



QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

QCPCI 3 E

Date: 21.1.2013

Exhibit number: ~~257~~ 257

Our reference: [eDocs document number]

Statement of Witness

<i>Name of Witness</i>	Pamela Sylvia Douglas
<i>Date of Birth</i>	16/10/1960
<i>Address and contact details</i>	Known to commission staff
<i>Occupation</i>	General Practitioner
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Detective Sergeant John Mison
<i>Date taken</i>	14/01/2013

I, Dr Pamela Sylvia Douglas, MBBS FRACGP IBCLC PhD state;

1. I am 52 years of age.
2. I am a General Practitioner and an Adjunct Senior Lecturer with the Discipline of General Practice at the University of Queensland. I hold a Bachelor of Medicine and a Bachelor of Surgery from the University of Queensland, a Fellowship with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, and a PHD from the University of Queensland. I also hold a Certificate in Sexual and Reproductive Health, Family Planning Australia. I am a clinician and researcher, currently focussing on mothers and babies.
3. I am a former employee of the Department of Family Services, [herein referred to as the department]. I worked for the department for about 12 months.
4. I commenced working for the department in 1989, at the John Oxley Youth Centre [herein referred to as JOYC]. A friend and colleague with whom I'd worked previously in indigenous health, Kim Yuke, became the full-time Registered Nurse at JOYC, and advised me that the manager of JOYC, Peter Coyne, was looking for a general practitioner to assist at JOYC.

Witness signature.....*P. Douglas* Signature of officer.....*John Mison*

5. I applied for this position and was appointed as visiting general practitioner at JOYC. My duties included conducting a weekly session at JOYC, for young people needing a non-urgent medical appointment. The appointments were made through Kim Yuke. I was also on call and provided with a pager, receiving calls from Kim a few times a week for advice on health topics or authorisation for administration of medications, if the problem was able to be appropriately managed by phone, or coming in to attend to more urgent matters on a needs basis. Upon commencing duties at JOYC I took steps to improve standards of medical care, working with Kim on programs that were appropriate for health education of adolescents, that increased rapport with health professionals, and better engaged them in their own health care. I ensured that medical examinations were conducted in ways that were sensitive to needs of young people.

6. I have limited memory of other staff that worked at JOYC. I was somewhat separate from the youth workers. However, I have clear memories of Peter Coyne, the manager, of Marion Drew, a social worker, and of Cindy Ranger, an art teacher. My main contact was with my fellow health professional, Kim Yuke.

7. I remember when I started at JOYC, Kim sought my advice on some old medications at JOYC. I remember being surprised that these medications were stored in a cupboard at JOYC, and in such quantities. I believe these medications included sedatives and antipsychotic drugs. I remember they were medications that I didn't consider appropriate for behavioural management of young people, except perhaps under highly exceptional circumstances. I can't quite recall what happened to these medications but I believe we would have arranged for Kim to dispose of many of them in an appropriate way. I helped Kim rationalise and modernise the range of drugs available, write medical protocols for the use of pharmaceuticals, and devise medication record sheets for the staff and youth workers so that all administration of medications would from now on be properly authorised and recorded. I understood there was a previous culture of behaviour management by pharmaceutical intervention with young detainees at JOYC.

8. When I was interviewed for the position at JOYC Peter Coyne made it clear he had reform of the system on his agenda. He told me he wanted to implement humane standards for the detention of young people modelled on international best practice. I recall that his vision, as presented it to me, was pragmatic, carefully researched, grounded in the necessary logistics, and very definitely the way of the future. I formed the view that Peter Coyne was a hardworking and deeply committed visionary, one of those rare and

Signature of officer.....

extraordinary assets to the public service. I believe that if we as a society were serious about preventing cycles of despair and criminality in this population of young Queensland detainees, Peter Coyne would have been appropriately mentored and supported at the highest levels, and would have had a brilliant career. From what I have seen in the press over the years, Peter Coyne has been savagely scapegoated, with every attempt made to destroy his reputation and credibility. I hope he has survived psychologically. In my first conversations with Peter Coyne, he alluded to the out-dated use of force, including hand cuff use, and the medical management of behaviours that had previously occurred. I remember him touring me through the facility, showing me the efforts he had made to humanise the environment and make it friendlier, less isolating and punitive for the young detainees, at the same time as it retained appropriate security. Regarding doctors' engagement with young detainees, Peter Coyne's opinion was that the culture had to change. For this reason he had wanted a female general practitioner on staff, rather than the previous older male paediatricians, in order to offer, amongst other medical services, preventative care that was appropriate to adolescents, including girls. My values were aligned with Peter's. I was aware that Peter was recruiting other staff with similar values.

9. However, as my time there progressed, I became aware that Peter Coyne was receiving opposition to his methods from some of the staff who could be referred to as the old guard. I remember that Peter was undermined by these staff, who believed that his way would not be effective in the management of young people. The centre was divided between new staff and the old guard. This dissention led to an Inquiry being conducted at JOYC. This Inquiry was known as the Heiner Inquiry. I remember at that time of the Heiner Inquiry there was considerable distress amongst staff. I do not think I gave evidence at this Inquiry. If I did give evidence I have no memory of it. I have some memory that youth workers were attending a conference room to meet with Mr Heiner. I remember this was a big event and stressful for everyone at the time.
10. I do not believe I wrote a report to the department or anybody else about any concerns I had whilst I worked there at JOYC.
11. I have no knowledge of any allegations of sexual abuse at JOYC and have not needed to report any allegations of sexual abuse to any person in relation to my period of employment of JOYC.

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




12. I do not remember administering a morning after pill to a child detainee at JOYC. I expect I would remember this, because of the implications.
13. Around the time of the Inquiry I remember Ruth Matchett came out to JOYC and held a meeting with staff. Then Peter Coyne left JOYC, and I understood that Peter was leaving JOYC against his will. As a result of Peter Coyne's departure from JOYC, I resigned in protest. I remember it as an awful time and I didn't want to be working there under the old ways.
14. In May 1998, Kim Yuke and I decided to write a "Perspectives" piece for the Courier Mail, in response to reports in the Courier Mail concerning the time we were employed at JOYC. We wrote this because the reports in the paper were discordant with our own experience at JOYC, and we found it difficult to believe that certain reported events could have occurred without Kim Yuke knowing about them, because of her close working relationship with youth workers and her daily contact and strong rapport with the detainees. If Kim had known about concerning events, she would have reported them to me, because they would have been relevant to the health care of the young people concerned. Furthermore, we had strict protocols in place concerning administration of medications. I considered the newspaper's response to our piece unprofessional and had grave concerns about the impartiality of the journalism. Our submission was not published, and I sent material through to the Forde Inquiry but was not asked for an interview.
15. I have not seen and spoken with Peter Coyne since I returned my pager to him at the time of my departure from the JOYC in 1990.
16. I have in my possession a copy of the document faxed through to the Forde Inquiry on 19 February 1999. I include that six page document as part of my statement to the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry. I believe I also found the contact details for Peter Coyne's lawyer, and faxed a copy through there, because I feared for Peter Coyne's psychological well-being given the extraordinary ferocity of the public attacks against him over such a sustained period of time, and wanted him to know that Kim and I had made an effort. I do not have a record of this second fax, and did not hear back, as was to be expected.
17. On Monday the 14th day of January 2013 I met with detectives Mison and Parer of the Child Protection Inquiry and had a conversation about my employment at JOYC.

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

18. On Wednesday the 16th day of January 2013 I provided detectives Mison and Parer copies of documents as mentioned in paragraph 16 of this statement.



Declaration

This written statement by me dated 14/01/2013 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 5 is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

 Signature
Signed at Brisbane this 14th day of January 20 13

Witnessed:

 Signature
Name J A Mison Rank Det Sgt Reg. No. 8065

Witness signature.......... Signature of officer..........
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attention, they wanted mothering. In the afternoons she worked on innovative health education projects. She consulted with the young people to find what health education they wanted and ran programmes dealing with body awareness, body image, sexuality, safe sex, STDs, pregnancy, personal hygiene, basic health education. She ran programmes to teach them of the dangers of drug abuse. She ran programmes to train the staff in first aid, wrote and taught them protocol for various medical situations and emergencies. She ran programmes on nutrition awareness and liaised with kitchen staff.

We read the allegations of inappropriate use of handcuffs, and felt disbelieving. As far as we knew, Peter had collected up all the handcuffs when he took the job and kept only one pair in his office for emergencies. He used to talk about the symbolism of handcuffs and the negative impact of that on the kids. We read allegations that inmates were kept in isolation units for three days or more. Kym frequented the office next to the isolation unit daily, and has no recollection of it being used for more than a few hours at a time, in keeping with the policies of a progressive administration that emphasized behavioural management and the creating of an environment of co-operation rather than of punishment and coercion and control.

Kym describes the definite split between some of the youth workers who had been part of the previously entrenched culture of abusive and coercive behaviour towards the young people and who were hostile to the changes afoot, and those staff who supported management. I was also aware of this conflict and of the efforts of management and professional staff to deal with it creatively, through programmes of support and training for the youth workers.

Then came the Heiner Inquiry. It was considered by everyone I spoke to at the time an inquiry into Peter Coyne's management, instigated by disgruntled youth workers with political connections. But the government changed, the inquiry folded, Peter was transferred out, professional staff including Kym and myself resigned in despair, and the documents were shredded.


I remember the young people's stories. I remember their bodies, the scars from "cutting up", the cervical dysplasia on the Pap smear of the sexually active thirteen-year-old, the sexually transmitted disease. These children were physically and sexually abused, but in their homes, and on the streets. They were victims who became street-wise in order to survive. They were a tough lot. Resilient. They needed to be contained.

And, under the horror of their stories, I remember the silence, a silence locked under the bravado and the bad language and the violence. It was the silence of their pain, and the silence of their longing for love.

Black-and-white solutions rarely endure. A mature society demands complicated strategies for youth in detention, embracing both the need for containment and opportunities for education and nurturing. Perhaps mine is a position of privilege, to have heard so many stories. Having heard them, one realises that societal solutions for their crime, no matter how shocking, do not lie in simplistic condemnation and punishment.

It seemed to me that Peter Coyne embraced the complications. He listened to their stories. He was a visionary with the courage to demand that society make a just


DS 8065



16/1/13

response. For the duration of his management, he effectively challenged the entrenched culture of oppression in a Queensland juvenile detention centre.

I shook my head, poured another cup of rosehip tea, and reflected with Kym that the ongoing bitterness of the backlash against Peter Coyne's brief era is simply a measure of the radicality of his vision of humane care for incarcerated youth. Reform in the John Oxley Youth Centre threatened to create in the community at large a perception of trouble, and neither side of Queensland politics wanted to risk it.

Monday 1 June 1998

The headlines of Saturday's edition of *The Courier Mail* (30 May 1998) read: "Children chained: jail boss". Kym and I remain confident that handcuffs overnight would have been used as a last resort to ensure the safety of the residents, when Peter Coyne was satisfied that all other options had been explored. In keeping with Peter's approach to management, we expect that the young people and staff concerned would have been debriefed afterwards, that strategies to prevent such incidents in future would have been explored, and that if there had been any physical problems arising from the use of handcuffs Peter would have had the children examined by the R.N. or M.O.


DS 8065
R. Douglas
16/1/13

30 May 1998 (not sent)

The Editor,
Courier Mail.

Dear Sir,

I have decided to withdraw the piece I submitted to your "Features"/"Perspectives" section on Thursday 28 May 1998, concerning the experience of myself and Kym Yuke R.N. in 1989 at the John Oxley Youth Centre.

I am concerned that your press is unable to impartially present a perspective that differs from the allegations published on 25 and 26 May 1998. Des Houghton commented that my article wasn't to be published in the near future because Michael Ware and his informants view our experience as naive and peripheral. This indicates to me that from the outset the Courier Mail would allow our professional credibility to be undermined by anonymous sources with political agenda.

Michael commented to me on Friday morning after having read the piece that he needed to interview me first to find things like how often I went there, before he would consider publishing it. This indicated to me a lack of competent scrutiny of the material provided, since that question was in fact answered in detail in the first eleven lines. In my view the Courier Mail's investigation favoured sensational unsourced headlines over the publication of professional perspective. I was not willing to be interviewed because I did not trust the way my perspective would be reported.


Des commented that Michael's information was corroborated by half a dozen sources with "dairies and dates" (even though nameless), unlike my story which was "uncorroborated". No attempt has been made to contact either Kym Yuke for corroboration or, as far as I know, to independently establish our professional or personal credibility, although we have been willing to be named.

Des said he may "wait until the dust settles" to publish it. I believe that the moment for fair public debate about the issue has passed, due to the political nature of the allegations in the context of an impending election.

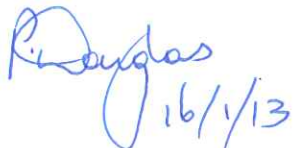
Because of these concerns, I withdraw the piece, and await an independent inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Pamela Douglas



05 8065



P. Douglas
16/1/13

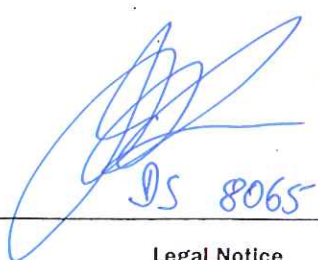
Gladstone Road Medical Centre

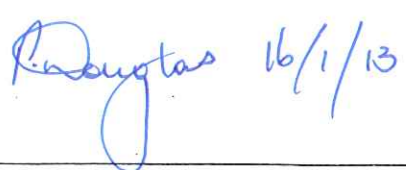
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To: DARIEL CAMPBELL SOLICITOR From: DR Pamela Dolan
Att: FORDE ENQUIRY Date: 19. 02. 99
Fax No: 3237 9924 No of pages including this one: 6.


JS 8065


R Douglas 16/1/13

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24 Hilltop Avenue,
Annerley. 4103
ph 3217 1234

Daric!
Dear Danielle,

In this fax I am sending you:

- (1) a copy of the article I submitted to the "Perspectives" section of the Courier Mail,
- (2) a letter I wrote but did not send explaining why I chose to withdraw it a couple of days later, and
- (3) a note written on 1 June 1998 in response to the ongoing headlines.

This material contains most of what I would have to contribute to the Forde Inquiry.

I have been appalled by the bitterness of the attacks in the press on Peter Coyne's administration, and bewildered by the allegations of abuse made against an administration that was overtly committed to *changing* the culture of abuse so deeply entrenched in the youth detention centres in Brisbane at the time. It seems to me that the humanity and compassion of both Peter Coyne and the professional staff he employed, in the face of profound resistance from "old guard" prison staff and the complex dilemmas of modernisation in youth detention, were beyond question.

I am continually astounded by allegations of inappropriate use of medication to control behaviour in the young people who were under my medical care throughout my period of employment.

I am willing to speak with a solicitor face to face (but not on the telephone, I'm afraid), and willing to offer my perspective to the inquiry in the form you think may be most useful.

Please treat this information as confidential. I would not like it used without my permission.

Yours sincerely,

P. Douglas
Pamela Douglas

[Handwritten signature]
DS 8065

P. Douglas 16/1/13

Submitted to "Perspectives" section of Courier Mail, Thursday 28/5/98

Kym Yuke came by after the kids were asleep last night, carrying a takeaway Thai soup and her folder of material from 1989 at the John Oxley Youth Centre. I was the visiting general practitioner for that year, she was the full-time registered nurse. I drank rosehip tea and read to her again the front-page articles from the *Courier Mail* of the past two days. "Child abuse evidence destroyed", ~~cried Monday's~~ headline.

We tried to make sense of it.

I have not seen Peter Coyne, the social worker who was manager at that time, since I said good-bye and gave him back the pager. I carried it so that Kym could contact me as she did a number of times each week for advice or authorisation or with request that I see a young person outside my usual weekly session. Peter had a vision of non-institutionalised and quality health care for the kids that I shared.

I liked Peter's integrity, his compassion for the young people and his conviction that a juvenile detention centre should be more than just a custodial institution for young criminals under lock-and-key. From our first encounter he articulated a philosophy of a nurturing and educational environment that attempted to break the cycles of deprivation, disempowerment and law-breaking. He employed a team of professional people with similar vision. They struck me as a big-hearted, hard-working, hard-headed lot, concerned about staff accountability, staff training, team-work, emotional and behavioural support and educational opportunities for the young people as well as the appropriate maintenance of security.

Kym drank water to soothe the chilli of the Thai soup as I read allegations that there was "administration of behaviour-altering drugs by staff without medical qualifications to control the children". We tried to think how that could have been possible. When we came, Kym modernised the clinic. We discarded the outmoded sedatives and anti-psychotics stocked in the pharmacy, we rationalised and modernised the range of drugs available, devised medication record sheets for the staff so that all administration of medications was now properly authorised and recorded. We wrote medical protocol. Later on Kym instituted "panadol sheets", so that youth workers needed to account for even the administration of a panadol tablet because of concerns that kids were hoarding for over-dose. We have only one memory of an anti-psychotic being used to control behaviour in an emergency, and that was, ~~ironically,~~ the time I was away and another doctor was called in.

We read the story of "Thomas" finding the twelve-year-old boy chained to the stormwater drain overnight, and looked at each other, bewildered. It is inconceivable to Kym that something like that could have happened and she did not know. She started each day at 8.30 am with a round of the wings, checking out how everyone was. There were only thirty or so residents, and the kids knew her and talked with her freely. She had a good working relationship with the staff. They were great gossips, she said, both the inmates and the youth workers, and she was trusted, so she cannot imagine she would not have heard of such an abusive incident. Then there was the clinic each morning, to which the kids came down on the slightest pretence, for coughs and colds and rashes, bee-stings, "I ate a mushroom I found out in the grass and now I'm feeling sick", "I can't get to sleep at nights", the inevitable minor efforts at self-mutilation. They were needy kids, she said. They liked coming. They wanted her

John Oxley
05 8065

R Douglas
16/1/13