe. He invited her to go for drives and to the cinema and her father encouraged their outings. The sexual abuse started almost immediately. Beth said it was always under the guise of Father Kevin being concerned about her. 'He showed me care and affection, and he was interested in me', she said. 'He gave me what I needed.'

Father Kevin swore Beth to secrecy. He'd get her to hide under the car dash board as he sneaked her into the presbytery. She said at least one of the older priests noticed her coming in and out of Father Kevin's room. On drives, Beth said they'd often drop into the homes of other adults.

She said their attitude was to look the other way and pretend not to notice her, or to see her as one of Kevin's 'causes'. In one home, a woman rolled her eyes and said, 'I think you're a bit naughty, Kevin'. In others, it was a 'wink and a nod'.

The sexual abuse continued through Beth's teen years. She went from being a good student to someone who was rarely at school and failing in her subjects. She developed anorexia and bulimia and at one stage weighed 46 kilograms. Beth confided in one of the Good Samaritan nuns in the Parish about the situation with Father Kevin, but told the nun not to tell anyone. Beth wasn't sure what the nun had done or said, but soon after, Father Kevin was going to greater lengths in being secretive. 'He'd say, "We can't go to the presbytery now", if someone was going to be there. Or he wouldn't come by for a week or two, but then he'd suddenly turn up out of nowhere.'

One day when Beth was 17, Father Kevin came to the house and introduced a woman as his fiancée, saying he was leaving the Church. Beth said she was devastated. 'We'd been in bed together the day before', she said. 'I had believed we would be married.'

'Faith makes you vulnerable', Beth said. 'My faith in the Priest was my faith in God.'

Beth said Father Kevin shouldn't have been allowed to be with her unsupervised. The adults who saw what was going on should have taken action. Someone should have spoken to her and asked her questions. Beth said all those adults should have noticed something and they should have done something to stop the abuse.

# BEVERLEY

Beverley was just eight years old when her father died. The World War II veteran committed suicide in 1959.

'My poor mother found his body. His death meant she had to work 45 hour weeks, so I virtually lost two parents.'

In need of help while she worked, Beverley's mother turned to Sydney Legacy where she met a bank manager, Giles Fowler.

'Giles became our Legatee to be a bit of support, mainly to see how I was going. He would have been in his late 40s, and lived above the bank where I had to go and visit him. Whenever his wife left the room, he'd fondle my breasts and tell me I was becoming a big girl, or pick me up and touch my genitals usually from behind to front. I'd squirm and he'd say, "that's not being a nice girl, won't you give me a hug?" When I sat doing my homework, he'd rub his penis on my shoulder, or try to kiss me.'

Beverley said Giles would only sexually abuse her when his wife was in the kitchen, and if she came back into the room, he'd make it appear they were 'playing a tickling game'.

'I used to tell my mother I hated seeing him but she said we had to be nice to him and were to be grateful that Legacy was looking after us.'

From 1964 when she was 13, Beverley recalled that at the Anglican Sunday school she attended, a Church Fellowship leader, Graeme Snell, also started touching her inappropriately.

'His pattern included coming up behind me, putting his hands over my eyes and pressing his body against mine. He'd sometimes put his arms around my waist, and often try to kiss me. I'd say, "Don't Graeme!" He'd whisper compliments in my ear saying how clever I was and how talented and pretty, he wore dentures and would always be salivating. He was a complete and total predator.'

When Beverley was 16, Giles moved away, and two years later Graeme married and moved interstate and she didn't see either of the men again until Graeme showed up in 1993 at the home she shared with her husband and two year old daughter. He continued to visit periodically for a number of years.

'I had very poor boundaries. When I separated from my husband he started to come around more, but when I moved I didn't give him my new address. I'm sure he would have abused my daughter, he would say, "such a terrible thing to happen to such a lovely little girl" about my husband and me splitting up.'

Beverley never reported the abuse to authorities, as she didn't believe anyone could help her.

'Years on from the abuse, others my age who were in the Church told me they thought I was probably being raped by Graeme. I was very angry that the Church community thought that and yet was prepared to let it go on. I'm a committed Christian and I know God is angry at those who are entrusted to represent his servants and abuse and cause to stumble the

very ones God loves so much, the little children.'

Now in her 60s, Beverley is keen to seek justice.

'I want to see them punished, but I don't even know if they're dead or alive. I want an apology from Legacy and compensation from both the institutions. I was robbed of the freedom to enjoy my youth, the

company of friends and innocent fun in the Fellowship. That's a lot of years stolen.'

Beverley told the Commissioner she intended to report the sexual abuse to police.

'If anything else needs to be done to protect children then let it be done. I was frozen by fear and shame. It has to stop.'

# BRENT

Brent met Christian Brother Norman at a Catholic youth centre in Perth in the late 1980s, where the two soon forged a close bond.

‘My parents were divorced and with my father out of the scene I looked up to Brother Norman as a mentor and positive role model and we became close. I saw him as someone who was very wise. He often told me stories and I aspired to his spiritual teachings.’

When Brent was in Year 11, he told the Commissioner, Brother Norman invited him to a vocations retreat where he made the 16 year old feel ‘special and talented’, saying that he would make a good priest.

Not long after, Brent recalled going out for dinner with Brother Norman then going back to the presbytery.

‘We sat on cushions in the lounge room watching television and he told me he usually wore jocks around the home so he stripped down to his underwear. He said I could do the same, so I did, even though I felt uncomfortable. Because I had total faith in this man, I believed this type of male behaviour was normal.’

As Brent lay almost bare on the floor, he recalled Brother Norman touching his stomach.

‘I said to him, “you know I trust you Norm”. Those words still haunt me today. He said I could trust him. He started to go under the waistband of my jocks and my penis became erect. He began to masturbate me, and I was shocked and confused because

I’d become aroused at the touch of another male, who I had no sexual attraction to.’

Brent remembered touching Brother Norman and giving him oral sex.

‘He said he wouldn’t go to confession about what we did, because it wasn’t something a priest would understand or accept. I vowed I would never tell anyone. I felt shame and guilt that I’d allowed it to happen, and repulsion. I wanted to forget it ever took place.’

That was the last time Brent saw Brother Norman for several years.

‘He went to a seminary to become a priest and we wrote to each other a few times. Even though he’d abused my trust severely, I still saw him as a friend and mentor, and still wanted him to be proud of me. In 1996 I invited Father Norman to perform a home mass and enjoy dinner with my wife and I.’ There was no contact after that.

Brent said that in 2004 a friend confided details of his own childhood abuse, triggering Brent to start ‘vividly remembering’ his own experience.

‘I finally realised he’d sexually abused me, and found myself crying uncontrollably. For days I was consumed with thoughts of what happened that night, and felt such shame.’

Brent said he began psychiatric treatment and was contacted by *Towards Healing* after writing to the Archbishop of Western Australia. He attended a meeting with Church



representatives and gave a statement, which was later accepted.

'I was suffering badly from depression and suicidal thoughts, so I was hospitalised for two weeks. After that, I received an apology from the Christian Brothers and a settlement of \$100,000. I was told Father Norman had retired, but was being supervised in his hometown and was not in good health. They said no further action would be taken against him.'

Brent provided a statement to police around the same time, and said he was told that Father Norman had denied the allegations and that the case would be closed due to insufficient evidence.

In 2006, Brent went interstate to confront Father Norman in person.

'He opened his door and recognised me straight away. I recorded the visit without his knowledge and he confessed, but denied there were other victims. He finished with a theatrical apology on bended knee. I was totally repulsed by that.'

It appeared to Brent that Father Norman still served occasional masses and did not appear to be supervised, as *Towards Healing* had suggested.

'I suspect he was sent state to state to escape allegations of sexual abuse. Meanwhile there have been times when I couldn't work for months because the medication to treat my depression was affecting me so much. I've had a noose around my neck and it felt good. People should know child abuse is a silent killer.'

# CATHY

When choosing a movie, Cathy is more cautious than most, knowing certain scenes or events could trigger flashbacks to painful memories of her childhood abuse in rural New South Wales.

'I remember watching a film where some boys were trapped in a chicken coop and later killed. Something about their inability to fight back really resonated with me, I was very affected by it.'

Cathy is 58 and told the Commissioner that from the age of three until she was eight she was regularly molested and sometimes digitally raped by Father Ryan, a parish priest and close family friend.

'He was very opportunistic, and would find ways to get me alone. We'd be in his car and he'd start saying and doing things, and even as a really little girl I knew the only power I had was not to feel, so I cut that part of myself off and would just stare out the window.'

Cathy told of finding courage to reveal the secret to her mother, but words that should have set off alarm bells, instead fell on deaf ears.

'My mother told me I was a bad girl for making up stories and accusing Father Ryan of hurting me. He was really like a brother to my Mum, and at that point, somewhere inside me my candle was snuffed out.'

Nearly 30 years later, Cathy wrote a letter to the Church detailing the abuse she'd experienced, in the hope of receiving acknowledgment and even an apology.

'After I sent the letter, Father Ryan turned up at my house looking really uncomfortable. I was absolutely petrified, and he said, "How do you know, you were so young?" and I told him the memories were surfacing.'

The priest's admission during the confrontation not only shocked Cathy, but also confirmed that despite nearly 30 years having passed, her memories were real.


'He said, "When I was changing your nappy I put my finger in your vagina and I know I shouldn't have done it, that it was wrong", then he asked if I needed money and if he could help. The next week I received a cheque in the mail for \$800, and I felt like I was being paid off to keep quiet.'

Cathy said she later returned the cheque with a note suggesting the money might be better used for priests imprisoned in their own fear and shame.

In 1991, Cathy approached the Church to bring her case to their attention, and remembers concerns expressed only for Father Ryan's wellbeing.

'Father Ryan was still an active parish priest, and once I had to stand by and watch him christen my god-daughter which was just an awful experience. The Church focused on the fact that my abuse happened so long ago. I was urged to maintain my silence and warned that if I spoke up, it could ruin Father Ryan's life. What about my life?'

'I've been so careful to protect my children from abuse. I know its effect,



and used to feel as though I was betraying my pain by being kind to others, and it's taken a lot of work to change that line of thinking. I've done a lot of therapy and have my art as well which has helped me cope through the years to rid my body of that toxicity. It's been a battle.'

By telling her story, Cathy hopes to generate greater community awareness of abuse and its effects, to ensure children living in Australia are better protected.

## COLIN

Colin is 52 years old and was sexually abused between the ages of 10 and 14 by Reverend Malcolm Jones, parish priest at his Anglican Church in New South Wales. His parents were strong Anglicans and both held positions at their local church.

Colin told the Commissioner that the abuse started when Colin became an altar boy at the age of 10.

He now believes that 'Jones was a bloke who - his whole focus, his whole grooming, everything he ever did when we were kids was textbook really and the only reason he was involved with the Church, was to have access to children - no question of it'. He told the Commissioner of being abused by Jones and another Anglican priest on one occasion and the other priest saying to Jones, 'It's unlike you to share, Malcolm'. Colin believes that there were a number of child sexual abusers active among the Anglican clergy.

The abuse stopped after Colin told his mother about it in 1974 and he understands that she reported Jones to someone in the Anglican hierarchy. When Colin's mother died suddenly several years later, and although the Church hierarchy knew of Reverend Jones' abuse of Colin, Reverend Jones was still sent to officiate at her funeral and Colin felt unable to enter the church.

Within a couple of years, at the age of 18, Colin suffered a nervous breakdown

and was admitted to hospital. It was not long after this that he first reported the abuse to police and was told 'go and talk to your priest'.

Several years later, Colin gave details of the abuse to the Bishop and was told that it would be 'looked into'. Colin was very distressed to learn that Jones was promoted within the Anglican Church. Colin is concerned that Reverend Jones is still active in the Anglican Church in another state.

During the 1990s Colin contacted the Anglican Church Sexual Abuse Hotline but realised that his call had been taken by a close friend of Jones'. Eventually Colin made a statement to the police which resulted in Reverend Jones being charged in 2001. The case was part heard and then withdrawn on a technical legal issue. Following this, an article was published in a church newspaper stating that Reverend Jones was a free man and that the allegations were incomprehensible. After this, rumours that his mother had encouraged the boys to make up stories about abuse were spread.

Colin has been diagnosed as suffering post-traumatic stress disorder and is on a disability support pension.

More recently, Colin received a 'fairer' hearing from a successor bishop which led to him receiving compensation of \$75,000 and the publication of an apology in the church newspaper.

# DAMIAN

Damian describes his parents as strict Catholics, and says there was always a priest or a nun in the family home for Sunday lunch. His sister later became a nun, and both Damian and his brother were altar boys in their small church beyond Adelaide. In 1961, when Damian was 10, a Franciscan priest, Father Jerome, arrived in town and Damian was chosen as the travelling altar boy to accompany Father Jerome to outlying communities.

Damian told the Commissioner the sexual abuse started with Father Jerome taking him and several other 11 and 12 year old boys to the local drive-in. 'He gave us cigarettes and Coke laced with whiskey, and the movies he took us to were pretty risqué, not meant for children. We thought it was all pretty cool.' Damian described Father Jerome as a smooth talker who stood out in their small town. 'He was friends with the Bishop, he knew the Vatican, and he'd travelled around Europe.'

Father Jerome started the sexual abuse by putting his hands down Damian's pants when they were in the front seat of the car at the drive-in. Damian asked his friends whether Father Jerome had done anything similar to them. They expressed horror and said no. 'I wasn't going to admit he did it to me.' Damian was the first boy picked up for the movies and was always in the front seat.

The sexual abuse soon escalated. On their visits to outlying communities, Father Jerome would stop the car and put Damian's penis in his mouth. 'I thought, "Why on earth is he doing

that?" I was so embarrassed. I was mortified.' The abuse stopped when Father Jerome was moved to another parish after about a year.

In 1978, South Australian Police invited the community to report any past instances of abuse they knew of, and Damian's wife encouraged him to do so. He was told that Father Jerome had become head of the Franciscans in an overseas country, and had died the previous year. Damian also disclosed the abuse to his parents. 'They were very upset. My mother condemned Father Jerome to hell, which for a strict Catholic, is about the worst thing you could do.'

Damian told the Commissioner he felt bad that he'd waited till the age of 27 before reporting the abuse. 'I carried it as a secret for a long time and I thought it defined me.' Damian said he knew other priests to be good and honest, and he thought Father Jerome was an aberration. 'I had compassion for this man. I also didn't want Mum and Dad to find out, and be disappointed that it was them who'd invited him into our home. When I did tell my mother, she was heartbroken.'

Damian said he has since disclosed the abuse to friends. 'I thought it was going to diminish my reputation, but it hasn't. They just accept that it happened.'

Part of the reason for reporting the abuse Damian said, was because he thought he owed it to his daughter. 'I looked at her and thought, "How can I expect my daughter to have integrity if I don't confront this". So I did.'

## DIMITRI\*

Despite a 17 year age gap, Dimitri and Howard formed a strong friendship during their first months in the seminary they'd entered to train for the priesthood.

It was 1982, and Dimitri was 17.

'The friendship seemed fine until the seminary administrator called me into his office one day and said it was too exclusive and that I needed to have my eyes open. He spoke to Howard as well, but Howard said the administrator didn't understand what relationships were about and that he was jealous of what we had.'

Dimitri told the Commissioner that he attempted to distance himself from Howard after that, and said he was relieved when he was able to transfer to a New South Wales seminary. Then Howard turned up a few months later.

'I thought, what the hell do I do? We'd play indoor soccer with juveniles and at the end of the match we'd shower, and he'd make comments about seeing me naked. I actually went to see one of the Vincentian priests for advice, but he was just trying to increase my empathy for Howard's needs, so I never went back.'

Throughout this time, Dimitri said there was 'a lot of hugging' with Howard.

'It wouldn't go on for two or three minutes, it would go on for ages and he'd have an erection. He'd say I was the only one who understood his needs, and there was a sense of guilt if I broke up the friendship. The next person I spoke to was a priest who was also a social worker, and he gave

me techniques to try and break the relationship, but his advice didn't work.'

In 1985, Dimitri joined an Order and recalled Howard again following him, but leaving three months later. That was the last Dimitri saw of Howard until he was in Korea in 1990.

'I went there to complete my two years prac, and he travelled over to visit me for a week at Christmas. One night after showering in different cubicles, we had just our towels on and he gave me a hug, then suggested we drop our towels and hug.'

*'Towards Healing should get rid of the title because it's directly the opposite.'*

Dimitri rejected the suggestion and confronted Howard the following day.

'Howard basically said I was afraid of intimacy and of relationships. I lost it verbally and said no, homosexuality was not an option for me, it wasn't in me.'

Dimitri left the Order and married in 1993, and after undergoing therapy and marriage counselling, eventually contacted *Towards Healing* to report Howard's actions in 2003. He was later questioned by two assessors.

'One of them said, "You're bigger and stronger than Howard, why didn't you push him away?" My response was

that the exercising of power through manipulation is far more destructive than physical power. The only reason they were concerned was because Howard had become a priest by then.'

Dimitri recalled rejecting the first offer he received from *Towards Healing*.

'They accepted my claim fairly readily, and came back with \$5,000 if I signed this non-disclosure. There was a sense that I needed to pray for Howard and his failings. Two weeks later they rang and offered me \$10,000 if I flew to Perth to meet with the priests, counsellors and Howard. I said they had to be kidding, they thought it was OK

that I meet in the room with a group of people I've never met, and the perp! So that was the end of that.'

Dimitri feels the *Towards Healing* process only served to 'cultivate despair', but said that with counselling he's feeling much better now.

'*Towards Healing* should get rid of the title because it's directly the opposite. The assessors they have are attached to the Church - there needs to be a level of independence in the interviewing process. Assessors should be chosen outside the Church structure.'

\* Sylvia's story is related to this story (page 264).

# DOUGLAS

In 1973 Mr Brown was a dormitory leader at a NSW sport and recreation fitness camp. Douglas was allocated to Mr Brown's dormitory when he attended the camp at the age of 12. Douglas told the Commissioner that Mr Brown sexually and physically abused him. Douglas was frightened of Mr Brown, of what was being done to him and to the other boys.

Douglas said that within a couple of days Mr Brown was removed from the dormitory leader role but remained at the camp.

Douglas can remember feeling powerless. He said, 'I was terrified of this guy because of some of the things he did and I know the other kids were the same and yet when he was removed, it was bizarre. It was this feeling that we had to protect him. We were concerned that he'd been taken away. It was the weirdest.'

Douglas didn't disclose the abuse to anyone, not even his parents. He told the Commissioner that he felt he changed after the camp.

Within a year, Douglas was in trouble with the police, rebelling from authority and experimenting with self-harm. Douglas' mother was very involved with the Anglican Church and encouraged him to talk to Reverend Edwards, the minister at the church the family attended.

Douglas revealed the details of his experiences at the camp to Reverend Edwards, who then began sexually abusing him.

Douglas said, 'I feel I was an easy target because I was a troubled kid'.

He said 'this time it was different because I was older and I'd been through puberty and I couldn't stop my body reacting'.

At the age of 17 Douglas tried to kill himself with a drug overdose and underwent a drug rehabilitation program run by a not-for-profit organisation.

No one along the way questioned why Douglas was behaving in such a way and abusing drugs. He said 'it is a miracle that I'm sitting here today'. The publicity surrounding the Royal Commission became the catalyst for him to start talking openly about his experiences. Before then, he was worried about how he would be perceived in the small town in which he lives.

Douglas believes that his children are better educated with regard to their own safety, in the main part because of Douglas' past experiences and the steps he has taken to educate them.



# EDITH

Father Price was well known to Edith and her classmates for his impromptu lolly scrambles at their Catholic primary school in country New South Wales. She recalled that as a six year old in 1956, the Parish Priest would invite her class to follow him outside where he would throw sweets in the air while children frantically tried to catch as many as they could. But away from the schoolyard, Edith told the Commissioner, she came to know a very different side of the Priest.

'My mother was a devout Catholic and welcomed him into our home. He always wanted my younger sister and me to sit on his knee, and from when I was about nine he'd put his hand in my underpants and grab my pubic area. He'd grab my hand and rub it down his penis. I couldn't understand why it was hard, it was very frightening and confusing. This, in front of Mum, who would be sitting on the other side of the dining table. I can't understand how she didn't see some kind of look on my face.'

As Edith became older, she refused to sit on the priest's lap, but remembered Father Price found other ways to molest her.

'Mum would always make me walk him out to his car. He'd put his arm around me in the hallway, Mum would be behind us, and he'd try and grab my breast. I'd always be trying to pull away from him.'

One day when she was about 12, Edith told her mother the Priest had been touching her inappropriately while 'being hard', and that on her visits to sweep the presbytery, would make up excuses to pull her pants down and spank her.

'Either Mum didn't believe me or didn't want to know about it, and totally ignored me. She always thought priests and nuns were like Gods on earth. I became quite cheeky and was quite often in trouble with her. I felt she didn't like me because I'd said something about a priest, and she continued to welcome him into the house. If you dobed a priest in, you wouldn't get to heaven, that was her belief.'

Edith described Father Price's involvement in her wedding as being one of her greatest regrets.

'Mum wanted us married by him, and I wish I'd stood up against her and said no.'

In 1972, Edith gave birth to a son and two years later, welcomed a daughter.

'Price only sent a card when I had my daughter, and Mum said "Oh, he only likes little girls". Then she asked if I was going to take my baby girl to see him, and I said "You've got to be joking, I wouldn't let him touch her with a 40 foot pole". She said, "Some men are just a bit kinky", so I've been angry towards my Mum for a long time.'

In the mid-1990s, Edith's sister revealed that Father Price had also abused her. The news came as a devastating blow to Edith, who always felt she'd 'protected' her younger sister.

'I grew up thinking it only happened to me, and always felt I'd prevented it from happening to her. I was the only person she'd ever told.'

More than 10 years passed before Edith and her sister reported the abuse. Edith wrote to the Bishop in 2007, who, she

said, advised her to contact *Towards Healing*. In 2008, she met with a *Towards Healing* representative.

‘I had to tell him everything that had happened, and he took notes but to my knowledge he didn’t have any qualifications, he was a parishioner. He came back with a statement and I got to thinking I didn’t really like the *Towards Healing* process, so I sought legal advice.’

Later the same year, Edith said the lawyer advised that due to the statute of limitations, she was virtually barred from the court.

‘He said he’d write to George Pell, which he did, and then I never heard from him since. He wouldn’t return my calls after that.’

Apart from herself and her sister, Edith said she’s since become aware of 12 others who say Father Price sexually abused them, including one of her friends.

‘I found out he’d digitally raped girls, including my sister. She’s had a terrible time, worse than me.’

Edith accepted 10 counselling sessions offered through *Towards Healing*, but described the general process as a ‘big fail’.

‘They basically said they’re not responsible, there’s been no money, no written apology. They hide their paedophile priests, they abuse children and they get away with it. I hate the Catholic Church.’

# ERIC

Eric was serving as an altar boy in the Anglican Church near his home in regional New South Wales in 1963 when Reverend Randall started sexually abusing him. The Priest also made Eric available to a paedophile ring operating out of an Anglican boys' home in the area.

Eric told the Commissioner the abuse started when he was 10 years old and continued for four years until Reverend Randall moved to another parish. Eric suppressed memories of the abuse until 2010 when media reports surfaced that Reverend Randall had been a serial child sexual abuser throughout his 40 years living in the area. Reverend Randall died in 2007.

Initially, Eric defended the Priest against the allegations, until he heard his mother remark, 'I wonder what the green walls in the rectory might know'. Eric said the reference to green walls caused a flood of memories, and he suddenly recalled being sexually abused by Reverend Randall in the rectory with green wallpaper. The abuse also occurred in many other locations.

Eric said when he travelled to outlying communities with Reverend Randall, 'It was mainly oral sex. He liked oral sex once he dressed up. On camps and in his house it was full rape'. As altar boy, Eric always went back to the rectory after church services. 'I was his "best boy". He made me feel very special. He'd do a ritual which was supposed to make us feel God, because it was all about being able to touch God. He'd make cuts on my back so I'd bleed, then he'd smear the blood and have


sex with me. Afterwards he'd clean me off. Mostly it was loving and gentle; other times he was aggressive and it was painful.'

One day, Reverend Randall drove Eric to a local Anglican boys' home and left him with two men to be sexually abused. Trips to the home became a regular occurrence until Reverend Randall left the Parish. The Priest would drop Eric off or ring for one of the men to pick Eric up after church services. On one occasion, he was taken to a campsite where there were a number of men and other boys. 'There were 10 or 12 of them and they treated us like animals. I tried to escape in the bush, but they dragged me back. There were other boys they abused. I didn't see them, but I heard them.' Eric said he recognised one of the men in the group as a regular attendee at Church.

Eventually, Eric said, Reverend Randall moved his attention from Eric to another boy who subsequently moved into the rectory to live.

Until Eric realised and disclosed the abuse, he said he couldn't understand why he thought there was something wrong with him. 'I always felt like a fraud. I could never be alone with a group of men. I thought I was crazy.' He required intensive psychiatric treatment in 2010 and has been trying to manage the continuing memories and his distress ever since. He has been diagnosed as suffering from dissociative identity disorder.

The Anglican Church initially met the cost of Eric's treatment but after several hospital admissions, they



balked at covering further care, Eric said, because 'they thought I wasn't getting better'. Eric sought legal advice and the Church paid him \$463,000 plus costs in 2013. He also reported the matter to police.

Eric didn't want what happened to him to happen to anyone else. He said he was told by an Anglican Church representative that other boys who'd been sexually abused by Reverend Randall had committed suicide.

'No one wants this to be true', Eric said. 'Sexual abuse is like a bullet's hit you. You don't know what it's hit or when it's going to come out, but it will.' He says he doesn't know what his life would have been like without the abuse. 'I just thought I could have spent all those years not being scared and not thinking there was something wrong with me. And now, it's like every day it's happening to me again.'

# HANNAH

In 1992, Hannah's parents moved to South Australia to make a fresh start. They'd been looking for help to manage problems with alcohol and drug use, and they found it in the town's Pentecostal Christian Church. They gave up drinking and smoking, found a house, and soon became part of the community.

The family rented a house from Charles Bekker, a counsellor at the Church. He worked with families, particularly the children of single mothers and others who were having difficulties. Hannah said that he and his wife always had kids around them. 'They seemed like ordinary Christians and made you feel comfortable. Everyone loved them.'

Hannah told the Commissioner that Bekker began sexually abusing her in 2000, when she was nine years old. She'd accepted his offer to have a ride on his motorbike. 'He put me on the front of the bike, and had his hand down my pants while he was steering. He stopped somewhere and pulled his pants down, then he put his penis in me, or near me, I can't remember.'

When she returned home, Hannah ran inside the house and refused to talk to her mother. The abuse continued over a period of 12 months, during which time Hannah's mother, Rachel, asked directly if Hannah had been touched by anyone. Hannah denied abuse because Bekker had said that if she told anyone, he would evict the family from their house and they'd have nowhere to live. 'He also said that he'd come and kill my parents.'

When Bekker became insistent that the family carry out repairs and


maintenance to the house, Rachel began searching for alternative accommodation. 'The day she found a new house was the day I told Mum about the abuse', Hannah said. Rachel immediately reported it to police, who said they'd had other complaints about Bekker, but that no-one had ever wanted to make a statement.

The police investigation resulted in 11 charges involving four girls being brought against Bekker. Hannah said she was relieved the abuse was no longer a secret, but remained frightened that Bekker would hurt her family.

**'It was as though, because I'd had charges against me in the past for drugs, we didn't matter.'**

Members of the Church congregation denied that the abuse had occurred and called the family liars. Hannah was teased and bullied at school to the point where the family eventually left town.

In 2001, Bekker was arrested and charged with sexual offences against children under 12. Granted bail, he absconded overseas. Rachel was particularly disappointed with the police handling of the matter over the next decade. 'They lost files and witness statements, so when it came to court it would be adjourned. It was as though, because I'd had charges



against me in the past for drugs, we didn't matter.'

Bekker was found several years later living back in Australia. He was rearrested in 2011, but was again granted bail and allowed to keep his passport. Once more he absconded. 'They told us he'd be flagged through Immigration, but he'd been in and out of the country something like 10 times.'

In 2009, Rachel discovered through an internet search that Bekker was working in an orphanage overseas. She

rang and told them about Bekker's history and arrest in Australia. A short time later she received from the orphanage a copy of Bekker's resignation letter.

A warrant remained outstanding for Bekker's arrest. Hannah was looking forward to having the matter resolved, but didn't know when that would be. 'I'm 22 now, and it's been going on for years. I've gradually got on with my life, but it's always there. I just want it finalised so I can move on.'

# HEATHER

Afternoon excursions to see the friendly labrador at the presbytery became a regular habit for Heather at the age of eight. She described home life in Canberra in the early 1960s with four older siblings, under the rule of her 'extremely religious' father, as being highly disciplined and the visits provided her some relief from the tense environment.

'I wasn't allowed a dog, so I used to find myself visiting Ollie quite often, he was a lovely dog. Things weren't good at home, and I was just drawn to him.'

During one visit, Janet recalled the Parish Priest inviting her inside his home for a cool drink.

'It was a really hot day, so I went in and he proceeded to grab my hand and put it on his crotch and start rubbing it. I freaked out and ran. I just thought, you bastard.'

Heather said the single encounter with the Priest shattered her trust and faith.

'My conduct changed fiercely after that at home, but more particularly at school. I went from being an A grade student to almost uncontrollable within a very short space of time. Bugged if I know why it wasn't picked up at the time, no one did anything.'

By 14 years of age, Heather told the Commissioner she had started experimenting with drugs.

'I started smoking and dropping acid, then at about 17 I started using heroin. I still hadn't told anyone what the Priest had done, and he had just carried

on like nothing had happened. I lost respect for everything.'

Despite Heather's efforts to break what she described as a severe addiction, she remained heroin-dependent for several years while periodically working and travelling overseas.

'Then I got busted, and it was a really awful time for me. My co-accused ended up committing suicide and the court case went on for three years. In the end I got four years.'

Heather was sent to jail at 22, and released two and a half years later in December 1980.

Twenty-two years later, a newspaper article about *Towards Healing* caught her eye.

'I rang the number at the bottom and a lady came over to my house. She was a nun, but she wasn't forthcoming about telling me that. I'd been told it would be an independent inquiry, and they sent over a nun. A few weeks later I got a call from an assessor who tells me she's an ex-federal police officer, one of my favourite people.'

Several months after her interview with the *Towards Healing* assessor, Heather said she was advised the Priest had been interviewed, and that since he'd denied her allegations the matter would be dropped.

Heather has struggled with thoughts of suicide and has been treated with anti-depressants and psychotherapy.

One of her main concerns now centres

on the high number of prisoners who were sexually abused as children.

'Why are we building more and more prisons to put the victims and survivors of sexual abuse away? I want it addressed, because it's wrong.'

Over the years, Heather said, she's lost a lot of friends to drug abuse sparked by early childhood traumas, and has penned a poem in their honour, which starts:

Each month another seems to pass prematurely to their grave, each a deeply scarred person often not knowing the cause of their darkness, having buried it so deeply inside.

Their wounds rip at their soul like some mindless and sinister game, dreams and feelings of nausea created by fear.

There is no quick remedy to relieve this incessant pain at it nags at the heart and eats at the brain. And for all this time the perpetrator has long forgotten the act, a thought to fulfill a selfish lustful gain.



# IRENE

Throughout her childhood and into her teen years, Irene described herself as 'demanding and socially inept'.

'My mother wasn't an easy person to deal with and growing up in the Anglican Church, I relied on that community to provide solace and stability.'

Irene told the Commissioner she battled an 'unpleasant' time in high school through the early 1970s, and at about the age of 15 years, sought counselling and support from Reverend Mallard. She said she met him through belonging to the GFS (Girls Friendly Society). He attended a combined GFS meeting and caught her attention. 'Somehow I found out where he worked and went there and said I wanted to talk to him about something. He picked me up from school and we went to the beach, and he masturbated and touched me on the breast. I don't think I saw him after that.'

Irene couldn't recall seeing Reverend Mallard again, but about two years later, experienced further sexual abuse at the hands of another Anglican Minister when she began attending youth-oriented services at an Adelaide Church after leaving home at 16.

'I'd been working as a masseuse in a health clinic and was aiming to study chiropractic. I wanted to talk to someone about what happened with Reverend Mallard, so I went to Reverend Walters and he asked me to see him at his home during the day. When I got there he asked me to massage his shoulders, and during the process he undressed

himself and masturbated. I remember him ejaculating, and going into the bedroom to get a handkerchief. He said we had to be careful because he had a cleaner coming in.'

At the age of 19, Irene married. By 21 she was divorced.

'I left home at 16 and in my 20s I went through alcohol abuse, and a couple of suicide attempts.'


In the mid-1990s, Irene decided to report both abusers to the Bishop. She said she then attended a meeting with Reverend Mallard at the Bishop's private residence.

'It was really hard, no supports. I just did what I was told, I was very compliant. Mallard said "Yes it happened", but said he didn't realise the effect it would have on me, and apologised in that sense, but nothing happened to him. The Anglicans wouldn't deal with Walters at all because he was in the process of moving to the Catholic Church.'

The Anglican Church provided Irene with access to a counsellor, who she found to be satisfactory, but nothing more.

Later, after media coverage of Walters, now Father Walters, she contacted the Catholic Church to report him.

'I went to a meeting and had to face Walters. It was a private meeting, all very hush hush. The first thing he did was to come up and literally stand over me, it was very intimidating. The purpose of the session was supposed



to be so I could tell them what had happened and challenge Walters, but I got the sense they thought I'd been a crazy young person, so what did I expect them to do? That's all I walked away with, it was like I wasn't believed.'

In 2007, Irene contacted police, to be told it was likely she was not the only victim of the two men.

'The police were great, took it seriously. They've been great, but both cases have stalled, and Walters is still preaching, in a cathedral.

If that's not supporting him, I don't know what is, he should be suspended without pay.'

Irene said the responses from both Churches have inflicted greater emotional damage than the sexual abuse itself.

'It's probably not what happened, but how it's been handled ever since, that's been the really hard bit for me. I don't have kids, I'm not married. They're the biggest things I've wanted in life. All this process has affected my ability to do that.'

# JACOB

Jacob has few happy family childhood memories.

He told the Commissioner, 'my father was a drug addict and an alcoholic employed as a police officer and was a very abusive man'.

When Jacob was 13 he ran away to escape the violent home environment.

'My parents didn't report me missing or anything.'

Jacob lived on the streets and slept under bridges. He hitch-hiked to Queensland where he was picked up by police and sent to a youth refuge run by the Catholic Church. Jacob recalled the Parish Priest would visit the youth refuge every couple of days.

'I got along really well with Father James, and when he invited me to live with him at the presbytery I thought all my Christmases had come at once. Having a home with my own room and someone to care for me was the stuff my dreams were made of.'

Rohan, a youth worker at the refuge urged Jacob not to take up the priest's offer, but against that advice, Jacob moved in with Father James.

'I've since spoken with Rohan and he's admitted to knowing Father James had been moved on from a parish in another part of the State for acting inappropriately with boys. But I understand now that Rohan was quite powerless against the Church, and his job may have been at risk if he'd spoken.'

Jacob emotionally recalled that the

abuse started within a week of him moving in with Father James.

'Father James made me believe that having oral sex with him, masturbating him, and kissing him with an open mouth was the way I should show him love. My only alternative was to return to life on the street, which just terrified me. I used to cry a lot and tell him I didn't want to do what he was asking, but that made no difference.'

Jacob lived with Father James for nearly two years, and said he was often encouraged to 'get plastered' and smoke with him and sometimes with visiting priests as well.

'I started drinking a lot, and was allowed to do pretty much anything I wanted except leave. It was clear I'd be kicked out if I did. If I refused sexual demands, he'd make me feel guilty by saying things like, "I've given you a home, nobody can love you like I can, you have to love me back". With visiting priests he'd say, "You have to love them like you love me", so I'd give them oral sex.'

On one occasion Jacob recalled a visiting priest attempted to rape him.

'I heard footsteps echo down the staircase, and Father Wayne came over to my bed, violently rolled me over and pulled my tracksuit pants down. He tried to penetrate me, and I was too scared to yell but remember clenching to avoid it. He couldn't do it, so he rolled me over and masturbated on me. I lay for hours with his mess on me, just frozen still with shock. That was one of the most terrifying nights of my life.'

One day Father James introduced Jacob to a 12 year old boy, Jonathon, who was staying at the youth refuge. Jonathon soon became a regular visitor to the presbytery and later confessed to Jacob that the Priest was also abusing him.

When a Marist Brother unexpectedly discovered Father James and Jacob sleeping naked beside each other, one of the 16 year old's greatest fears became reality.

'We'd both been drinking and Father James passed out with his hand on my penis. The Bishop was called, and despite our flat denial of any abuse, both Jonathon and I were told to "Get out and leave the area". It was cold and brutal, and I was devastated because we were told we couldn't go back to the youth refuge, so we were going back to the streets. Jonathon ended up throwing himself under a train. I promised him I'd have a good life in his honour, and I've never forgotten him.'

To Jacob's knowledge, Father James was not held accountable and remained active in the Church until his death in 2005.

Jacob approached the Catholic Church's *Towards Healing* program in 2007 in the hope of receiving an apology. Instead, he described the process as intimidating, and found his abuse claims were largely trivialised by those involved.

'I wasn't allowed to talk about Father Wayne or Jonathon, and felt I was being purposely misguided. A meeting was set up with a social worker which felt more like an interrogation, and I later found out that person was an assessor for the Catholic Church and wasn't there to counsel me at all. That really upset

me. I knew they had proof of my abuse, but were trying to drag the process out unnecessarily to intimidate me, and perhaps deter me from going to court.'

Jacob later met with the Archbishop in the hope of receiving an apology.

'The Archbishop came to the meeting with four elderly women, and I felt their presence was intended to silence me because it's not easy to talk about children being molested by priests in front of older women. When I asked the Archbishop why he let paedophiles into the Church, he brushed the comment off saying "Oh Jacob, they're not paedophiles, they're gay". He wasted no time in asking how much money I was after, when I'd come for an apology, not money.'

From the age of 14 Jacob battled drug and alcohol addictions that would last until his 30s, and affected his ability to maintain personal relationships.

'I was always off my face, it was killing me not being able to talk to anyone about my abuse. The first girl I met I married, but that relationship broke down. I always struggled with sex, I felt very confused. Father James wrecked my life, and I never go to church now but I do still believe in God and that's helped me somehow survive.'

Jacob said he hopes the Church will one day offer him an apology, but more importantly, accept responsibility for what happened to him and other children under its care and make changes to protect the young and vulnerable community members.

# JULIE

It seemed strange to Julie that when the Parish Priest in regional New South Wales, Father Perry, visited her and her children, he nearly always asked her seven year old daughter Belinda to dance for him. Julie also noticed the Priest would play 'tickling games' with all five of her young daughters, but never seemed to include her son.

'My husband was away for work a lot and from 1986 Father Perry was coming over sometimes five nights a week, and at the time I thought he was being kind and supportive. It occurred to me something could be going on with the girls, because something didn't seem right. My husband and his nine siblings were raised by devout Catholic parents, and he was horrified when I raised my concerns with him so I let it go and never mentioned it again. Now I don't know how to forgive myself for not protecting them.'

Julie told the Commissioner that Father Perry offered her and her husband work within the church grounds, and she now knows, would abuse her children at every opportunity - in the family home as she cooked dinner, at the presbytery while she cleaned, and on church family picnic days to the beach where the Priest would take little girls from a number of local families into the deep water.

'Always the girls, and never the boys. They'd be in there for hours, I was so naïve and of course now I realise he was abusing them right under my nose.'

Five years later in 1991, Julie received a call from her daughters' school asking her to collect Belinda, who at the time

was an aspiring singer.

'I asked what was wrong and the Principal told me she couldn't stop yodelling. When I picked her up I saw her eyes were glazed over and I worked out she'd taken some of my prescription pills. That marked the end of any hope for a singing career and the start of a long, downward spiral with drug addiction.'


'There are no Christmases, no birthday celebrations any more, our family's been absolutely destroyed by the actions of one man.'

Around the same time, Father Perry left town.

'All of a sudden he was sent to the other side of Australia but I still received letters from him or sometimes he'd turn up at the door to see the children, and when he left he'd always say, "Don't tell anyone I've been here", and I'd say "Of course not, Father". I was so stupid.'

Julie said the abuse has affected each of her daughters differently, and many family relationships are broken, seemingly beyond repair.

'One of my younger daughters, Gina is very hostile towards the rest of us and



only a couple of weeks ago rang her eldest sister Abby at work to accuse her of molesting Gina as a child. Abby called me to pick her up and I found her crumpled up on the footpath, just absolutely devastated that Gina could think of her like that.'

Four of her five daughters have received compensation from the Catholic Church, but Julie said some fragile sibling relationships were left in shreds following the process.

'They all received the same amount, but one had to pay higher legal fees

and ended up with much less than the others. Now she feels bitter towards her sisters and that's caused me a great deal of distress.'

'There are no Christmases, no birthday celebrations any more, our family's been absolutely destroyed by the actions of one man. Two of my daughters blame me for letting it happen, they won't speak to me. I'm devastated, but I tell my children my front door is always open to them, and I live in hope that one day they'll each find their way home.'

# KATHLEEN

From the moment he arrived in their Brisbane Catholic Parish in 1962, Kathleen said Father Hartley ruled with 'an iron fist'. 'He'd stop the Mass if a family came in late and make them sit up the front. He'd belittle them and make comments to make sure they were embarrassed. As a child you were terrified, but so were the parents.'


Kathleen told the Commissioner that Father Hartley was a regular visitor to the playground and classrooms and always carried a riding whip. She said the children were told by the nuns to do whatever Father said. The Priest started making sexual comments towards Kathleen from the outset. 'I was in charge of playing the national anthem every morning on the record player in the kitchen of the presbytery.' Kathleen said Father Hartley was always there. When he found out that she'd started menstruating, he told her that God had made her a woman early, and that he'd tell her later about the special job that God had given her. 'I was 10 years old. I had no idea what he was talking about. Sometimes he'd put his hands down my pants and lick his fingers, saying it was the blood of Christ. I was horrified.'

When she turned 12, Kathleen was put on a class roster to take Father Hartley his lunch. On her first visit, the Priest put the tray down and told her to turn around. 'He started kissing my neck and biting my ear, then he put his hands down my uniform and undid my bra. I told him to stop and he slapped me and said, "Don't you ever say 'don't to me. This is God's will. You have been chosen, and you will do whatever God tells you to do".'

At a school retreat, Kathleen's class was invited to write down anything that was troubling them and put it in a box. She and four other girls wrote that they wanted Father Hartley to stop touching them. The young Priest leading the retreat told them he'd look into it. 'For two weeks nothing happened, and I thought it was wonderful', Kathleen said. 'Then one day, Father Hartley told me to go to the vestry. He told me I'd broken God's law by telling, and that all my family would be punished. Then he stripped me from the waist down and made me get on all fours. He penetrated me with his riding whip. It was so painful. He said that from now on I was his, and told me I should expect this to happen every Sunday morning at 25 past eight. And it did.'

The next day Kathleen awoke unable to speak. She remained mute for a year, as her mother took her to various doctors and her father took her to Father Hartley for healing. The Priest told Kathleen that he could now do whatever he liked because no one would hear her. 'He used to put the chalice cloth on my back and ejaculate over it. Then he'd fold the cloth up in a neat little square and put it in a calico bag. My mother used to wash those cloths, but how could I say anything to her?'

Kathleen's speech returned after two sessions of hypnotherapy, though she was left with a stammer. She left school at 15, but found she couldn't hold down a job because so many people and situations reminded her of Father Hartley. In 2002, she sought legal advice and went through the Catholic Church's *Towards Healing* process. A woman took Kathleen's statement;



however in its written form, Kathleen felt the abuse had been glossed over. 'The woman said to me, "Well the Bishop has to read it and he'd be offended. I have to make things easier for him".'

At one mediation session she was offered payment for 12 months' counselling and a job at the end helping others who'd been through similar experiences. 'They said, "You can tell them that it does get better as life goes on". It's been 50 years and I live with it daily. At the end of the day, I got just under \$20,000 from the Church, but I didn't want money. I only wanted an apology. That's really all, just that and for somebody to say they believed me.'



Kay described her eldest son when he was a boy as being a 'generous, kind, affectionate and happy-go-lucky kind of kid'.

Now in his 40s, she told the Commissioner, Cameron is clinically depressed, battles ongoing addictions to alcohol and gambling, has experimented with homosexuality and admitted to contemplating suicide.

Kay believes Cameron was sexually abused by at least two men during a time when she was 'heavily involved' with her local Catholic Parish in the mid-1980s.

She said one of the men, a Marist Brother, would often drop by to spend time with her family.

'Cameron would often be in his bedroom with Brother Brian, and there's stupid me in the kitchen innocently thinking he's giving Cameron guidance. Cameron told me years later that Brian would be touching him while I was cooking dinner, I don't know how many times, then he'd bold-faced come out and have a meal with us.'

Kay said Brother Brian sexually abused Cameron in 1987 while he was a 15 year old student at a Marist Brothers' college. She understands the Brother has since been ordained a priest, and lives and works in Sydney.

Then, when at 17 years, Cameron showed a keen interest in writing, Kay allowed him to travel to the coast with another friend she'd made through the Catholic Church.

'Doug worked on a Catholic newsletter and offered to take Cameron on a weekend trip so they could work on some stories and that sort of thing. When Cameron came home, he was acting very strange, I couldn't work it out. His behaviour went downhill really quickly after that.'

Months later in mid-1990, Cameron tearfully disclosed the abuse to Kay following a major fight between the mother and son.

He later provided further explanation through a letter he wrote, part of which read:

*On a trip away under the guise of a writing internship, Doug told me of a network of several priests in the Diocese that were part of a ring. He mentioned names, but it was so long ago, I can't remember them all. They had been discussing me and grooming me through involvement in Church activities. He said there were several boys they had their eyes on.*

In the same letter, Cameron also described his conflicting emotions following the sexual abuse.

*I was so f... confused that any time a man in the Church got close to or put his arms around me, I couldn't tell if it was sexual or not.*

Kay immediately reported Cameron's abuse to the Bishop, saying the Bishop appeared 'upset and concerned' and promised prayers.

Two months later Kay met with her 'good friend', the Archbishop and told

him Cameron's story.

'He wasn't shocked, but he was disappointed. A while later I asked him what had been done, and he said, "Well, Doug's been counselled. He was under the influence of alcohol at the time, perhaps it was just a weakness". He had a 17 year old kid in his room in a hotel. Weakness or alcohol or not, you don't touch that child.'

Not long after, Kay said, Doug moved away.

'We were glad he'd left town, but I was disappointed it hadn't gone further, and we hadn't heard something positive had been done about it.'

Kay said Cameron had been diagnosed with clinical depression, and described in writing the sense of low self-worth he suffered.

*Despite therapy and months of good progress, I had another gambling incident. That voice in my head that wants me dead rose up in such force, and before I knew it I was back at the machines undoing months of hard work and cash. If I hadn't called my girlfriend, I would have chucked myself off the railroad bridge.*

Though Cameron had reassured Kay his abuse was not her fault, her son's trauma was a constant source of torment.

'To think those guys used me to get to my son, just breaks my heart. I didn't give birth to him for some bastards to come along and abuse him. All that promise was just frittered away by someone's selfish f... actions. I can't even tell you what it's like to see your child suffering.'

# KEITH

In 1949, Keith belonged to the Church of England Boys Society (CEBS) in his New South Wales town. The Curate, Mr Griffin was in charge and 'ran the whole show'. Keith was nine years old when Griffin first sexually abused him. Keith was at the regular weekly CEBS meeting when Griffin told him to go into the vestry. Once there Keith was told to take his clothes off. 'He started to fondle me. I had a bit of an erection. Then he proceeded to masturbate.'

Keith told the Commissioner the abuse continued at least twice a week for 18 months. He didn't tell his family because he was ashamed and embarrassed. Griffin would often be at his home, 'invited and uninvited', and was held in high regard by Keith's deeply religious parents.

In addition to the vestry, Griffin abused Keith in the Church. They were seen one day by the Minister, who Keith was sure knew what was going on.

Keith said he couldn't understand why he didn't stop going to see Griffin. 'I don't know what power he had over me.' He recognises now that Griffin was grooming not only him, but his parents, through the continued and unannounced visits. The abuse stopped when one day Keith feigned illness at the time of one of Griffin's visits.

Keith said he was in bed when Griffin came into the room and put his hands under the bed covers. 'I brought my arm down really hard on his hand. He stopped and that was the last of it.'

Keith went to the Anglican Church in 1994 to report Griffin's abuse after he was encouraged to do so by a support agency. He was drinking heavily and receiving counselling for stress and anxiety. Keith said he was fobbed off by the Church and went back into his shell.

In 2002, Keith approached the Church again. The issue of child sexual abuse had surfaced in media reports and Keith thought he should take some action. He spoke to a Church legal representative who offered him counselling; however Keith didn't take up the offer. 'I was more concerned to find out if he was still alive. I wanted to have some finality.' He was told Griffin had left the Anglican Church in 1990 to become a Catholic priest, and that he'd died in 1997 at the age of 80.

When Keith told his sons about the abuse, one of them said, 'That's why we didn't have a father'. It was a matter of great sadness to Keith that he'd neglected his children and wife for so many years. His son told the Commissioner, 'It's not easy growing up as a kid in this situation. It has its knock-on effects'.

When Lee 'took a knife' to his older brother, their mother decided enough was enough and called in a Catholic priest to help her teenaged sons resolve their issues.

Lee told the Commissioner, 'In 1988 when I was 13, my brother and I didn't get along, we fought like cat and dog. The Parish Priest, Father Kilroy, came around two or three times with everyone there so we could talk things over, and then there was the one time when he came and I was the only one home'.

Lee said when he and Father Kilroy entered the rumpus room, the Priest asked Lee to sit on his knee, put his arms around Lee, and kissed him.

'He pulled open my track pants and made a comment about my penis and pubic hair. I knew it was wrong, but I did enjoy what was happening I suppose. I was a bit mixed up with my sexuality. He didn't play with it, but I don't know how far it would have gone if my father hadn't come home then. Father Kilroy left straight away, and I burst into tears, I fell into Dad's arms and told him what had happened.'

Lee recalled his father reported the abuse to the Bishop straight away, and understands the Bishop at first denied the abuse had happened, but later

admitted it had. Within a few days, Father Kilroy moved away.

'I told Mum what happened as well, and she stopped going to Church for a long time. Mum and Dad sent me to the doctor to talk about my sexuality, and that was about it, it wasn't really discussed again. The police weren't involved at all.'

In 2013, Lee decided to report his sexual abuse to police.

'I did nothing up until 18 months ago, and it always kept resurfacing for some reason, it was still getting brought up and I needed to deal with it. The police told me they had 10 other complaints relating to Father Kilroy. It still hasn't gone to court.'

The sexual abuse at the hands of the Priest has affected Lee in a number of ways.

'I was very distressed when it happened. I knew that I was gay, but coming from an Aussie family, it wasn't really accepted back then. I've struggled in long term relationships, trust is a big problem. I think a combination of the abuse and my sexuality, I didn't deal with this there and then. Counselling has helped, and I am a lot better now.'

# MATTHEW

Matthew was raised by devout Catholic parents. But in the mid 1940s his faith was destroyed the day he was abused at the age of nine, by the Parish Priest.

One of only a handful of Catholics in a small town in New South Wales, Matthew was recruited by Father Peter to train as an altar boy. After practice, he recalls the Priest would drive him back to the family home.

Matthew told the Commissioner, 'On one occasion, he pulled over to the side of the road and turned off the engine. Without saying a word, he pulled out his penis and started masturbating himself then leant over and tried to do the same to me, but he didn't have much success. He pulled my head into his lap, and I remember keeping my mouth tightly shut as he ejaculated on my face. Afterwards I wiped it off with my handkerchief and ran home'.

As a 'little fellow', Matthew had been raised to believe priests had a direct line of communication with God, and didn't fully understand the priest's actions. But from then on he avoided being alone with Father Peter. His mother allowed him to withdraw from Church activities. 'My parents were wonderful and I think if I'd told them what Father Peter had done, they would have believed me, but it would have absolutely destroyed their faith and I couldn't do that to them. They were good people.'

But the abuse stole Matthew's trust in the Church, and, no longer able to cope with the religious influences in his life, he left home at 15 to pursue a policing career in Sydney.

'I joined the cadet program and gave 27 years to the police force. I've

always exercised as well and still train every day. Somewhere along the line I decided I wasn't going to let what that Priest did to me ruin my life. But I go to bed with it every night.'

Almost 70 years later, Matthew's two sisters and younger brother remain unaware of his abuse as a young boy.

'We're all very close. They've maintained a strong commitment to the Catholic Church, and I don't want to spoil that for them. But for me that faith isn't there and I've been an atheist for most of my life.'

The burden of keeping his abuse to himself was lightened when Matthew revealed the long kept secret to his second wife. She and a close friend remain the only people Matthew has ever told, until the last 12 months. With the support of his second wife, Matthew has consulted solicitors and is seeking compensation from the Church. As part of the process he has obtained a psychiatrist's report which states that he is suffering with a major depressive illness, largely controlled by his stringent exercise program.

For as long as priests and brothers are forbidden to marry, Matthew believes abuse will continue within the Catholic system.

'People think it's just one bad apple in the box here and there, but it's not. What kind of people is the Church attracting with its rule of celibacy?'

'Most people who've suffered it come out needing some sort of support. If it's not there they often end up taking drugs and alcohol, or going to jail and having their marriages go down the drain.'

# MICHAEL

Michael Johnson has fond memories of the first Parish Priest he encountered at his Catholic Church in Tasmania. He was just five years old in 1951 when his family left England to settle in Tasmania where the Johnson family soon bonded with their Catholic community. Many of the parishioners' children, including Michael, happily accepted roles as altar boys and for some years he thrived under the guidance of the Parish Priest. So when Father Tomes came to the parish, Michael had no reason to distrust him.

Michael told the Commissioner, 'He was good for some time, but one Sunday afternoon he asked me to come and do some bible readings. He took me into a room and started asking me different questions about sex. He asked me to remove the bottom half of my clothing, and he started interfering with me, trying to masturbate me, which didn't happen because it wasn't possible for me, pre-puberty I suppose. I wasn't able to get an erection'.

At just 12 years of age, Michael didn't understand much about sex and what was happening.

'When he let me out from the meetings, he'd always say, "Let's just keep this between ourselves. Don't tell anyone, because they won't believe you anyway".'

Those words weren't far from the truth. Father Tomes took advantage of the Johnsons' trust in the Church, and found excuses to spend time alone with Michael where he would continue his efforts to arouse him.

'It happened about four or five times, and I decided I couldn't take it anymore and told my father what had happened. His reaction was disbelief, and the same with my mother. I don't think she could ever really come to terms with it, they both had Tomes on a pedestal.'

Despite his reservations about questioning the Church, Michael's father reported the abuse claims to the Vicar-General.

'His reaction was to tell my father, "Don't go to the police, don't go to the newspaper". So it was virtually swept under the carpet.'


Reflecting back, Michael believes the ripple effect of the abuse not only cast a shadow over his childhood, but profoundly impacted the outcome of his education, and in turn, his employment prospects.

'I never got a proper education because after being molested I found it impossible to concentrate on my school work, and that held me back. We had to do homework every day, and if you didn't do it you were belted. I got the strap every day, two on each hand. That went on for a year or so.'

Now approaching 70 years of age, Michael has endured a constant battle with his childhood demons and came close to suicide in 2012.

'I put a hose in the car and started up the engine, but I just couldn't leave my kids behind so I stepped out of the car.'

Motivated by extensive media coverage of child abuse globally, Michael's



ultimate wish is that no other child endures his suffering.

'I'd just be happy to know the Catholic Church was weeding out all these parasites and was accepting people that could be trustworthy rather than to fulfil their own ends as paedophiles, within the Church itself. I think they should be scrutinised very carefully.'

# MIRANDA

Having experienced the pain of miscarrying four much wanted babies, at the age of 40 Miranda has given up hope of ever becoming a mother.

Only last year she underwent surgery to remove internal scarring which she believes is evidence of the 11 years of abuse she suffered from the age of six when her father was diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Miranda told the Commissioner, 'Dad was in and out of hospital, so the nuns and priests were over all the time to support my parents, and help look after us because Mum was working and spending a lot of time at the hospital with our father'.

During her private session, Miranda recalled the Parish Priest in Brisbane was the first of several men to abuse her throughout her school years.

'He'd ask me what my sins were and start touching me while I spoke, and it got to the point where he'd have me under his white robe with his pants undone making me touch his penis and perform oral sex on him while he touched my genitals.'

Miranda was too frightened to report the abuse for fear of further repercussions.

'When it first started I was six and the Priest would point to Jesus on the cross and say, "Did you know little girls can be nailed to the cross?" He then said if I told anyone my Dad would die, and I'd go to hell. I turned nine in 1982, and around that time he took me to his home and raped

me. It was very painful and I bled a lot afterwards. It happened twice or three times a week after that. My legs were hurting all the time because I was so little, but it was put down to growing pains, so no one worked out what was actually going on.'

The Priest left the Parish a few months later, but Miranda remembers the abuse continuing at the hands of a De La Salle Brother.

'At a weekly church bush dance, the kids would often play hide and seek outside while the parents socialised inside the venue. There was a Brother who was quite young compared to the others, maybe in his 30s, and we knew him as the "bush dance Brother". He'd say to me, "Come and hide with me Miranda, I know a place where nobody will find us", then we'd go under the hall or down into the bush nearby, and he'd touch me and make me give him oral sex.'

At other times when Miranda waited for her brother to finish sporting practice after school, she told of the Brother coming to find her, and inviting her to his place nearby for cookies and milk.

She told the Commissioner, 'The milk tasted funny and after drinking it I became like a floppy ragdoll, quite dopey, and then he'd have sex with me. I believe now that he was sedating me. He'd say if I went to the police they'd lock me up and throw away the key, and I'd never see my family again. That abuse continued from when I was in Year 4 right up until I went into Year 7, then that Brother moved on'.



But the high school years offered no protection to Miranda. She recalls it as a dark time when she was exposed to depraved acts which were performed on her by another parish priest, Father Bennett, who arrived at her local church when she was 12 years old.

'He raped me in the church, in his quarters nearby, in his car, in my bedroom with my parents in the next room thinking he was saying my bedtime prayers with me. He had everyone's absolute trust. Sometimes he'd rape me anally, and always made sure he washed all the blood away before I was allowed to leave. He had jars of cockroaches and spiders, and if I refused to give him oral sex, he'd pull live cockroaches out of the jar and make me eat them until I did what he wanted.'

Miranda later detailed further depraved acts carried out by the Priest, and the ongoing impact the traumas have had on her life.

'Sometimes he'd put cockroaches or spiders on my face, or inside my body, and he'd tell me they were going to lay eggs and crawl to every part of my body. Still to this day I literally feel them everywhere, like I'm filled with them. I used to sit up all night at home with the light on wearing four layers of clothes, unable to sleep for my fear of bugs.'

In 1987, Miranda disclosed the abuse she'd endured to an assistant parish priest, Father Richard.

'I had to walk past my mother who was working for the Parish at the time, and when I sat down and told Father Richard what was going on and that

I wanted to kill myself, he stood over me and said, "Think about what this would do to your father if he heard you talking like this". he didn't want to hear it. Then he basically told me to leave his office.'


With limited knowledge of sex as a then 13 year old, it's only later in life that Miranda understands what happened when Father Bennett took her to visit her family doctor late one night.

'I can say now it was an abortion. There was a vacuum and I was heavily sedated. I bled so much that there was a pool of blood on my school chair the next day, and I had to spend a lot of time in the toilet. There was a second abortion later, and that was carried out by the Priest with a piece of pipe. The rape, abuse and abortions destroyed my ability to have children. My husband and I were married for 14 years during which time I managed to fall pregnant a few times, but always miscarried my babies.'

A high school principal became the fourth man to abuse Miranda in just over a decade.

'Through Years 11 and 12 I suffered severe migraines and would take my father's prescription drugs to numb the pain. Often I'd end up passing out and end up in sick bay where the Principal would visit me and touch himself under his white robe. On weekends he'd take me to the Brothers' house, and he'd lay on top of me without penetrating me but reach orgasm himself.'

Miranda has remained unable to work since suffering a breakdown in 2000,



and told the Commissioner she's battled anorexia, panic attacks and suicidal impulses. She blames the breakdown of her marriage on her inability to trust men, which she says stems from the traumas of her past.

The safety of children who may be under the care of her abusers remains a grave concern for Miranda, who believes there are children at risk.

'I've had to work very hard to no longer be suicidal, and I want my story heard

because to my knowledge one of the priests is working with troubled youths, another is working in a refuge for women escaping domestic violence and the doctor who performed the abortion on me is still a practising GP.'

Miranda found the strength to lodge a report detailing her abuse to police in 2011 in the hope those she's named will be held accountable for their actions, and denied the opportunity to subject others to the same abuse she suffered.

# NARELLE\*

Since suffering sexual abuse as a young child, Narelle told the Commissioner, she's always felt like a 'dirty, rotten piece of meat'.

She and her sister Valerie were raped from the ages of four and six, and both recalled their younger brother also being sexually molested.

'We moved around a lot, my parents were Salvation Army Officers who gave their heart and soul to the congregation and the community, but never really had much time for us. I was four when we moved to a small town in South Australia, and we lived next door to the church where we spent a lot of time with the church caretaker.'

Daniel befriended the siblings and Narelle described feeling that he was her friend and that he loved her.

'He called me a princess. We went to the church alone a lot, to the spot where my Dad would preach, and the stuff we did was under a cross. If it was hard for me to deal with, I disassociated and would go to other places in my head. My clothes were always taken off, his body felt heavy and I felt squashed. I remember his touch and the objects he put inside me, I remember his boy bits that were inside me, I remember having to swallow what he put in my mouth and I remember blood in my undies. He used to put a spoon inside me and scrape something out.'

The abuse continued several times a week from 1976 until Narelle's family moved away in 1978. Narelle said Daniel told her to keep 'their secret' quiet, and

on the day she moved away recalled him saying he would kill her if she told anyone.

At 18, Narelle was admitted to a psychiatric facility where she detailed the abuse for the first time, and four years later, she told her mother.

'I was 22. I woke up from a suicide attempt and just told her. She was still

'I tried to tell police in the early 90s, but the law stopped me. I've had depression my whole life, significant post-traumatic stress issues that are chronic and I've never been able to hold down a job. I don't know what happiness is. I want The Salvation Army to stand up and take responsibility for something that is incredibly serious. It feels to me they still don't care.'

an Officer with The Salvation Army, but she didn't report it, nothing happened. I don't think she believed it, or it was probably too hard for her.'

In her mid-20s, Narelle attempted to report her abuse to police.

'They told me there was a statute of limitation that stopped me from making a statement. The first opportunity I had was about eight years ago when the law changed. They came and interviewed me and around that time I found out my sister had been abused by Daniel as well, so we both made statements.'

Due to the sisters' ages at the time they were sexually abused, Narelle said she was advised the case would not go to trial. Years later Narelle heard Daniel had been charged and convicted of child sex offences relating to pre-teenaged girls while he was training to become a Minister. Narelle feels the

justice system let her and others down.

'I tried to tell police in the early 90s, but the law stopped me. I've had depression my whole life, significant post-traumatic stress issues that are chronic and I've never been able to hold down a job. I don't know what happiness is. I want The Salvation Army to stand up and take responsibility for something that is incredibly serious. It feels to me they still don't care.'

Narelle is the single mother of two young boys, and told of facing a daily struggle to survive.

'I've managed to attract some really nasty men, I've never had anyone tell me they love me. I have a heart and an ability to love, but low self-worth, I don't feel strong. I fight to keep alive, I fight to get out of bed every day. I do anything to get to a better space, because I want my boys to be ok.'

\* Valerie's story is related to this story (page 269).

# NATALIE

The first thing Natalie noticed were the sheets hanging up in Father Collier's room, forming a makeshift studio. It was 1985 and the 11 year old had previously mentioned her childhood aspiration to become a model to the 'touchy-feely' Priest, who was often at her Catholic primary school in regional Queensland.

She told the Commissioner that Father Collier had responded by offering to take some photos of her.

'The Principal pulled me out of class and sent me over to Father Collier in the presbytery next door, and when I walked in I saw these sheets and lights set up. He said, "Look at all this work I've done for you" and I thought it must be okay, because the Principal had sent me there.'

Despite feeling 'strange and uneasy', Natalie started posing for the pictures.

'He took a few photos, then he asked me to change into a white, see-through shirt. It smelt like him and at first I refused, but he started getting angry and told me if I wanted to be a supermodel, then this is what I had to do. He said "Don't put any underwear on because you'll see lines and it'll ruin the photos".'

Natalie recalled the Priest leaving the room while she put the shirt on.

'When he came back he asked me to pose like Elle McPherson. He was telling me to stand this way and that way saying "I want to get your face at this angle", but I knew he was taking photos of my private parts. He was coming


over and touching me, my breast. I was shaking the whole time, and then he put his fingers just inside my top and I nearly had a nervous breakdown. I kept crying uncontrollably and begging to go home to my grandma.'

As she left, Natalie recalled the Priest warning her he was an important man in the town. She confided the abuse to a school friend the following day.

'I'd been a really good girl and for me to do a complete flip, it just didn't make sense. I wish someone had looked at why I was going off the rails, it wasn't normal behaviour.'

'We decided no one would believe us so we shouldn't tell anyone, we thought we might get expelled. My mother had left when I was three months old and my father was a violent alcoholic, so I was living with my grandma who had Alzheimer's. I was terrified that if I told her she might blame me, so I had nobody to confide in.'

In the space of the hour spent in the presbytery, Natalie said the course of her life was changed forever.



'Everything fell apart, I just saw the world in a completely different way after what he did to me. I felt this sense that my only value was sexual, and as I got older I became very promiscuous. I left home at 15, and by 17 I was a prostitute. I'd been a really good girl and for me to do a complete flip, it just didn't make sense. I wish someone had looked at why I was going off the rails, it wasn't normal behaviour.'

Natalie told of terminating eight or nine pregnancies, marrying the 'wrong type of person' at 19 and 'always using alcohol'.

Following three years of therapy with a psychologist, Natalie reported the abuse to authorities in 2013.

'Father Collier is still alive and disclosing to police felt like the beginning of not taking crap in my life any more. I've been beaten by boyfriends, knocked unconscious, but now I'm standing up for myself, my inner strength has seen me through it. You're very vulnerable when you're a child out there in the world without any family. I would hate for him to do to another child what he did to me, but I've been broken in so many ways, he can't hurt me anymore.'

# ROBERT

Robert said he was astonished in 1992 to discover that the Priest who'd abused him as a child was living next door to a primary school. The Priest, Father Gerald, was also Robert's paternal uncle, and Robert had been abused by him from 1965 when he was nine until he was 16 years old. The abuse occurred on visits to the presbytery where his uncle lived, on the outskirts of Perth.

Robert told the Commissioner that on visits the abuse would happen four or five times a day. 'He called them "the sessions". It involved everything except anal penetration, though he did that once. In the morning, he'd say, "We'll have a session before Mass, and then we'll go for a drive and have a session after that". After lunch would be another session, then after the pool. It went on and on.'

In 1977, Robert disclosed the abuse to his father and found out his four brothers had also been sexually abused by Father Gerald. They'd each been sent separately to stay with the Priest and none knew about his brothers' experiences.

Robert said his father reported Father Gerald to the Bishop and was told Father Gerald was being sent to Sydney for treatment. The Bishop later denied knowledge of this conversation. It appeared that for the next few years, Father Gerald was moved around New South Wales and Queensland.


In 1993, after discovering Father Gerald was back in Perth and living next to a school, Robert went with his brothers to see the Archbishop. They

requested Father Gerald be stopped from undertaking religious duties and that he be moved away from the school. Robert reported that the initial response from the Archbishop was to tell the brothers they were being vindictive. When they threatened to make the knowledge public, the Archbishop said he would take action. In late 1993, the Archbishop wrote to tell Robert that Father Gerald's priestly faculties had been removed and he was no longer permitted to undertake the duties of a priest. He also offered them money for counselling.

**'It's clear that three Archbishops and a Bishop and several priests all knew about our uncle.'**

Robert said at this time he became aware of a report that referred to Father Gerald sexually abusing boys in the early 1950s. He said, 'It's clear that three Archbishops and a Bishop and several priests all knew about our uncle'.

The brothers requested a meeting with Father Gerald, during which they asked him for a list of other boys he had abused. He wrote down the names of nearly 30 boys. They also asked why he had sexually abused them and not their cousins. 'Because you were available and they weren't', he replied. When the brothers said the Church should



reach out to the people whose names were on the list, Father Gerald said that would be an invasion of privacy.

Robert and his brothers made statements to police and Father Gerald was charged with child sexual abuse. He pleaded guilty to 46 offences and was sentenced to six years imprisonment. Robert remembers the Church's QC as being very aggressive even though Father Gerald had pleaded guilty to all charges. An attempt to suppress the priest's name was unsuccessful.

Robert describes the police handling of the matter as outstanding. Although

he found the court process harrowing, 'It was one of the most freeing things I've ever done. I felt six inches taller'. He was perplexed when the police unit that investigated the matter was disbanded a short time later.

In 1996, Robert spoke again with the Archbishop who said that he'd been to see Father Gerald in jail and that he was doing well. Father Gerald had refused therapy while he was in jail. 'I support him in that decision', the Archbishop said. 'Because it involves showing him pictures of naked women and that would be against his vow of celibacy.'



# ROD

In 1994, Rod was living overseas when he heard that an allegation of sexual abuse had been made against a priest, he recognised as the one who'd been his Parish Priest in the 1960s in regional South Australia. That Priest had sexually abused him over a period of eight years while Rod was serving as an altar boy.

Rod told the Commissioner that he was eight years old when Monsignor Sheehan began abusing him in 1966. 'It started out as psychological torture, and then it became sexual.' Rod said the Monsignor was an integral part of the community for decades, and although he'd died years before, the allegations created enormous upheaval in the Parish. The man who disclosed the abuse chose not to take legal action, however his family held significant status in the area and demanded that the Monsignor's headstone be removed from the town's cemetery and it was removed.

Rod said his father rang him about the rumour and asked if he too had been abused by Sheehan. 'I told him that I had. Dad said, "Why didn't you tell me? You should have let me know". In hindsight, you understand things differently, but at the time, the power of the Monsignor and the Church, and the fear of God were so instilled in everyone, that I didn't say anything. I also didn't think anyone would believe me.' Rod said he found his father's late support and belief reassuring.

In 2000, a confluence of events, including his mother's death and the end of a long-term relationship, led Rod to seek advice from Broken Rites. He found them understanding and their advice

helpful. He also started to engage with the Catholic Church's *Towards Healing* process, but found their response poor. 'I thought it would be an independent review, but it wasn't', Rod said. 'I had an interview with a nun and had to fill out numerous questionnaires. The whole thing didn't seem right. It didn't seem a good idea that they could conduct an inquiry into themselves.'

After becoming increasingly dissatisfied with *Towards Healing*, Rod took civil action against the Church. He described the lawyer he engaged as professional and compassionate, and doubted that he'd have been able to persist with the process without legal help. 'Once we started the civil claim, it became very protracted. I got the feeling they were trying to wear me down. There were more questionnaires, plus assessments and meetings. They wanted to know my income from day one of my working life, which was back in the '70s. I earned \$110 or \$120 a week, but I don't really know how that was relevant.'

In 2008, seven years after he started the civil action, the Church settled with Rod for \$80,000, including \$30,000 for legal fees. 'There was no apology or recognition that the abuse had occurred. They wanted me to sign a confidentiality agreement, but I said I wouldn't sign anything that stopped me from talking. For a long time my fear had been greater than my desire to confront the abuse, and I didn't want to be silenced anymore.'

In 2012, a priest contacted Rod to ask what he thought about the Monsignor's headstone being reinstalled in the cemetery. 'I said, "Don't even think about it".'

# RUSSELL

There is a pain in Russell's chest that refuses to subside. In a written statement to the Commission he explained it's a symptom stemming from years of physical and emotional torment dating back to 1976, when Russell was 14 years old.

'I was very involved in the Brisbane Uniting Church where my father was the Minister, and I had a fair bit to do with the youth group. The youth leader, Roy, invited me and another person to his private place of business after church one Sunday. He asked us to take our clothes off, then he got me to lie face down on a photocopier and he photocopied my genitals.'

Sometime later, Russell and his family attended a barbecue at Roy's house where he said Roy showed him some pornographic magazines depicting naked men. On a third occasion, Russell recalled Roy asking him to stay back after a youth function and help pack up.

'He got me to undress, then he undressed, and he put his mouth on my penis. I had an erection, I didn't know what was happening and was scared and really nervous. He did this for about 10 minutes, then sat me down on the floor, sat on my lap facing me with his legs around me, and placed my still erect penis between his legs. He moved up and down for a short time, then got up and told me to get dressed.'

Russell wrote in his statement that as Roy was the youth leader, he assumed he was being 'shown about growing up'. The last time Russell described

being abused, Roy had collected him from his parents' place.

'He asked if I could give him a hand with things down at the church. I was scared and didn't really want to go, but Dad suggested it would be good for me to get out of the house. We went into the church and walked to the altar, and he asked me to give him oral sex. I said "No" and ran outside.'

Roy followed, and Russell said he was asked twice more to perform oral sex on Roy. When he refused, he said Roy agreed to drive him home.


'I kept a distance from him after that, but it had a profound effect on me and my family.'

Over the years, Russell described having difficulty dealing with issues surrounding his sexual abuse. He married at 18, standing at the same altar where he recalled being abused.

In 1997, he attended a Christian course that unleashed a tide of long-suppressed emotions.

'It was all about inner hurts and I burst out in tears and said I'd been sexually abused. Later I had a conversation with my wife, but was too embarrassed to say much. I went to the Uniting Church Complaints Tribunal and spoke to them about it, and was later told Roy had been stood down as youth leader and given counselling within the Church.'

Unhappy with the Church's response to his complaint, Russell made a statement to the police in 1999 which led to Roy being charged. He said that



Roy received a suspended sentence after pleading guilty.

Though he's kept his Christian faith, Russell wrote that some aspects of his relationship with religion remain broken.

# SUSAN

Susan's mother was grateful for the break Brother John gave her when he took the children on hikes and bike rides. She was busy and exhausted, looking after five children, including Susan's youngest sister who had a severe disability and confined to a wheelchair. Brother John was a Christian Brother who'd befriended the family through a Cub and Scout camp. It was on the outings that he sexually abused the children.

When Susan disclosed the abuse and said she didn't want to go with Brother John, her mother said that she didn't want to know. 'He's a lovely man', her mother said. 'He's helping our family, so you go with him and don't lie.' Susan tried several times to let her mother know about the abuse, but she was never believed.


Susan told the Commissioner that Brother John took the children to isolated locations and made them take their clothes off. 'He'd make me sit on his lap and then he'd feel me inside and then my brother, he'd do that, and then he'd make us pose together for photographs.' Brother John took other 'innocent' photographs of the children and these he gave to their mother. 'My parents thought he was wonderful. My mother said, "Look at all these lovely photos we've got".' In later years, Susan told her father about the abuse and was relieved when he believed her. However, her mother still doesn't believe it. 'She ignores it. It's self-protection. My father told me she was abused as well.'

The abuse by Brother John went on for five years until the family moved

away from South Australia. Susan said her brother committed suicide at the age of 19. 'He just couldn't deal with life after the abuse.' From the age of 16, Susan spent long periods in psychiatric institutions. She attempted suicide several times and severely self-harmed. 'I'd withdrawn so far from my feelings. I did it so the pain was on the outside instead of the inside.'

Susan said her own breakthrough moment came when she heard a woman speaking publicly about experiencing sexual abuse as a child. Susan was 40 years old. She wished there'd been a person like that earlier in her life. She said it hit her when the woman spoke. 'They're my feelings. That's what happened to me. And when she described how she coped with them, I thought if she can, I can too.'

In the last 10 years, Susan has become involved with her local Anglican Church. She said she won't go near a Catholic Church nor does she wish to follow up with any Catholic compensation scheme. Susan contrasted the Catholic Church's approach to allegations of child sexual assault to her local Anglican Minister's handling of a suspected paedophile ring in their congregation. She said the Minister informed the Bishop, but when the Bishop ignored the matter despite repeated requests for him to take action, the Minister became a whistleblower, making a public disclosure and reporting his concerns to the media. The Minister then worked with the congregation and sent a letter to each Church member informing them about the matter and offering them professional counselling.



Susan said that her speaking to the Royal Commission has encouraged her sister to find the courage as well, to recognise her own experience of child sexual abuse and start talking about it. 'That's what we have to do', Susan said, 'Keep talking about it'.

## SYLVIA\*

The ripple effect of sexual abuse and institutional responses to it is often far reaching. In 1982 Sylvia's husband Dimitri was a priest-in-training, when a much older fellow candidate struck up a close friendship with him that she said led to ongoing sexual abuse.

'Dimitri was a 17 year old boy and Howard was a 36 year old man when they met at the seminary. People expressed concern about the friendship and Dimitri tried to distance himself from Howard, but every time he moved away, Howard would follow.'

Sylvia told the Commissioner that Dimitri sought guidance and advice from those within the Church to distance himself from Howard.

'The general tone was that Dimitri needed to be more understanding of Howard. Eventually he left and then we married in 1993.'

During the course of their 21 year marriage, Sylvia described Dimitri withdrawing for hours and even days at a time.

'I know that comparatively, what Dimitri went through is not as bad as other stories, but the impact on him has been devastating, and on his relationship with our 12 year old son, because he doesn't trust himself as a man. Our son is going through puberty, and Dimitri can't go there at all with him, not even on a jokey level.'

The couple approached *Towards Healing* in 2003 hoping to hold those who were 'covering' for Howard, accountable.

'We thought if it happened to Dimitri, it might be happening to someone else and we also felt it was the only way to have it acknowledged, and to describe the impact on Dimitri. He has to shave his arms and legs because it's the only way he can feel clean.'

'If the person who's giving you a hard time is within the Church, and the whole organisation supports that person, the victim can become ostracised. I think the Church is unable to investigate itself. The approach in Dimitri's case was to blame the victim, because they were looking at him as a 30-something year old man, not in the context of a 17 year old boy.'

The response from *Towards Healing* fell far short of what Sylvia and Dimitri had hoped for.

'*Towards Healing* doesn't look at the full context. When they interviewed Dimitri, they asked why he didn't just punch Howard or tell him to piss off. But when abuse is based in religion, not only do you doubt your beliefs, and your sexuality, it also impacts on your world view with God and what your fundamental beliefs are. He was the son of an immigrant family that were fundamentally religious. He was taught the Church can do no wrong.'

Sylvia believes those involved in *Towards Healing* should be trained to understand the role of power in the process of abuse.

'If the person who's giving you a hard time is within the Church, and the whole organisation supports that person, the victim can become

ostracised. I think the Church is unable to investigate itself. The approach in Dimitri's case was to blame the victim, because they were looking at him as a 30-something year old man, not in the context of a 17 year old boy.'

Dimitri was diagnosed as bipolar in 2006, and Sylvia said he's only been able to survive with medical intervention.

'Drugs sustain him, and that's what keeps our marriage going, but there are times he's been so depressed that I've been concerned he'll take his own life. Professionally he's very good, in the world he's very good, though he finds it difficult to have male friends. Really difficult. He's so angry, and I don't know if he'll ever get past how let down he feels.'

\* Dimitri's story is related to this story (page 224).

# SO LISTEN TO ME NOW. 2001

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They did not listen then  
To brave adults that dare speak out  
Or the frightened voice of a child  
Those cold hearted women  
And grey men with no hearts  
Cold calculated view they did take  
Written in black against the white  
Gambling with our lives, to save a pound  
Signed by men of great title & power  
Letter and documents authenticated  
Cruellest game they ever did play  
With the lives of vulnerable wards of state  
The games they played, led our lives astray  
Sorry, they must say to acknowledge our pain  
How dare they complain of the cost they must pay?  
Compensation offer withdrawn, they had made  
They don't deny the charges, Oh, not at all  
Are we worth so little in the eyes of the law?  
Anger & pain, rage filled with despair  
Abandoned, betrayed yet once more  
Must listen to me now  
The law must be upheld  
We are of the same value  
As your own precious child  
Morally, this is so wrong  
Corruption of man's heart  
To value the dollar over  
Even, one small child  
So listen to me now  
Seen by all, justice must done  
Cold grey men so morally corrupt  
Weighted values, warped & perverse  
Lost in the blackness, compassion lays dead  
They have chosen not to listen for  
Crying voices of their young  
All children should be valued  
No exceptions to this rule  
Yesterday's children can't forget  
Let society remember, the future lies ahead  
Our greatest asset, only on loan  
Are the children of tomorrow?  
Don't let them grow into cold grey men  
Who value the dollar more than the pen?



During an interview to enter the seminary in 1980, Theo disclosed to the Archbishop that he'd been sexually abused as a 12 year old by his then Parish Priest, Father Maher. He recounted that the abuse had continued through secondary school and stopped only when Theo left the Western Australian town at the age of 18. 'The Archbishop roared laughing, and said, "So you're one of Maher's boys are you?" I think he found it funny that "one of Maher's boys" would want to be a priest.'

Theo told the Commissioner that as an altar boy he travelled with Father Maher to outlying communities every Sunday to conduct Mass. The abuse started with fondling and kissing and escalated to anal rape. 'It happened in the car first, then it was in the presbytery and on camps, basically wherever he could.' Theo said he became progressively more withdrawn and isolated from friends and family, which prevented him from talking to anyone about the abuse.

Theo thought Father Maher's inappropriate behaviour had been known for decades. In about 1968, an Archbishop visited the Parish. 'He must have made an assessment of his own, because Maher came to me and said the Archbishop had told him that if I said so, he'd have to leave town. He told me if he did leave, all his good work with the elderly would stop. I see now that I was being manipulated.'


Theo told the Commissioner that he left the seminary after four years, and married and had children. In 1997, aged 33 and living in Victoria, he reported the abuse to the Catholic Church's

*Melbourne Response*. He found them sympathetic and helpful in organising counselling, but thought they were hampered because the abuse hadn't occurred in Victoria. 'They also called it homosexual behaviour, rather than abuse, which was odd.' Theo also phoned *Towards Healing*, but was discouraged by the dismissive attitude of their staff and made no follow up contact.

'For children and for the sake of truth, the message needs to be clear that you don't have to keep people's secrets. That's the only way things will change.'

Theo reported the abuse to Victorian Police in 1997, and they referred the matter to Western Australian Police. Attempts to retrieve documents and information were thwarted by the Catholic Church's Western Australia liaison staff. 'They said they wouldn't hand over any priest to the Police.' Soon after the investigation was initiated, Father Maher died in the Pacific Islands and the case was closed.

A civil claim had been considered by Theo, but he thought the process would be too daunting.



Before his death, Father Maher wrote to Theo in response to being informed about the investigation. He admitted the abuse and asked for Theo's forgiveness. 'He said, "I've placed myself in God's hands and will accept whatever punishment He thinks I deserve". Then he wrote an outline of all the good work he'd done in the Islands, and attached a letter from a student to demonstrate his inspiring efforts with young people.'

Theo said that to prevent child sexual abuse, it was important to recognise

the dynamics of communities and social events, and the way narcissistic people like Father Maher operated. 'The police should have been informed as soon as it was known what he did. It should also be a criminal offence to knowingly fail to report behaviour like his. He took something very personal from me: my trust. For children and for the sake of truth, the message needs to be clear that you don't have to keep people's secrets. That's the only way things will change.'

# VALERIE\*

Outside of school hours, Valerie and her two younger siblings were left mostly to their own devices.

Their parents were 'always busy', as officers with The Salvation Army, and when the family moved to a regional South Australian town in 1976, the three children would 'hang out' with the caretaker from the next door church where their parents worked.

'Daniel would sit on a chair watching us play table-tennis. He was a big part of our family, someone we thought we could trust. One of us would always be on his knee, his hands would wander, there was a lot of finger involvement, inserting into me and rubbing, and making me feel ok. He always had a firm grip on me so I couldn't go when I wanted to, then with my sister he'd do the same thing.'

Valerie was six years old when the sexual abuse started, and told the Commissioner that Daniel would routinely molest and rape her in the church.

'He'd pick me up and sit me on a platform that was higher than me, open my legs, and he'd go down on me. Then he'd walk up the stairs and we'd go behind this little barrier and he would lie on top of me. As well as his fingers, there was something else that hurt. I can't define if it was an object or his penis, but I remember there'd be stains of blood on my undies.'

Afraid that she may get into trouble, Valerie would hide her bloodied underpants, but still wonders whether her mother may have seen them and

known the abuse was happening.

In 1978, the family moved to a new posting and throughout her school life, Valerie struggled socially and never felt she had friends.

'I barely passed anything in high school, but I have a good job now. I don't know how I managed to get where I am. In my 20s I had men take advantage of me. I went out to seek love, but didn't know what it was all about. It was hard to trust people and get them to like me.'


Valerie eventually revealed the abuse to her mother, but never felt believed. She married at 28, but divorced eight years later, and is raising three children from that marriage.

She said she copes with the traumas of her past by 'keeping busy'.

'I think my whole life has been affected by it, I'm always on the go, I haven't had a holiday in 10 years. I feel if I slow down, the doors will open and that would be very overwhelming. In my career and as a Mum, I'm not reaching my full potential and I'm struggling emotionally with that.'

Valerie told the Commissioner that she suffers from the memories of her abuse, and that a number of things can trigger flashbacks.

'I've never been able to go out with anyone with facial hair because Daniel had a moustache. Even when the kids play around and jump on me, I cannot cope with that. I cannot cope with there being any pressure on my chest. Daniel's been put in jail for sexually assaulting



other children, but he's not been held accountable for what he did to us and that's irritating, that's what's frustrating. For us the visions will never go away. Those memories, will never go away.'

\* Narelle's story is related to this story (page 253).

# VERONICA

Veronica's mother was a very devout Catholic and welcomed priests into their home and provided meals to the presbytery of the parish Church in Perth. Veronica would deliver the meals to the presbytery three days a week.

When a Marist priest they barely knew invited Veronica and her mother play cards during his visit to the family home in 1957, Veronica was encouraged to sit beside him. Veronica told the Commissioner, 'Mum was sitting on the opposite side of the table. She was excited and happy that Father McCafferty was so nice. He proceeded to put his hand onto my thigh, and I thought it was just an accident but then he proceeded to go under the elastic of my pants, and push his finger into me.'

After that, Father McCafferty continued to visit the home, but when he invited her to play cards, Veronica said she would make up excuses like being too sick to join in.

'My life had totally changed, the world didn't seem to mean a lot to me because my mother wasn't there to support me. I couldn't tell her, the Church meant everything to her.'

Around the same time, another, younger priest she considered to be 'like an older brother', touched her inappropriately on several occasions.

'Mum told me Father Royce wanted me at the school next to the church to play the organ, so I went up. The little school was all closed up, but he took me in and I sat down to play. He stood behind me, started to get really close

to me then he pushed himself into me and grabbed my breasts.'

Veronica recalled Father Royce molesting her another time when a group of parishioners had gathered at her family home to watch movies.

'Sometimes I think with Father McCafferty it only happened once, but then I think no, it's far more important than that because it does something to you for the rest of your life in regard to trust. What happened to me shouldn't have happened.'

'I went into the kitchen to get some food and he was in there. He grabbed me and pulled me into him, and as he did, my father walked in the door and just glared at Father Royce.'

In 2012, Veronica contacted Broken Rites for support and advice, and was encouraged to see a lawyer who, she said, advised it wouldn't be worth the effort to take her matter to court.

About a month later and with the help of Broken Rites, Veronica wrote an account of her childhood sexual abuse, and sent it to *Towards Healing*.

‘A man called Bob from *Towards Healing* came and saw me. He was distraught about how much work he had, and told me his sister had been abused. It was most unprofessional, I almost felt like his counsellor.’

Veronica agreed to write her story down for a second time, but was disappointed with the response from *Towards Healing*.

‘Bob sent my statement back and had added details which weren’t correct, and at the bottom I had to sign a privacy statement. I got fed up and thought I’m not having anything more to do with *Towards Healing*, the process was just so cold and unprofessional.’

Veronica told the Commissioner that after she married, it was years before

she would allow her husband to touch her. After her husband died in 1991, Veronica had an eight-year relationship with a woman.

‘When that relationship broke up I had counselling. Sometimes I think with Father McCafferty it only happened once, but then I think no, it’s far more important than that because it does something to you for the rest of your life in regard to trust. What happened to me shouldn’t have happened.’

Veronica feels disillusioned with the Church and stopped attending after the abuse.

‘It doesn’t just take a child’s feeling of sexuality away, it takes your whole belief in Jesus and where do you go after death? As long as I can keep distracting myself I can cope, it’s when the distraction stops that I think I want to do something about it.’

# VINCENT

'Shame and embarrassment' stopped Vincent for 20 years from reporting the sexual abuse he endured for three years from the age of 14. He joined a Melbourne Uniting Church youth group in 1978, and recalled the leader becoming a trusted family friend. When Roger offered Vincent lawn-mowing work, Vincent didn't see any reason to refuse.

Vincent told the Commissioner, 'Roger lived with his mother so I'd go up, but sometimes she wasn't there. I can recall lying on the bed with Roger. He was a big man, at least 40 kilos heavier than me. He took my clothes off, and his clothes off as well. He kissed my chest and licked my nipples, then I felt him start playing with my penis. He was masturbating me, then put his mouth over it. Then he lay on top of me and rubbed his genitals against mine. After a while he knelt between my legs and masturbated himself until he ejaculated over my chest. I felt powerless to stop him.'

Vincent believes he was sexually abused by Roger at least 20 times over three years. When the abuse stopped, Vincent continued to have contact with Roger through the Church community, and when he married, Vincent's parents even invited Roger to the wedding.

'Roger continued to work with the church, and I'm aware now that I wasn't his only victim.'

In 1997, Vincent told his wife and parents about the abuse, and with their support, decided to take action.

'I sent Roger a note and said what he'd

done was wrong. We met and he said he was happy to help, but that I should realise he had no money. Those were the words I was left with. I wasn't after money, I just wanted an apology.'

Four years later, Vincent reported the abuse to the Uniting Church and a meeting was arranged with three Church elders.


'The meeting was held in good faith and the Church explained their internal processes for investigating, but said once the investigation had been carried out, it would no longer be possible for me to follow up with police. I didn't feel the Church would solve the issue and opted not to pursue their enquiry. I went to the police.'

Roger was charged in 2002, and Vincent was called to testify – twice. Vincent said the first case resulted in a hung jury and at the end of the second trial, Roger was acquitted.

The greatest cost from Vincent's perspective came on the personal front.

'I've failed to reach my full potential. I have complete and utter resentment towards authority. As a kid you have to trust people in your life, and when that trust is taken away there's not a lot left. When something so sinister has happened, it's difficult to trust again.'

No compensation was offered by the Church, but Vincent has subsequently received some victims of crime compensation and is considering pursuit of a civil action.



He said he's attended many counselling sessions over the years in an effort to overcome his feelings of shame.

'What sort of man am I to have a relationship with another man? The abuse can never be erased, it's a constant burden. The basis for the problems I've faced are due to Roger refusing to take responsibility for his actions. I've given him ample opportunity to apologise, but he hasn't. There's been a huge personal and family cost involved in seeking justice for a crime committed against me. The only thing that will help is for Roger to be held accountable for what he's done.'



# WANDA

The Parish Priest in regional Tasmania would visit Wanda's family home often, and she recalled being about 10 years old in 1967 when Father Walker started taking her and her two older siblings away for weekend trips. 'We'd go bushwalking or swimming, the typical grooming stuff. I subsequently learnt my parents didn't trust or even like him, but being devout Catholics, they didn't feel able to go against his ways.'

Wanda joined the Church youth group at 14, and believed at the time Father Walker was singling her out for sexual abuse.

'It took place at the presbytery, and sometimes on trips away. He'd keep me in the car sometimes for an hour after youth group, and my parents used to worry and question him on it, and he'd kind of bully them and say, "I'm the Priest, what are you worried about?" His words to me were, "Trust me, Wanda".'

Even after Father Walker moved away to a remote parish, he continued to maintain regular contact with Wanda and her family.

'He was actually moved because people were objecting to his behaviour, but he continued abusing me for several more years. I was a nervous, shy girl, and he made me feel like I was the problem, and being young and vulnerable, I couldn't shake it off. I was just ashamed of it, and couldn't tell anyone.'

Wanda told the Commissioner her spirit was broken and that she came to accept the abuse. She felt unable to tell

anyone what was happening, and became socially isolated.

The abuse only stopped when Wanda wanted to marry at 26.

'I think he just knew he couldn't get away with it any more. He was at the wedding, at the altar, and performed our wedding with another priest which is a shocking thing to deal with. He tried to make contact again when our children were quite young.'

When her daughter was about to turn 14, Wanda felt forced to confront the demons of her past. By then she was in her 40s.


'I was my daughter's age when the abuse had seriously started, and I couldn't keep it hidden any more. It was just screaming at me. I found myself crying every morning and at that stage I told my husband.'

With the support of her husband and counselling, Wanda said she began the journey of 'bringing myself back together'.

Wanda reported the abuse to police, and Father Walker was charged and convicted after pleading guilty.

Around that time, Wanda contacted *Towards Healing* and described the process as 'disgusting'.

'Two nuns came to our house and asked why we went to police, sort of told us off about that. I asked if they could pay for counselling and they told me there was no money for that, no compensation, they were on the



offensive and kept referring to Father Walker by his first name, as if he was a friend. It felt like they were trying to put the blame on me.'

After contacting the Archbishop several times over the course of a year, Wanda received an offer of \$25,000 in return for signing a confidentiality agreement. She accepted.

Years later, in 2008, Wanda was contacted by the Archbishop who

advised he was dealing with further complaints about Father Walker, as well as several other priests. 'He basically apologised for handling things badly with my complaint, but Walker's always said he was badly advised by his lawyers to plead guilty and shows no remorse, doesn't think he's done anything wrong. I believe there are a lot of good people in the Church, but the hierarchy is corrupted. The Church needs to be cleaned out.'

# WENDY

In 1955, when Wendy was eight years old, her mother died and her father started drinking heavily. Wendy and her sister and two brothers were left to fend for themselves, surviving largely on a diet of bread and cereal. To make money, Wendy cleaned a house each week for a few shillings. Then she and her younger brother started stealing. They stole flowers from people's gardens to sell at a market, and milk from front verandas and food from shops. When Wendy was 12, they were caught by Father Julian stealing money from the Church poor box. 'He sent my brother home and said as punishment I had to go and tidy the books in the choir loft. I heard him lock the Church back doors and the side door. Then he came up and that's where he raped me.'

Wendy told the Commissioner that Father Julian threatened that if she told anyone about the abuse she'd be punished even further. The abuse coincided with another traumatic event in Wendy's life. Wendy's father had brought a woman, Rose, to live in the house, and one evening during a drunken argument Wendy's father struck and killed Rose. As witnesses to the event, Wendy and her brother gave evidence in court. Her father was convicted of manslaughter, but didn't receive a prison sentence. The matter received a lot of publicity and Wendy thought that Father Julian's abuse of her was linked to the family's situation and her vulnerability. 'There were so many things going on. We were hungry. He knew and he took the opportunity.'

Several months later, Wendy saw Father Julian at the local swimming pool. She said she was in the pool hanging on to

the side because she was frightened and couldn't swim. Father Julian got in the water and told her he was going to teach her to swim. 'He grabbed hold of me and he stuck his finger inside me and he was jumping me up and down and I couldn't get away, he was holding me too tight.'

From then on, Wendy ran whenever she saw Father Julian. 'I lived in fear of him, especially that he might come to our house. He held power. He used to go door to door and visit people. One time he did come and I hid under the bed.'

In 2013, when she was 67 years old, Wendy disclosed the sexual abuse for the first time. A nun she knew asked directly if Wendy had ever experienced sexual abuse, and Wendy told her she had. Previously, she'd discussed the circumstances of Rose's death in counselling, but had never felt able to tell anyone about the abuse. Wendy said her way of coping over the years had been through gambling, particularly poker machines. 'When the wheels are going around, I don't have to think. I'm in zombie mode. I'd do money till it hurt, and then all I'd have to worry about was how I was going to pay the bills or where I was going to find money. If I had that to think about, I didn't have to think about anything else.'

Wendy said the Royal Commission was her chance to release the sadness that she'd carried for nearly 58 years. She said Father Julian died many years ago, but she hoped to see a safe place created where people could go and reflect on the past abuses of children and to 'Let everyone know that personal stories cause change'.

# ZACHARY

Zachary was born in 1955 in Western Australia. At the age of six, he was put into the care of his grandmother who was a strict Catholic with priests and brothers as regular visitors to her home. He did well at sports and his studies at a Perth Christian Brothers college.

Zachary told the Commissioner that Brother Ignatius started grooming him when he was in Grade 6, sitting next to him at sporting events and paying him attention. Then, one day in Grade 7, Brother Ignatius sat him down in the empty canteen and told him to pull down his trousers. Zachary was petrified. Brother Ignatius then started to play with his genitals and tried to get him to have an erection. Zachary said, 'At 13, you've got no sexual concept of what's going on. I wasn't masturbating or anything at that age. I mean, I was still developing.'

Eventually, Zachary became hysterical. Brother Ignatius threatened Zachary, saying 'If you say anything, you will get a belting and you will be called a liar'.

Zachary kept quiet. Some time later, one day, after playing cricket, Zachary turned around and Brother Ignatius was standing there in the toilet block with his penis erect, blocking Zachary from escaping. Brother Ignatius bent Zachary over the toilet and raped him. Zachary told the Commissioner, 'I have never experienced anything so painful in all my life. The pain was unbelievable and I was just absolutely screaming by this stage. He was not giving me any mercy. There was no lubrication, there was no nothing. So he just ripped into me.'

Zachary, bleeding, walked the long eight kilometres home. He told his grandmother that he was not going back to the college and he told her why. She gave him a belting and accused him of being a liar. She took him to see the Principal who said that it was best if he left the school.

'At that stage I felt deserted, my grandmother, the only person I loved and the only person I was close to and the only one I trusted - she didn't believe me.'

He said this episode sent him off the rails. He was enrolled in the local state high school and started to abuse alcohol and drugs. He thought, 'If they think I'm bad, I'll show them how bad I can be'. He told the Commissioner 'At that stage I felt deserted, my grandmother, the only person I loved and the only person I was close to and the only one I trusted - she didn't believe me.'

At 18 Zachary was able to stop the drugs and alcohol and he reconciled with his grandmother, although he never lived with her again. He has a wife and two children and has been with the same employer for over 30 years.

Zachary told the Commissioner that when his grandmother was in her 80s, 'my wife and I went and saw the old girl, and just out of the blue, we were there for lunch, she said to me "Zachary, remember back in the day you told me that story?" I said "Yes". She said "Was that true?" And I said, "Yes, Ma. I told you it was true. You gave me a belting". She started to cry. So obviously she'd started to understand what had been going on - because it was all coming out in the media - so devastating for her too.'

Zachary still has flashbacks and nightmares about the abuse. He has suffered all his life from an inability to sleep for more than an hour or two at a time. He has had ongoing treatment for severe depression and anger management and has been diagnosed as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. He said, 'I can describe

Brother Ignatius to you in infinite detail at the time he attacked me. I can still see the gap in the teeth, the dark-rimmed glasses, when he looked over his glasses, the facial expression, the way he talked, his mannerisms.'

Zachary said that he has never been able to forgive the Catholic Church. He knows that Brother Ignatius - who has been accused of molesting over 200 boys - was moved around Australia by the Church, was ordained a priest in Tasmania, died in 2012 and was never brought to justice. Zachary said that he had decided not to engage in the *Towards Healing* process because he was cynical about it achieving anything.

Zachary wants to see the Church made accountable.









# JUVENILE JUSTICE

**Names have been changed**

The real names of individuals have not been used. The names of all individuals and any other identifying features have been changed.

# BARRY

Barry grew up with his grandparents in country New South Wales and in 1959, left school and took to the road with a friend, travelling to Queensland. They arrived without money or any means of support and were caught by police after breaking into a shop to steal food and cigarettes. Remanded in custody, Barry was sent to an adult prison even though he was only 15 years old. During the six-week remand period, he was sexually assaulted by two other inmates who had been allowed access to his cell by a prison officer.

'In the mornings, you'd go out, but this day they let the other two out of the cell and they kept me there. Next thing, the door opens and two blokes come in, and the door gets locked again.' Barry told the Commissioner that the two men bashed him and one held an ice-pick to his throat. 'He said, "You say anything and this is what you'll get". And then they did the sexual assault.'

Barry said the next day an inmate who came from his home town in New South Wales warned the offenders off and he was left alone for the next six weeks. Following his next court appearance, he was sent to a boys' home to serve out his sentence. He described the home as brutal and the

people extremely cruel in meting out physical punishment. 'I walked in and the Superintendent put his hand out, I thought to shake it, and when I put mine out, he gave me a backhander across the face. It went from there.'

Until 2012, Barry had never told anyone about his experiences of sexual or physical abuse. One day his wife read an excerpt from a book written by an ex-resident of the boys' home. 'She was reading the book to me and at the same time there was all this stuff coming out about the Royal Commission, and I thought bugger this, I'm going to say what I know too.'

Barry said it had been a relief to tell his wife and that she'd said much of his past behaviour now made sense to her. 'I did some strange things over the years. One day I just took off and went to Perth. I can't even say why, I just did.'

Barry said talking about problems wasn't something he knew how to do, and he usually managed feelings and memories by going to the pub to try and get rid of them. 'My wife says I keep everything inside. Things that'd happen, I'd worry. It's hard to explain. But I was told about counselling the other day, and I thought that might not be a bad idea.'

# A REFLECTION OF ME. 2008

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My reflection  
In the mirror  
Startled me  
Come here  
Come closer  
Have a good look  
Look within  
Look deep  
Feel what I feel  
...anger  
...hurt  
...betrayal  
...abandonment  
...rejected  
...mistrust  
...fear  
Learning to love  
Learning to heal  
Learning to forgive  
Learning to survive  
Learning to speak out ...  
Come in and sit beside me  
Hold my hand  
Don't be afraid of me  
For I am you  
And you are me  
Together we can become one  
We can unite  
Stand tall  
Stand proud  
Speak out for me  
Speak out for us  
Your voice is loud  
Your voice is clear  
Go forth and conquer  
Don't be afraid  
I won't abandon you  
As you abandoned me

Hand in hand  
Side by side  
We are fearless  
We are strong  
We are healing  
We are loving  
We are trusting  
We are growing stronger  
Day by day  
My reflection  
In the mirror  
Took my gaze  
Once again  
A smile came over my face  
Now I truly know  
I am not alone  
You are within me  
As I am within you  
You give me voice  
You give me power  
You give me control  
To join together  
To unite  
As two become one  
For you are me  
And I am you  
Go forth now  
I am so proud of you  
And I love you  
More and more  
With every breath I take  
Forever  
And for always  
For you are me  
And I am you

# GODFREY

Godfrey was born in 1948 in Tasmania and was one of six children. He describes his parents as 'wonderful' and 'hard-working' people.

George told the Commissioner that, growing up with the wrong crowd, he started to get a bit rebellious and got into trouble with the local police.

At 14 he appeared before the Children's Court and was sent to a government reformatory for 10 months. The abuse started after a few weeks. New arrivals spent about a month in a room like a cell before going into a dormitory with the other boys. Godfrey told the Commissioner that a staff member, Sean, came into Godfrey's room and accused him of masturbating. Godfrey didn't know what he meant by that. Sean then asked him whether he was playing with himself. Godfrey was then forced to masturbate and, finally, hit over the head for doing so. Sean threatened him with being kept in the cell indefinitely if he told anyone about the abuse.

The same thing happened a number of times, sometimes with Sean masturbating himself. Each time Sean made Godfrey clean up the cell and always with the threat that if he told anyone he would be kept in the cell indefinitely. Once, Sean attempted to rape Godfrey but Godfrey wouldn't keep still.

Finally, Godfrey was moved to the dormitory with the other boys. However, he was soon put back into the cell after he accidentally snapped a fence post when he was driving a tractor. Godfrey was sent back to the cell as punishment and there he was again abused by Sean.

Godfrey subsequently had problems

with alcohol but gave up drinking when his daughter was born, many years ago. Throughout his life, Godfrey has struggled to make friends. He said, 'I suppose you could say, if I died tonight there would be quite a few at my funeral, but there wouldn't be anyone that I've actually been close to and shared my life with ... only immediate family.'

Godfrey never went to the police because he was concerned about people in his small town finding out. He said, 'It's a bit like if a totally innocent person was branded as something in a small town, you know. Three parts of the town – and he may be proven innocent of what that was, but three parts of the town would believe him, but then just that section of the town that say, "Well, you know, where there's smoke there's fire. He must have done something".'

He was never able to tell his parents about the abuse but recently, after a major accident, he told his wife and a psychologist. He said, 'I don't know why I couldn't pluck up the courage but I never, ever told my parents. You feel dirty. You feel cheap'.

The psychologist encouraged Godfrey to speak to the Tasmanian Review of Claims of Abuse from Adults in State Care as Children but he was disappointed that it was focused on providing compensation rather than providing support. He accepted its offer of \$28,000, although he subsequently regretted it. He has destroyed all the paper work because he was afraid that his daughter would find it and learn about the abuse.

Godfrey told the Commissioner that compensation hasn't provided resolution for his past trauma.

Throughout his childhood, Ivan was keen to follow in his older brother's footsteps and pursue a career as a jockey. 'Unwanted' by his mother, the young teen spent his spare time at the racetrack learning all the trainer would teach him about the racing world.

'He'd introduce me as his next apprentice, and that's all I wanted. My mother was always drunk and the bloke that lived with her was a dog, he used to kick the shit out of us kids. The trainer and his wife just loved me, and when I think about how my life could have turned out, I feel very bitter.'

Ivan spent part of his childhood in New South Wales in different boys' homes, and in 1957 at the age of 13, found himself in a Sydney remand facility for boys due to what he recalls as being parental neglect.

He told the Commissioner, 'This bloke Pfitzner ran the place. He'd pull me into this room and say, "You've been talking about it". I said, "Talking about what?" He said, "Talking about escaping". I said, "Escape?" I was three foot nothing and the walls were 20 foot high, I wasn't going to escape!'

Despite his denials, Ivan said the questioning became routine, and always ended with an act of sexual abuse.

'He'd come to the dorm and call you by surname, and you'd be crying your eyes out all the way to his office. He straddled me across the table, took my pants down. He had a couple of fingers missing, and he'd give me what the boys called "hand-slaps". While he was doing it, he'd ejaculate on your back, it

would go on for minutes. It was pretty bad. He never entered me, but he may as well have.'

Afterwards, Ivan said Pfitzner's hand mark remained clearly visible on his bottom for some time. He told the Matron at the shelter, as well as a nurse, and recalled both telling him to shut up.


'They must have told Pfitzner because I got 72 hours locked in what they called "dark Jimmy", it was a cell, and Pfitzner was the only one allowed in. You'd get a crust of bread and milk three times a day, and he'd say, "Time for a shower", and hose me. All I had was my pyjamas which I ripped the buttons off to click against each other on the floor, to see how far I could make them go.'

If the boys faced court, Ivan said the outcome often depended on a report from the facility, written by Pfitzner.

'Nobody took any notice of you, in them days he was God. He does the reporting, it goes to the judge, you're in his hands. He used to remind you and say, "Don't forget, I write the reports. There's no one else!" You'd be terrified.'

As the abuse went on, Ivan described losing his confidence and any interest he may have had in school.

'It was just so degrading, all that stuff. I've suffered depression, slashed me wrists and got 26 stitches inside and out. I can't have relationships, I don't trust anyone and that's not the way it should be. I've been dead for years and it all stems from that crap.'



At 55, Ivan had a breakdown, and said he often thinks about how his life might have turned out if he hadn't been abused.

'I live in a one bedroom flat, I drink a lot, I've got nothing, and it could have been so much different. For a lot of years, 20, 30, you do forget about it, and then all of a sudden it comes back. I could have been a champ or I could have been a chump, but I never got the chance to find out. I've been to a counsellor and psychiatrist, but what's in your head, no one can get around it. I've been trying to tell someone for over 50 years, but nobody's listened to me until now.'





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