

QCPCI

Date: 26.11.2012

Exhibit number: 14



QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

Our reference: [eDocs document number]

Statement of Witness


<i>Name of Witness</i>	Trevor James Cox
<i>Date of Birth</i>	21/2/1949
<i>Address and contact details</i>	C/- Cleveland Youth Detention Centre, Townsville
<i>Occupation</i>	Deputy Director Cleveland Youth Detention Centre, Townsville
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Det Ins Peter Brewer
<i>Date taken</i>	27 / 09 / 2012

I, Trevor James Cox state;

I am employed by the Queensland Government currently within the Department of Justice and Attorney General, as the Deputy Director of the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre situated at Townsville. I have held this position for the last 6 years. As part of my current role I am responsible for the accommodation of the young people placed at the centre, the case work team and the programs team.

After recent phone contact by Detective Sergeant Colless of the Child Protection Commission of Inquiry I made arrangements to provide a statement to investigators. On Thursday 27th September 2012 I met with officers from Crown Law and then provided information of my recollections to Detective Inspector Brewer at the Townsville Youth Centre. I later received a draft copy of a statement based on this discussion, to which I later added further information on reflection when speaking over the phone to Detective Brewer.

On arrival at the centre I was provided information by Detective Inspector Brewer in relation to the general operation of the Commission of Inquiry by way of an Information sheet detailing various pieces of information including frequently asked

Witness signature:  Signature of officer

questions. I was also shown at this time the Terms of Reference to the Inquiry mentioning the 3(e) aspect of the inquiry.


I have been employed continuously by government since 1985 primarily within the Youth and Detention Centre system but also worked for three and a half year period in head office administration. These Departments have changed name and title on various occasions within changes through the Machinery of Government.

I was initially employed as a Training Officer and worked at a number of facilities including Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Detention Centre, John Oxley Youth Detention Centre, Brisbane Youth Detention Centre, Youth Detention Operations (Head Office) and then Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in Townsville (January 2006).

The John Oxley Youth Centre or JOYC as it was commonly referred to, opened in 1987 and closed in about 2000 with the opening the new Brisbane Youth Detention Centre. I was employed at the centre for this 13 year period. I was previously at Wilson before going to John Oxley. At the time when I first commenced John Oxley was a Youth Centre only and not a fully secured facility, it later became a secure Detention facility after the riots in 1994 and after the closure of the Westbrook facility.

Wilson was retained as a remand centre for young people who then were later placed at different facilities. Boys over 15 were placed at Westbrook Centre and John Oxley was a mixed facility in that boys under 15yrs and girls were placed at the centre. These young people had their own secure rooms which operated in three different wings being Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson. The wings were 10 bed facilities with 7 individual rooms and one room with 3 beds. The wings had both boys and girls placed there. When we first opened there was only 30 beds and of the population there were approximately 6 to 8 girls and the remainder were boys, but this changed over time.

I was initially employed at JOYC as a Youth Worker. There was a Senior Youth Worker above me and above this position was a Principal Youth Worker. There were

Witness signature..........Signature of officer.....
Page 2 of 9


two youth workers attached to each unit and a senior youth worker across each of the three units and then there were three principal youth workers.

When I first started at JOYC the Manager was Terry McDermott. I later learned that I was hand picked to work at JOYC as it was being developed as a different facility with different concepts. We did not wear a uniform and it was a much different system than we have now.

Peter Coyne started as the Manager of JOYC in about 1988/1989 as Terry was promoted fairly early on after the centre opened. I understand that initially a number of people selected to come to JOYC refused to transfer as they did not want to be a part of the new environment where you interacted with the young people. Terry was initially recruiting for 4 Senior Youth Workers and I was one of two workers selected by Terry. I now know that initially there was some debate over the selection of these positions between the outgoing manager and incoming manager being Peter Coyne. I now understand that it was agreed that Terry was able to select 2 persons and Peter Coyne was then able to reinterview for the remaining positions.

Col Bray and I were appointed to the positions, and I think the other two workers were eventually to be Bruce Cassidy and Eileen Bisby. Fred Feige was to be one but I understand there was an incident shortly before these appointments and I understand this involved Peter Coyne finding another worker (Lorraine Hayward) asleep on the job on the shift that Fred was responsible for. I understand this cost Fred his Senior Youth Worker position. Fred later left the Department and went to work for the department of Environment as a Workplace Health and Safety Officer.

There were 4 Senior Youth Workers and 3 Principal Youth Workers at JOYC. The Principal Youth Workers were Lyn Draper, Ray Bentley and Rudy Pikelharing. Ray was from Westbrook and Rudy became my best mate and he passed away 2 years ago. On all shifts back then they were rotational I think it was 7am till 3pm, 3pm till 11pm and then night shift 11pm till 7am. On each day shift there was a Senior Youth Worker and two youth workers in each of the three wings making a total of 7 staff. On Night duty there was only one youth worker in each wing and a Senior Youth

Witness signature..........Signature of officer.....
Page 3 of 9


Worker making four people in the whole centre. Principal Youth Workers worked a 9-5pm and a 1pm to 9pm shift, this was the original model, and there were in excess of 30 operational staff at the time.

Peter Coyne started in about 1988/1989 from my recollection around February and stayed for about 18months to two years, this was after Terry McDermott left. The reporting structure was such that as a Senior Youth Worker I reported to a Principal Youth Worker. Within the roles and responsibilities each Principal Youth Worker did different aspects of work being HR, Accommodation and Programs. These roles would change around every 12months or so, and I recall that initially Rudy did Programs. Lyn Draper and Ray Bentley were the other Principal Youth Workers at the time.

In general the relationship between staff and Peter Coyne was fine for the first 6 months however; after this it went downhill. I think that people have lost sight of what the Heiner inquiry was all about, it was about staff abuse. There were other things by way of example that came out, but primarily Heiner was setup because of how staff were being treated.

In relation to the Heiner Inquiry I remember speaking to Heiner, I can't recall if I did a written complaint at this time, however because of staff complaints Heiner was asked to investigate things that were happening in the centre. It was about staff mistreatment and favouritism and a whole range of things that happened in this period. I recall speaking to Mr Heiner and Barbara Flynn whom I knew worker at Court Services. I recall that we met in the conference room at John Oxley, Barbara I think was taking the minutes. I don't recall if it was recorded or any other persons being there at the time.

From my recollection a number of people I knew gave evidence to Mr Heiner these included Rudy Pekelharing, Fred Feige, Danny Lannon, (he was pretty upset at this time). It is also likely that Eileen Bisby and possibly David Smith gave evidence as well as probably half the centre. There were a number of staff who I knew would not give evidence against Peter Coyne because of the association they had with him. This

Witness signature..........Signature of officer.....


group were referred to as the Ipswich connection and included Peter Coyne, Anne Dutney, Lyn Draper, Geoff Maninsky, Karen Mersaides, Lorraine Haywood and Col Bray.

The information I gave to Heiner, was as a result of the handcuffing incident (the last straw) which has been fairly well documented, however it was primarily about how the staff were being treated and not listened to, there had been quite a few incidents where staff had other views on how things should have been managed and we paid the price for it. Because of these incidents the staff who did not agree with Peter Coyne were being persecuted, to the point that I looked to buy a business in order to get out. I had been in business before doing this work and left the business sector because I wanted to work with young people. I subsequently decided that I would not leave as my passion was for working with disadvantaged youth.

I have read the terms of reference to the Commission of Inquiry and see the reference to historic child sex abuse in detention centres. This started with the Annette Harding incident. I am aware of the incident, but I did not go on the excursion. I recall being the admitting officer when the boys involved were returned to the centre by police this day.

I am unsure if I spoke to Mr Heiner about any sexual abuse allegations at the time of the Heiner Inquiry. There were certainly some incidents that I am aware of at JOYC in the time I was there. I remember [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I remember this as [REDACTED] was there from 15yrs of age and left when she was about 19yrs. It was towards the end of her sentence she was going on Leave of Absences supposedly to her parents, it later came out that she was actually going home with [REDACTED] and they were in a relationship. Unfortunately for me they followed me home the last weekend before she was released so they found out where I lived.

It was then the next day when [REDACTED] spoke to me a told me the street where I lived that she also disclosed that she had been in the car with [REDACTED] when they followed me to my home. As a result of this conversation I alerted management to the relationship and I think it was that day or the next that [REDACTED] resigned. In

Witness signature  Signature of officer

reflecting on the time of this incident now I realise that this was past the time of the Heiner inquiry.


I remember working with [REDACTED] in the months leading up to her release when she was on Leave of Absence, she would inevitably end up in separation, self harming particularly her face, she also seemed to know about what was going on with other children and staff in the centre. It later made sense when it was found out about her relationship with [REDACTED].

The Annette Harding incident was certainly known to me at the time of the Heiner inquiry, however I can't be certain if I spoke about this matter to Heiner. I am aware of the circumstances surrounding the incident through hearsay and conversations with other staff after the incident and some limited involvement with outside persons. I recall this was in either 1988 or 1989.

I was a Union member at the time, I think it was initially AWU then QPSU and then went back to AWU. Certainly for the Forde Inquiry I was there with the Union but do not recall the involvement of the Union with Heiner.

I was shown a number of documents by Detective Brewer at the time of providing this statement. There were two copies of Incident reports dated 24/5/1988 which have part of my handwriting on them. There was also a letter dated 2nd June 1988 addressed to Peter Coyne and signed by me. I have now adopted these documents and placed my initials on the top right hand side of the documents.

One of the incident reports was completed by Eric Kaltner and as a Senior Youth Worker I made a notation to his incident report. I also completed an Incident Report myself on the same matter. This was for the Annette Harding incident. At the time of the boys initially arriving back I was unaware of what had happened, but would have become aware later on. Initially the focus was to settle the boys and get them placed back into their units which took some hours.

Witness signature..........Signature of officer.....

In general terms the incident reports should have been placed on each of the four boy's files and a copy to the Centre Manager being Peter Coyne. There was a chain of command to be followed then. It would be my expectation that an incident as serious as this would always go to the Centre Manager.


The letter outlines the actions I took on the evening of the 26th May 1988 and the conversations and telephone calls I had with Peter Coyne, Mrs Harding (Annette's Mother) and Doctor Forbes. These documents have refreshed my memory and I can confirm that I spoke to Coyne and Dr Forbes and subsequently located some medication and have given this under direction from Dr Forbes to Annette. I believe that this would have been the equivalent of the Morning After pill. This letter was just giving an account of what had happened and what I did, as this would have been done to cover myself, recording what had happened and my actions.

I don't recall whom I gave the letter to but under normal circumstances I would have given this to Peter Coyne. I would expect that this would also have gone on Annette's case file. I don't recall having any further involvement in the Annette Harding case as I was only a Senior Youth Worker at the time at the bottom of the management chain.

On reflecting over these documents I am unable to be any more certain if any information regarding sexual abuse was provided to Mr Heiner.

I also gave evidence to the Forde Inquiry. I recall going before the Inquiry, but don't remember where it was I went to for this hearing, but it was in town and it was recorded. It is also referenced in the final report, but I don't remember if I consented to my name being published. I recall that some of this paperwork would have been used in the Forde Inquiry and asked questions around it, that is my belief.

In relation to the two incidents of sexual matters at the centre there was another matter involving allegations involving 'Shelly O'Neill I think was her name. There was also a youth worker by the name of [REDACTED] (I think), who played rugby, he left employment, but I am not sure if that was the matter involving Shelly O'Neill or not. I

Witness signature Signature of officer


remember there was an incident at Moogarah Dam on an outing or something like this.

I was also shown a blanked out hand written letter dated 3/10/89 signed 'very concerned' but I do not know who authored this letter.

It was the incident that is referred to in this letter that was a part of what led to the Heiner Inquiry. I was also shown a number of staffing lists and provided some information about the names I knew to Detective Brewer. I have not had any recent contact with any of the staff on these lists other than work related. I do not hold any other statements or documents personally that relates to these matters.

Rudy Pekelharing was a Principal Youth Worker at the time and he has passed on now, he was my best mate and we did discuss things about the centre. To be honest Rudy's wife felt this was the beginning of Rudy's early demise. Rudy and I were on duty the night of the handcuffing incident, and Peter Coyne directed certain boys and girls be handcuffed to the wire mesh fence at the end of the tennis court. By the time we knocked off at 11pm most of the boys and girls had gone back to their rooms. Next morning we came back on duty there was a young person (boy) handcuffed to a grate on the ground in the swimming pool area (Rudy went right off). We subsequently got the young lad out of there and returned to his room; but we paid the price for this as the instructions from Peter Coyne was to leave him there. We were told to remain in the conference room until we agreed with Peter Coyne's directive. Rudy was very adamant that the handcuffing was wrong however in the end we convinced Rudy to apologise for not following direction so that we could go home and we left that day, but following this event they looked at every opportunity to get rid of us.


The Heiner Inquiry we went along to in good faith as we thought something good would come of it. The paperwork was allegedly shredded because we weren't indemnified and it was in our own interest so we believed however; there was no closure. Peter Coyne got a payout and left the Department and those of us who spoke with Heiner were never debriefed.

Witness signature Signature of officer

I provide this statement of my own free will and declare the contents to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.



Trevor Cox

Witness signature  Signature of officer