

Date: 25.1.2013Exhibit number: 291

**QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION  
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

**Statement of Witness**

<i>Name of Witness</i>	Mark Harry MILLS
<i>Date of Birth</i>	22/08/1965
<i>Address and contact details</i>	Known to Detective Senior Constable Denise PARER
<i>Occupation</i>	Workplace trainer and Assessor
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Detective Senior Constable Denise PARER
<i>Date taken</i>	03/11/2012

I, Mark Harry MILLS state;

1. I am former employee of the Department Family Services, [herein referred to as the department].
2. I commenced employment with the department in 1989 after having completed an Associate Diploma of Community Recreation. Upon commencement with the department I undertook a position of youth worker at the John Oxley Youth Centre [herein referred to as JOYC]. JOYC had been in operation approximately 18 months when I started there. My position at JOYC was as a youth worker supervising the children. I initially held a temporary position but later attained a permanent position after approximately 2 years. Further, during my time of employment at JOYC, I attained the position of Section Supervisor and ran programs for the children when others were away. At one stage during my employment at JOYC I was seconded to the Boonah Outlook Centre for a period of 9 months providing external programs for children in detention. I remained at JOYC for a period of 12 years until the Centre's closure in 2001. At that time

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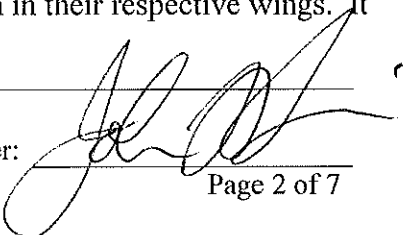
JOYC was offering voluntary redundancy packages which I accepted. At that time I left the employ of the department and moved on to the private sector.

3. During my employment at JOYC I recall the Centre had several managers over the years. These included Peter Coyne, Ian McIntyre, Tim Evans, Barry Collings, Arthur Eustace Earl, Martin Grandalis and Paul Carter. I have named these managers in no particular order, just how I can remember them. I remember Anne Dutney being second in charge to Peter Coyne when he was manager.
4. Other staff I recall working with me during my time at JOYC include Eileen Bisby, Trevor Cox, Colin Bray, Lorraine Hayward, Scotty Healing, Warren Christensen, Garry Truloff, Rodney Reston, Paul Hamson, Narend Nath, David Smith, Marj Judd, Sabina 'Connie' Konnicanin and Jimmy Douglas. I further recall Guy Gibson (senior youth worker), Gary Thompson (manager/ Set up Boonah outlook centre), Darren Leahy (later became a psychiatric nurse), David Gold (casual youth worker), David Farnsworth (teacher), Noel King (ATSI youth worker), Dawn Webb (youth worker now deceased), Helen Neville (nurse), Neville Mather (youth worker who came from Westbrook), David Lloyd, Peter Griffin (shift supervisor in the later years) and Damien Butler (youth worker).
5. I recall there having been several issues at JOYC during my time there. One of the issues arose after a riot at Westbrook. Anne Warner had been the Minister at the time and Barry Collings had been the deputy manager of JOYC. After the riot children had been directed on transfers from Westbrook to JOYC. Our numbers at JOYC jumped from 30 to up to 100 children. The centre could just not properly accommodate the numbers. Children needed to share rooms which caused problems. We had children escaping. Eventually demountables were added to help cope with the numbers.
6. JOYC had originally been purpose built on a model which was to include a mum, dad and children style accommodation. That is, male and female youth workers were to be in charge of both male and female children in their respective wings. It

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was to operate similar to a family unit. Due to the change in dynamics from the influx of older more violent children, the model changed to youth workers as having to become prison officers.

7. Social workers who would spend limited time with the children would often make major and somewhat poorly informed decisions which would cause issues for the youth workers. For example if a child when speaking with the social worker during their 10 minute session stated that they wanted to share a room with a certain other child, the social worker would make recommendation and it would happen. No matter how much the youth workers protested, knowing after spending extended time with those children that this would cause difficulties, the social workers decision often stood. This caused friction between the social workers and youth workers.
8. Other issues that arose at times were between management and staff. From memory this mainly centred on the safety issues experienced by staff as there was an increase in staff being assaulted by the children. There were issues surrounding extended hours staff had to work on overtime because of lack of staff. Essentially problems arose because the centre didn't have the necessary tools to deal with the situation. I remember one solution that was attempted at one time was the recruitment of the 'ninja turtles'. These were a group of youth workers who came to the centre around 1995 who were trained in martial arts. These workers were supposed to help gain control of the children again. (This was a change that was implemented during the time that I was seconded to Boonah I became aware of it from talking to other JOYC workers while at Boonah and on my return to JOYC)
9. Another issue over the years was over some of the children having been handcuffed. I was never involved in the incident.
10. I recall that there were also issues between Peter Coyne and one of the youth workers Fred Feige who for some reason had been demoted from being a senior

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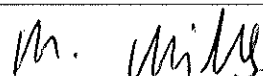
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youth worker in the transition from Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre to JOYC. There were also issues around the difference in management models between the newer people recruited to JOYC as opposed to the ones who had been transferred from the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre. From memory the ex-Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre staff did not like how JOYC was being run and had not liked the change. I myself stayed out of it as I was just a young 23 year old naïve youth worker new to the system.

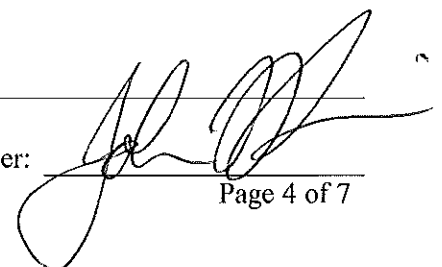
11. At no time do I recall ever writing a statement about management or issues at JOYC.
12. During my conversation with Detective Parer on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2012 she showed me a copy of a typed document dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 1989. After reviewing this statement I can state that it appears to be a true copy of a letter I must have written all those years ago as it bears my signature. I do not remember having written it, but know in my heart that for me to put pen to paper and write such a letter I must have thought it was necessary and I would have believed in the contents of what I was saying in that letter. I cannot recall how I came to write that letter or who may have asked me to other than someone possibly having asked me what my opinion about JOYC was. From review of that letter it appears I had addressed it to George Nicks, who was in human resource of the Department in Brisbane. I do not recall having forwarded this letter or to whom I may have given it to.
13. I recall that during my period of employment at JOYC that there was an Inquiry commenced which was referred to as the Heiner Inquiry. I did not have a great deal to do with it. I had only been at the centre for 2-3 years at the time of the inquiry and I do not recall being asked to or having ever provided any evidence to the Inquiry. From memory I thought that the inquiry only spoke to people in higher positions within JOYC. I myself was still a junior youth worker at the time. I cannot recall what the Heiner Inquiry was supposed to have been about and I

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think at the time I was only vaguely aware of it happening as I did not get involved. I do not recall who may have been involved in that Inquiry.

14. In relation to allegations of sexual abuses alleged to have occurred during my employment at JOYC I can only offer the following information, all of which is third or fourth hand. At no time did I ever directly witness any sexual abuses or receive any allegations during my period of employment at JOYC.
15. I am vaguely aware of an allegations of sexual abuse said to have occurred to a female detainee named Annette Harding. I only know of this allegation from rumours and information I have read or seen in the news. This event was said to have occurred prior to me commencing employment at JOYC.
16. I recall there being rumours in relation to some sort of outing. This from my memory was an education outing and involved Terry Owens, Alexander Meulenberg, [REDACTED] and the school teachers. At the time I had taken one of the children to do some filming with a camera on a separate camp run by David Smith. When I had returned to the centre that afternoon with the child, (David Smith and his staff and residents were still on camp), I remember Ian McIntyre asking me to stay on and do an overtime shift. I was to replace one of the staff members from the education outing ([REDACTED] who had been dismissed or let go because of something inappropriate was said to have occurred on that excursion. Again I do not know of details of that incident, my only knowledge of it came about as a result of having to relieve the shift after the staff member was sent home. This occurred at approx 3.30pm to 4.30pm in the afternoon. I passed [REDACTED] in the hallway while going on shift. He looked stressed and I asked him if he was ok. He just said that he had some personal problems and had to go home. I never saw [REDACTED] again. This conversation with [REDACTED] may have occurred the day after or a few days after the date of the Education Excursion.

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17. Another instance of sexual abuse having said to have occurred related to two male children ( [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] ) having allegedly entered one of the female detainees room and raping her. I do not recall that child's name ( [REDACTED] ), or what happened in relation to it. I only learnt of it because from memory there had been talk about the female getting the morning after pill. I think Ian McIntyre may have been the manager at the time and that nurse Lorraine McGregor had been involved.
18. I recall very late in the years at JOYC, when the manager between Paul Carter and Martin Grandalis was in charge, there were rumours relating to a male youth worker who was supposed to have sent some sort of love letter to one of the male detainees. This may have been discovered during a room search or something similar. From memory no offences had actually occurred but the casual youth worker involved was dismissed immediately. This occurred around the time the new building was built at JOYC.
19. I further recall rumours surrounding youth worker [REDACTED] and female detainee [REDACTED]. Again from whispers there was some talk about [REDACTED] when on day release and supposed to be seeing her mother, was meeting up with [REDACTED]. This was said to have occurred shortly around the time prior to [REDACTED] release which was when she was around 17 years old. I never witnessed any such instances or concern and only ever learnt of this information through staff gossip. My knowledge of this matter is hearsay only.
20. At no other time have I ever been approached by or asked to make statement or submission to any person, union, Inquiry or body in relation to sexual abuse allegations during my employment at JOYC. Should such an incident have occurred, as with the reporting of any incident, it would have been logged in a log book or diary and passed on to a shift supervisor for briefing up to management. I recall later in the years during my employment at JOYC that when incidents occurred, the process was to call a shift supervisor who would provide you with a

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incident number for the report so it was more accountable. Those reports would be completed, copied and sent to the relevant parties depending on their content.

21. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2012 Detective Parer attended my home at which time I provided her with my knowledge of these matters.

*M. Mills*

Mark Harry MILLS

**Declaration**

This written statement by me dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2012 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 7 is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

M. Mills Signature  
Signed at Brisbane this 11<sup>th</sup> day of Jan 20 13

Witnessed:

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

Signature of Witness:

*M. Mills*

Signature of Officer:

*J. A. Mison*

25th September 1989.

Mr George Nicks,  
7th Floor,  
Community and Youth Support,  
G.P.O. Box 806,  
Brisbane, 4000.

Dear Mr Nicks,

In view of recent events at John Oxley Youth Centre, I would like to express my support for both Peter Coyne and Anne Dutney.

In the six months that I have been at John Oxley Youth Centre, I have found the management team at John Oxley to be very competent in the job which they do.

In their dealings with the staff, I have found the management team to be approachable, informative and fair. Compared to other places that I have worked at, the John Oxley management team should be commended on the job that they do.

As a qualified Recreation Officer, I think that there are many programs, and ideals which have been introduced to the centre by Peter and Anne, which will be of a major benefit to the young people at John Oxley.

Yours Sincereley,

*Mr. Mills.*

Mark Mills,  
Youth Worker, John Oxley Youth Centre.

*Mr. Mills.*

*J.A. Mison*  
J.A. MISON  
Det Sgt 8065  
11/1/89

*See letter on*

*Coyne personal  
file also.*



28th September, 1989

Mr M. Mills  
Youth Worker  
John Oxley Youth Centre  
P.O. Box 556  
DARRA QLD 4076

Dear Mr Mills,

Thank you for your letter of 25th September, 1989 in which you expressed your interest and concern with the action of certain staff members at the John Oxley Youth Centre.

I have taken the liberty of forwarding your letter to the Director-General so that it may also be considered with other material which may become available.

Yours sincerely,



G.E. Nix  
Deputy Director-General  
(Community and Youth Support)