



**QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

Statement of Witness

<i>Name of Witness</i>	Greg Wall
<i>Date of Birth</i>	
<i>Address and contact details</i>	Known to the Commission
<i>Occupation</i>	Service Manager, Churches of Christ Care Pathways residential programs
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Jason SCHUBERT
<i>Date taken</i>	15 / 01 /2013

I, Greg Wall state;

1. I am the Service Manager, Churches of Christ Care Pathways Residential Programs. Churches of Christ Care has about 12 to 15 residential facilities across the State and I manage four of these facilities.
2. House B is one of these four facilities. It is a five person residential care facility purpose built in the late 1980's. It's of block construction, gyprock lined in the carers section and rendered block in the residence. House B is located in a rural setting on the outskirts of Brisbane about 10 minutes from the shops at the end of a fairly quiet road on approximately seven acres that is surrounded by a lower 1.2 metre galvanised pipe and wire fence.
3. The residence contains 5 bedrooms (to accommodate children), two bedrooms to accommodate carers, a large open plan kitchen, dining and living area. There is an adjoining room which is large enough to be a small home gymnasium. The house is air conditioned and has a pool table in the outdoor, paved and covered area. There are two bathrooms other than the carers bathroom. One is presently locked off and used for storage.
4. At the time of making this statement there are three children living in House B. Placements can be terminated after a young person absconds. Usually these placements as terminated one to two weeks afterwards. Over the last six to eight months there have

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Greg Wall

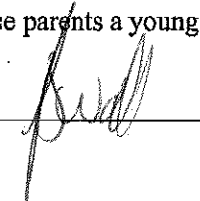
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Jason Schubert

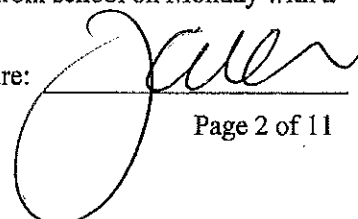
been difficulties in identifying five young people to be placed together. Our referrals come from Child Safety through the Placement Service Unit (PSU).

5. PSU can at times work really well and at other times not so well. Often we receive referrals for young people that given they know the other young people that we've got placed would just never be an appropriate referral. Sometimes instead of having a direct targeted placement we will receive a blanket email out to multiple services asking "who can take this young person". Generally though in this region it does work fairly well most of the time.
6. We have our own internal matching processes and if the information contained in the paper based referral (received from PSU) is not a good match with our other residents we would meet with the PSU and, Child Safety Officer to gather more information. If after this process the information does not indicate a good match will say no to that placement.
7. At the house we have three children, BJ, KI and JA. BJ and JA have been in other residential placements before. KI has been in and out of placements most recently he was placed with a relative and two to three months ago he contacted the department and said he did not want to live with relatives anymore and wanted to come back into care.
8. Church of Christ Queensland oversees Church of Christ Care. Church of Christ care are funded \$1.2M for Kingswood Lodge (about \$240,000 per child). The budget is tight and the funding for Kingswood Lodge is expended by Kingswood Lodge. There are only minimal savings in having three (instead of five) children in care. We are funded quarterly and allowed to have what is termed a buffer which is one month of our funding over in savings, so we're able to have that much in surplus. Amounts over that are not funded in the next quarter.
9. We prepare quarterly financial reports to the department along with operational reports on how many beds nights have been filled.
10. One of our young people is indigenous.
11. Up until about nine 9 years ago the site was operated as a house parent model which is where a married couple would live 10 days on and then four days off. Most of the house parents that worked would actually leave site but have the ability to stay if they wanted to. Then another couple would come in and they would stay here for four days while they covered that period of time off of the full-time house parents.
12. I have 23 years experience having been a house parent, a foster carer and in residential care as well as being a manager of a rotated youth worker model. The consistency level of a house parent model far outweighs what consistency you can get in a youth worker model. With house parents a young person would come from school on Monday with a

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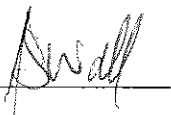
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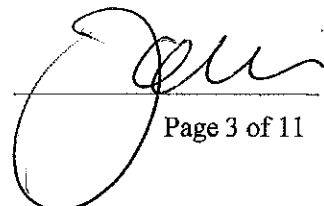
permission form to be signed for an outing or an activity or even if they wanted to go to a friend's house say for a sleepover on Friday night the same people were on on Monday that they spoke to about it that were on then on Friday when they were doing it. Whereas under the current model of the youth worker rotational model you could have had seven to eight different people on between those two events of time which makes it difficult for them if the communication hasn't worked to get permission slips signed or even just the awareness of an outing or an activity that they're wanting to do at that point in time. If that hasn't happened then obviously that's going to destabilise the young person and unsettle them. So certainly there's a lot of advantages in that consistency and that regulatory however it would be difficult to get people with the right qualifications and experience. The payroll process and industrial relations would also be fairly significantly hard.

13. We run single gender houses. We find that there's probably more issues for female people placed with males just in the attitudinal position that they can be put into from males as to their appearance and how they look and things that can be said will affect a young girl a lot more than a girl saying something to a boy. So we feel that it's not really fair and what we have seen in placements or where we used to have boys and girls placed together was that more often than not the female would be affected more so than the male.
14. We have a rotational shift process. During school holidays we have two carers on duty. Normally through the day we have one youth worker, our case manager and out team leader. We also have an afternoon shift that comes in to assist with getting home from school, afternoon tea-time and getting ready for dinner. This shift is about 5 hours from approximately 2.00pm to 7.00pm.
15. At night we have two staff that sleep over. They start their shift at 4.00pm and 5.00pm, work for 5 hours and are off duty (sleeping) from 10.00pm to 6.00am the following morning. The day shift then commences at 8.00am (and 9.00am during school holidays).
16. Our case manager is responsible for doing care plans with the department. They work with the CSO's about what plans we need to do. We heavily guide the case plan working closely with the department to develop what we are doing around schooling, family contact, and activity bases where the young people are wanting to be and what they are wanting to learn about. We have weekly staff meetings where information is shared about what's happening for the young people at the moment. That then goes into our reports and our meetings with the department about what the young person is wanting, what their needs are and how those needs can be met.

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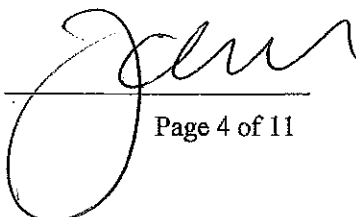


17. The development of the case plan could be done by an NGO if you had the right people in the right roles with the right knowledge and experience. I think where the difficulties could potentially lie, and it might just be through not having had the role before, in communicating and liaising with the natural families. Also if the child were to exit the placement then there would be no guarantee that what we do here will be continued on at the next placement.
18. Our youth workers have a range of qualifications from Certificate IV in youth work or community services and up. So we have some with diplomas, some with degrees, and a lot of them are studying for higher qualifications. We have an annual performance meeting with our workers where we do look at what they're doing and how they're working but we also look at developing a plan for them to further themselves. The organisation has a study assistance program, so if our workers want to study they can actually get assistance, and many of them take it up. So we have a lot of them that are receiving some sort of assisted funding to assist with the costs for study.
19. Prior to employment we do a licence care service check through the Department that's mandatory and we also check blue cards through the Commission for Children. These checks need to be completed prior to commencing work.
20. Our program's about helping young people learn living skills so that they can look after themselves. So they're all taught, with the assistance of staff, to cook for meals, depending on what stage they're up to and what ability they're showing they would be given different levels of tasks depending on where they're at. They do actually do their own washing so staff assist them as they're learning to get them to a point where they can actually do it themselves. And that goes with all tasks around the house. We have guidelines with our staff around trying to promote healthy eating, so we look at what we're preparing for them as far as meals so that they're not always having, terrible things; that's what they'd like to have. We develop a menu plan with the young people about what meals we are going to have for the fortnight.
21. For breakfast they have cereal, toast, and things like that. Often on weekends they'll do bacon and eggs, or something a bit different to what they have during the week. Through the week as far as meals go, we regularly have steak and vegetables or something similar. We have many staff from different cultural backgrounds and they will sometimes cook a meal from their culture and have the young people assist. If we have a young person from a particular cultural background we will incorporate a meal from their culture in the menu plan..

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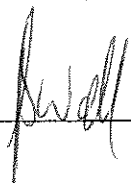


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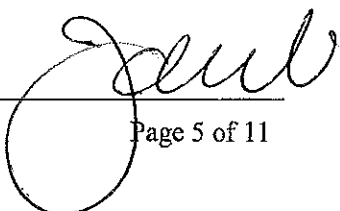


22. Children get takeaway one night a week and they receive \$20 pocket money each week for doing their chores. In addition to the pocket money the young people can also receive extra money, up to \$20 for doing positive behaviours, like helping other young people or staff, participating in programmed activities. All other food is paid for by us.
23. If children damage property on purpose they will likely be responsible for paying for it out of pocket money. Depending on the damage they would be asked to help clean it up or be involved in repairing it with staff or our handyman. If the damage is significant the Police may be contacted and they may be charged with property damage, but we try not to have to do this.
24. Where possible carers have a life space interview (LSI) with children on a daily basis. Life space interviews provide an opportunity for children to talk about incidents with carers and work through what's going on and think about other ways they could manage their behaviours.
25. Children travel to school through a variety of ways including walking, riding a bike or are dropped off by a carer. Churches of Christ have 2 cars available with a third available during the day. Children also have Go Cards to get to school and get around.
26. Children who want to participate in after school activities will be supported, including having their fees, equipment and clothing paid.
27. Children do not have sleepovers. There are difficulties with having an unknown young person mix with the other children in a sleepover environment. There is also the issue with contacting the parents of that young person so that they were aware that they were sleeping over at a residential care facility. If a young person wanted to have a friend sleepover we would discuss it with them and encourage them to have the sleepover at their friend's house.
28. Children do regularly spend nights away from the house by arrangement, including spending nights with family members.
29. Children are provided with a range of entertainment activities including bowling, movies, DVD's, camps and theme park annual tickets.
30. Kingswood Lodge has a comprehensive games room which has a second TV on the wall, a computer and a Playstation 3. This room is not open at meal times, evening activity times or school times.
31. Monitored internet access is provided to carers who can take a laptop out and work with children. Children do have access to the internet on smart phones (not monitored) which are paid for out of their own pocket or chore money.

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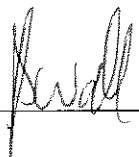


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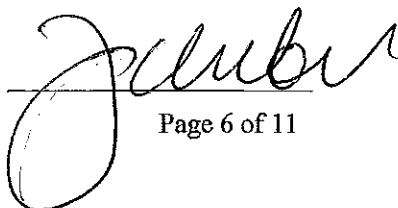


32. Pocket money ceases when a child attains the age of 16 and is in receipt of Centrelink benefits. Reward money continues past the age of 16. Once a young person is receiving Centrelink money it can cause problems as children say "I don't have to do any of your silly jobs anymore because I've got my own money".
33. Most of our young people struggle with schooling, most of them are operating at a very much lower level educationally than their peers so they often struggle through school and end up in Special Ed units or alternate programs where they're working on alternate education systems. Some of our young people unfortunately aren't engaged in the school so we run an education program with them where we try and get them to do some sort of school work and gear some of the activities that they would then do towards an educational outcome for it. So while they're not learning traditionally at a school we're trying to get them to learn something.
34. I don't believe children are stigmatised at school for living in a residential care house so. We work pretty closely with the schools so that issues are addressed and so there wouldn't be very much opportunity for the school to say they're that way because they're at the residential. A lot of our young people don't tell their friends they're in care.
35. In my experience not too many young people within the residentials would return to or go to a foster placement just because most foster placements won't take adolescent young people.
36. As far as kinship care we do a lot of work to try and identify appropriate kin. We as a service do an independent assessment (Placement Assessment Report) for all of our young people so we would go and review departmental files to try and identify if there's names in there that haven't been followed up on or haven't been explored. A lot of CSOs don't have enough time to do much more than what the current file is currently doing. But we have a therapeutic worker that will go and spend time and review all of the departmental files, look for any names that are listed there and then try and make contact with those people. In about 30% of our placement assessments we identify somebody that hasn't been followed up on and in about 50% of these, result in monthly contact with kin.
37. One of the benefits of Kingswood Lodge is that we have a semi-independent living service (SILS) program attached to this service so we also encourage – and our young people see young people developing and moving through our program to move into the independent living program. So they know about it, they're aware of it and we work with them on their skill development so that they can get to a point where they can go and live in that program. So I guess we're sort of looking at a two-pronged attack, we're looking

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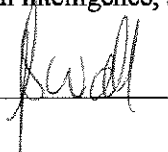
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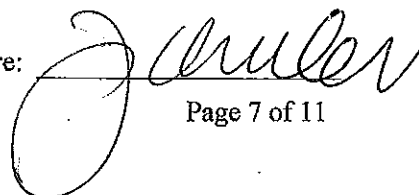
at is there any family member out there that could take this young person or are we preparing them for independent living.

38. A part of our service agreement is that we report quarterly to Child Safety. The requirements surrounding quarterly meetings and reports differ between service centres. In the Brisbane region I complete an electronic Oasis report which is done online. In Ipswich region, south-west region, I do the Oasis report and then also do an additional report. This report is attached to the Oasis reporting program. Some regions have gone to an electronic QSM, that's a quality service meeting done by email. So we send the reports to the service centre who would then make comment on it and then they send that back and then it gets forwarded onto us with their comments and then we have an opportunity to comment on their feedback and then send it back again. And we have a particular date to do those by. Some regions are doing those twice a year so they'll do two face to face and then two electronic. You certainly lose those personal professional relationships by not doing it face to face.
39. Oasis is probably a very financially orientated tool so there's a comparison between the financials of what we're paid and what we've spent as opposed to this.
40. The additional report also looks at the documentation sharing between us and the department so in south east it identifies how many young people we had with placement agreements, with care plans, case plans. So you can then talk about well this is how many we had with case plans, this is what we did to try and get the case plans from the service centres. When going to the service centre managers and when you have your face to face meeting you can say we had four people from your service centre that we weren't able to get placement agreements for or that we weren't able to get their case plan. And then they're able to say which young people were they and, you know, they can go back to the service centre and say get onto it and get that document. Attachment A is a copy of one of these additional reports. *Greg to append an Oasis report and a copy of one of the additional reports.*
41. Churches of Christ fund any out of pocket medical/pharmaceutical expenses.
42. We did a lot of research and looked at a lot of different models and I guess in looking and deciding to go with Sanctuary it was identified that Sanctuary actually didn't just say this is how you work with young people. It identified that this was an organisational change model really in saying that if your workers and your organisation are healthy and working and functional then they will work better with your young people. So Sanctuary has at its core seven commitments around the aspects of the tools which are non-violence, growth and change, emotional intelligence, social learning, open communication, social

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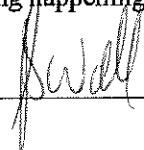
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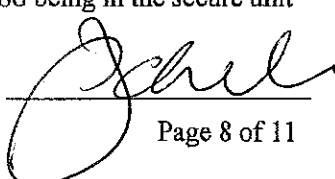
responsibility and democracy. But by instilling those into our workers and into our organisation we actually make our organisation more functional. Along with those you get a series of tools for working with young people and with our staff. And as I said it really works on a basis that if we have healthy staff and functional staff then they'll work better with our young people more so than having a model that says this is an approach for working with your young people. Tools like the Safety plan, is part of the self-care for staff, so by identifying that you're getting anxious, wound-up because of what's going on you can use strategies that you've already identified that you can go and do to help yourself calm down.

43. Through our behavioural management programming which is therapeutic crisis intervention (incorporating the life space interview (LSI) and teaching children new behaviours to better manage situations) we try to reduce the number of occasions we call out the Police.
44. We have policies and procedures about trying to make any consequence a natural consequence and related to what's happened.
45. Last year we had one person expelled because their behaviour (drugs and physical intimidation) was becoming very detrimental for the other young people. He went to Logan Cottage (Silky Oaks). On this occasion we talked to Silky Oaks about what was happening on his transition there.
46. We've had young people that have behaved in a way because they wanted to get kicked out so that they could either justify going and living on the streets or with friends. There has also been a couple of young people I've worked with at different times have felt that if they burn through enough placements eventually they'll get let go back home.
47. I believe that there have been 40 or 50 times a year where a carer would have liked to restrict a child leaving Kingswood Lodge. Most of our young people when they're out and about in the community are very vulnerable because of their limited social skills and cognitive ability to actually think through scenarios properly. They can get engaged in different gangs and crime and make poor choices. I think there's some young people who would benefit from being in a secure unit. I would guess 15-20% of children would benefit from a secure care environment similar to the Kibble program on the outskirts of town in Glasgow that I observed whilst attending a conference. In talking with the people operating it the majority of young people were in there because it was identified that their safety was paramount and would be in jeopardy if they were in the community. So there were young people there that were chronic absconders who put themselves at risk of harm or risk of something happening if placed in the community. So being in the secure unit

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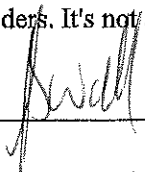
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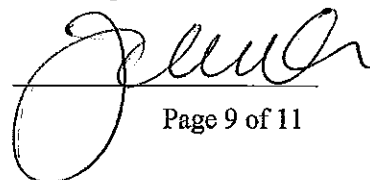
meant they couldn't run away and they then had people working with them on their behaviours and their issues so that they could eventually return to a normal community based placement. the people who were in there were chronic absconders, chronic self-harmers and there was I think a couple of people that were overtly or really highly aggressive young people that were I guess probably bordering on potentially ending up in the juvenile justice system. One of the young people actually in that program actually had day release so they would actually go out and they had a job and come back to the secure unit at night.

48. We support and facilitate contact with families. I think for some young people it doesn't happen anywhere near enough. For some young people sometimes unfortunately it happens more than it should. We have a lot of young people and for a lot of our young people exit options from care is actually go back home. Now the internal safety ability and protective care of a young person who's 14 or 15 is vastly different from a toddler or someone younger. You don't really hear about reviewing assessment of parents' ability or young people's ability to have connections and relationship with their family because often it's based on what happened when they were two or three. At 14 or 15 they have a lot of ability or potentially if you work with them they've got a lot of ability to do a lot more things for themselves that maybe cancel out the need or the issues that were occurring at home. At Christmas we invited significant people from the children's lives to visit. I think contact with a child's natural parents or kin improved the chances of transitioning out of care successfully.
49. We certainly have had some young people live here during the week and return to family over weekends because mum couldn't cope with them through the week, couldn't deal with getting them and three other kids all off to school and having the funds to meet everything that's needed around school. So where we could do it through the week and make sure that school was paid for, that they had their lunch, that they came home and did their homework, all that sort of thing and that they went to school every day and mum was capable of coping over the weekends because she didn't have the pressures of school and all those sorts of things. It is the reality for some young people and some families that the cost of having the kids is too much and once they're in care they get what they need and get the clothing that they require and the uniforms that they need to go to school.
50. I guess the thing that does irk me to some extent is the nature in which residential care has been I wouldn't want to say perverted but stretched in its understanding because I don't believe that what currently occurs in residential care particularly where you talk about the TP providers. It's not a very cost effective way, it's a very expensive model.

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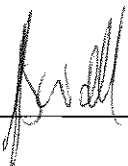
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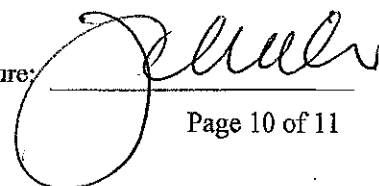
And that was why we stopped doing it because when Pathways was providing that sort of option we costed it based on what we believed would provide good outcomes for young people. During the time that we operated that program we reunified a lot of young people, did a lot of work to stabilise young people and transition them back into more economic models of care. Whereas I believe a lot of the providers that are left that still provide TP are there for the money. Where it was originally done it was intended to be a short response to an immediate need but some young people are there for quite a long period of time now. I guess lots of the organisations that are doing it are profit organisations. We have had lots of young people that have been referred to us from transitional placements, we've brought them in and they don't now fit into a group care model because they can't live with somebody else, they've never had to share. They've gotten everything they wanted when they wanted it and all of a sudden we're asking them to share it across four or five young people, telling them they have to go to school, telling them what their bedtime is. And they just haven't had that when they've been in those sorts of models.

51. A recent funding release was for 2 bed resis. What they're doing is they're actually funding is TP in a way so they're saying this is grant funded, it's not a per placement costing this is what we're funding you to do and then what they're doing is instead of saying we're going to fund a four-bed resi we're going to fund a two-bed residential. At Kingswood and have our case manager and team leader on site able to work with the young people, work a lot more closely with the staff to develop plans and what we're doing for our young people. In our budgeting of for a two-bed residential you can't get those roles, you can have one or the other and they have to manage across multiple sites.. TPs are not done on contract basis where we set up costs and we know the costs for the next three years, TPs are done "where we've got nothing else let's go to one of these services".
52. It is interesting to see Child Safety have changed and started talking about those two-bed resis but they're not talking the other end. We seem to be happy to accept and adopt models from Victoria but not anywhere else. We're not looking and adapting necessarily for our Queensland needs we're sort of picking up particularly from Victoria, picking up models and saying well that works there so let's do it here. We're not looking at Queensland problems and saying well let's solve a Queensland problem we're saying what can we adopt or what can we bring in from somewhere else that might fix our problem.

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Declaration

4/2/13

This written statement by me dated 3/1/13 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 11 is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed at BOSWICK this 31 day of FEBRUARY 20 13

Witnessed:

Joanne Coogan Signature
Name Joanne Coogan Rank _____ Reg. No. _____
Jason Schubert

Witness signature:

Swall

Officer signature:
