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QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

Statement of Witness

Table with 2 columns: Field Name, Value. Fields include Name of Witness, Date of Birth, Address and contact details, Occupation, Officer taking statement, Date taken.

I Robert James O'Hanley state;

- 1. My full and correct name is Robert O'Hanley and I am 63years of age having been born on the 5/6/1949 I am currently employed as a teacher with a public school in Queensland and have been since 1988.
2. On the 24 September 2012, I was approached by Detective Sergeant Fabian Colless of the Office of the Child Protection Commission of Inquiry and provided the details contained within this statement.
3. I am a former employee of the John Oxley Youth Centre (JOYC) and the Department of Family Services, having started working at the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre around 1985 and then finishing up my employment at the John Oxley around mid 1988. During that time I was employed as a teacher.
4. As a teacher employed by the Department of Family Services, I used to teach children who were incarcerated at both the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre and the John Oxley Youth Centre (JOYC).

Signature of Witness:

Signature of Officer:

R O'Hanley

[Signature]

5. I recall at JOYC that there were about 3 teachers who used to teach about 25 kids at JOYC but we would only teach about 6 kids at any one time. There was a School at the centre and a classroom where we would teach the kids.
6. I remember while I was employed at JOYC, the manager at that time was Peter Coyne and the teachers were Karen Mersiades and Gordon Cooper. I remember that we worked in conjunction with the youth workers. I remember that a female worker used to teach art, who I recall as Sarah Moynihan. I remember that a worker used to teach automotive but I can't recall his name. I remember that there used to be some psychologists at the centre but I cannot recall their names. Our aim was to have kids involved at the school for the full day.
7. I was not aware of any problems at JOYC. The issue that I recall was the jealousy that youth workers had of teachers due to our employment conditions such as leave but no animosity. I remember that we were very insular from the youth workers.
8. I remember at that time I was a member of the Queensland Teachers Union. At that time I was not employed by the Department of Education but with the Department of Family Services however we still got the benefits of 12 weeks of annual leave just as other teachers did. I remember that this caused some jealousy with the other workers at JOYC as they were only getting four weeks.
9. The only letter that I can recall giving while employed at JOYC was in relation to an incident at an excursion. This involved a young aboriginal girl, who I cannot recall her name, who claimed that she was abused whilst on the excursion. I remember that a number of kids were taken out of the centre, with three teachers and a psychologist and what happened was that whatever had gone on at the excursion, we were unaware of. When we got back to the cars three of the kids took off.
10. I remember that I got into a car with Gordon (Cooper) and drove to a farm, as in those days nobody had mobile phones, and asked the person at the farm if we could use his

Signature of Witness:

R. Harley

Signature of Officer:

phone. We phoned the centre and told them what had happened. The Psychologist and other teachers travelled in another car and they happened to find the three kids and brought them back to the centre. When we got back I learnt that the young girl had claimed that she had been abused and then we sat down and wrote a letter of what had occurred on the excursion. I remember that we were not aware of what had happened until we got to the car-park, when the kids just took off.

11. I recall that after the excursion Peter Coyne told us to write a report about what happened. I then wrote this letter and provided it to Peter Coyne. When I wrote the letter it would have been pretty fresh in my memory. After this we went back to our teaching roles and played no further part in that matter. It is probably that the girl would have attended the school but I never had conversations with the girl.
12. On the 24 September 2012, I was shown a photocopy of a typed document dated 25 May 1988 bearing my signature. I cannot recall signing this typed letter however it appears to be the same contents of a handwritten document prepared by me on the same date about the incident mentioned above in paragraph 9 of this statement. I remember writing a letter but I cannot recall how this typed statement was prepared or who prepared it.
13. I did not supply any statements or letters while at JOYC that I recall. I did not supply any statements or letters to my union while at JOYC that I recall.
14. I was not aware of any inquiry conducted at JOYC nor did I give any evidence to any inquiry while employed at JOYC or when I left JOYC. I did not give any evidence to the FORD inquiry, nor did I give any evidence at any Parliamentary inquiries. I did not give any statements or submissions to these inquiries.
15. I did not give any evidence of sexual abuse to any of these inquiries nor did I give any evidence about the excursion mentioned above to any inquiry.
16. I am not aware of any other incidents of sexual abuse at JOYC or any other centre.

Signature of Witness:

R O'Hanley

Signature of Officer:



17. I was interviewed by an aboriginal woman, possibly from the Government, about 10 to 12 years ago but I am unable to state who that person worked for or exactly when that occurred. I remember that this person showed me a letter and I think it was the letter I wrote about the excursion incident. Apart from that I have not spoken to any other persons that I recall.
18. On the 24 September 2012, I was shown a list of staff, by Detective Colless, who were employed at JOYC around the time of my employment. I was unable to identify any of the staff names.
19. On the 24 September 2012, I was shown a photocopy of a hand written document dated 3rd October 1989 signed 'Very Concerned'. I am not the author of this document, nor am I able to recognise the handwriting on the document

Robert James O'Hanley

Declaration

This written statement by me dated 24/9/12 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 4 is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

R O'Hanley Signature
Signed at Bussell this 25 day of September 2012

Witnessed: 
Name P.G. Colless Rank Det Sgt Reg. No. 9631

Signature of Witness:

Signature of Officer: