



**QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

Statement of Witness

<i>Name of Witness</i>	
<i>Date of Birth</i>	
<i>Address and contact details</i>	
<i>Occupation</i>	
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	
<i>Date taken</i>	

I, [REDACTED] state;

1. The department has been my legal parent since I was a baby. In about three weeks I will turn 15. Before I came here, to [REDACTED], I lived at the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] and before that I lived at the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. In total I have lived in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and so I think I have a good knowledge of the different houses.
2. I have been in a couple of foster care houses before I came to live with [REDACTED]. Resis are more laidback; in foster care they are more strict and not flexible about things. I like resi a lot better than foster, but if I was little I would probably prefer to live in foster. Now that I am older I prefer residential. I think I would have liked to have switched from foster to resi at around age twelve, eleven or twelve.
3. [REDACTED] residential works differently to [REDACTED]. I found that [REDACTED] is more supportive, that the carers are very trustworthy so I open up to them more than I did at [REDACTED].
4. My carer here at [REDACTED] was also my carer when I was at [REDACTED]. Here at [REDACTED], she gets more support to support me than she did at [REDACTED]. I think [REDACTED] houses are run differently to [REDACTED] houses, and this difference affects the way carers can interact with the children.

Witness signature: [REDACTED]

Officer signature: [REDACTED]

5. [REDACTED] do more activities and stuff than [REDACTED], like camping. In June we went to Tangalooma. I loved the boat trip over, and it was just nice to go to a different area rather than being in the same place all the time. We also went to Marcoola.
6. I have been at this [REDACTED] house for a couple of months, and I like it better than the other [REDACTED] house I lived in. This house is a lot lighter and it just looks tidy. We have a pool while the other [REDACTED] house didn't, and I love swimming. I go to the movies too, the last time was a couple of weeks ago, and we have DVD nights.
7. Also we have Fun World passes, so we can go to theme parks; I have Movie World, Wet 'n' Wild and Sea World. I didn't even know I had it till the other day.
8. It is pretty laidback here; there are no dramas, hardly.
9. Because I have lived in the [REDACTED] before I lived here, it is basically the same rules. Some of the rules are: do your own dishes; clean your own mess; keep your room clean; shower; and wash your own clothes.
10. We have a chore chart and it is on the wall but if you don't do chores then you get a cross if you are not there, you don't get paid for it. And you can do one, two extra chores a week to earn some extra dollars.
11. Also I love cooking. I don't bake; I usually cook meals for dinner like roast lamb and potatoes or a chicken.
12. One of the younger girls here is learning from us, about cooking. I try to help young people settle in. I would tell them a bit about the house and about the carers.
13. Carers usually do all this; I might welcome and stuff but the carers tell them the rules. If I have got a problem with one of the young people, like if they have got mess somewhere, I just tell the carers and the carers tell them to clean it.
14. I have seen kids deliberately being naughty so that they could get thrown out of a residential house. I think they behave like this because they are not happy with themselves, or are jealous of other kids, or so they can be noticed. I saw this behaviour at the mixed house I lived in, in [REDACTED].
15. I have seen a couple of kids run away from a residential house for good. But I don't think kids should be locked in. I think if they want to go then they should be allowed to go.

Witness signature:

[REDACTED]

Officer signature:



16. Some kids run away and then a couple of days later they are back. They have food, a shower and then go again.
17. I have a doctor at [REDACTED] who I can see when I need to, and a dentist who I am due to see because my last appointment was in last June or July. I also do day activities with the youth workers here.
18. The police have never been to this house. They came a couple of times when I was at Parkridge but every time they came I was asleep.
19. I have been in a mixed house before, at [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. I definitely prefer all ladies, then you don't have body blues I think. The boys are lazy, and some are hypo and can't deal with it.
20. Over Christmas I stayed with my auntie at her house on the [REDACTED]. I was away for at least ten days straight and it was good, but I missed being here at the [REDACTED] house. It is my home.
21. While I was away with my auntie I had my uncle and auntie come down from [REDACTED], and I caught up with my little cousins who are aged four and six.
22. Though I didn't see my closer family over Christmas, I keep in contact with them on Facebook. I think it's a good thing for children in care to have Facebook. I have a lot of family in Melbourne that I don't know as well on my mum's side and I have them on Facebook.
23. I still keep in contact with my mum and dad. I have just come back from a visit with my dad in [REDACTED]. It was a positive; it was really good to see him, he is good.
24. The carers dropped me off at the [REDACTED], I told them I was going to see dad but I just wanted to go and see friends first and then I caught the bus to [REDACTED] train station and then I caught the train. Dad was happy to see me; he is in a pretty good place at the moment.
25. The visit wasn't planned though, I did it without help from a carer or CSO; I just took it in my hands. I rang Dad the day before so it was planned with him the day before. I said, "Can I stay over?" and he was like, "Yeah" and I just made my own way back here. I talk to Dad over the phone all the time, but it had been like eight months before I had seen him.
26. I knew the careers wouldn't approve it, and I didn't think Child Safety would approve a sleepover, but it could have taken months before I might have got


Witness signature: [REDACTED]

Officer signature: 

- permission. I have tried to get a visit officially approved before, and it would have been a while before I heard back.
27. To arrange a visit I know that I ring the department; either that or I ask my carer to email my CSO. But I didn't ask my CSO about this visit to Dad because I know they would say no because of his past.
28. But I always, I always kept in contact with carers by phone. When I was at Dad's before I went to sleep I texted the carer and I was like, "I am still alive" smiley face. I got a text back and I just had to send the details like my dad's phone number.
29. They might say it is the wrong thing to do, but everyone knows by now that if I really need to see my dad I am going to go anyway.
30. My carers have taught me a lot of techniques to deal with people like dad and people who might be in his house independently. I love these carers. They are like family, basically. I have never seen a carer that has been lazy.
31. The carers have always given me enough clothes and food, and I can talk about personal issues with my carer. I love her: fair, strict but fair. She knows what she is doing.
32. When I am catching the train to the [REDACTED] sometimes I see my mum around [REDACTED] with my sister. I don't meet up with her, she is just there; I just bump into her.
33. I go to [REDACTED] and I am going into grade ten this year. I enjoy school and I go every day. English and Food Studies are my favourite subjects. I like seeing my friends at school, but I think I should concentrate on my education more.
34. I have only told close friends at school that I am living with [REDACTED]. I tell them about this house and they go "Oh I wish I was living there." I feel good that I have the opportunities that come from living at this [REDACTED] house, but I don't talk about it much.
35. I don't really like going over to friend's houses, and you are not allowed to bring friends over here to the [REDACTED] house.
36. I get a lift to school but I catch the bus home from school. I have a go card and the carers put money on it every couple of weeks.

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37. Homework has been easy in every residential house that I have been to before, because you can just go up to carers and ask them to help you and they do.
38. My room is a good, quiet place where I can do my homework. I do my homework on my bed; I don't have a desk yet, and I don't want one.
39. Three years ago a foster carer gave me a Compaq laptop, which I use to complete assignments. We don't have Wi-Fi yet but I can just turn my hot spot on, on my phone, to access the internet.
40. I have never been offered drugs at [REDACTED]; they used to at [REDACTED] but not here. This is because I don't hang around that crew anymore.
41. I have seen people using drugs in residential care. If they did it in front of me I would always tell the carers because I don't want that in the house. Yes, yuck, I don't want to do drugs.
42. Kids do drink alcohol but not at the house. If they were to drink they would go to their friend's house and stay there the night. But I am not like that.
43. When I leave school, I want to be a veterinarian or a policewoman. I want to be a policewoman because you are not doing the same stuff every day. I have spoken to some police officers about becoming a policewoman and they were very encouraging.
44. I have also thought about joining the Air Force. I love cooking too and could train to be a professional chef; I can do courses at school in year eleven and twelve, like my hospitality course.
45. If I could change the way that care works, one thing I would change is how often Child Safety Officers visit. Yes, my contact with my CSO. I have had my CSO since October last year and he has not come and visited me once. Every month your CSO has to come and visit you.
46. My last CSO was really good, she was really on the ball and she would always come and see me every month. She would email Jodie straight back about some things. She would ring me if she wanted to talk to me.
47. Another problem is that when you try to get approval from the department the answer is always no. I sometimes feel powerless and that I am not involved in the choices that affect my life. I haven't had one phone call, one visit. The first time I met my current CSO was when my old CSO was with him.

Witness signature: _____

Officer signature: _____



48. But I have had it good compared to most people. I'm positive about my situation, and my counsellor has helped me.
49. I've had the same counsellor for about three years. I have built a very close relationship with her.
50. I would recommend that children's social workers stay with over longer periods of time, and that other young people should be able to get onto a social worker if they feel low. I would say talk to someone. I think everyone should have a right to a counsellor.
51. I think it would be a good idea to link kids to DOCCSS using Facebook. I think this would connect with kids a lot better than by spending millions of dollars on resources.
52. I have also opened up to the carers too so I have worked. But that is only if I trust them and I know that they are alright. It takes a lot for me to trust someone.

Declaration

This written statement by me dated 6 Feb 2013 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 6 is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed at Count. Signature this 6th day of February 20 13.

Witnessed:

Name SHARON SIMS Signature SHARON SIMS
Rank Officer of the QCPCI Reg. No. _____

Witness signature: _____

Officer signature: _____