

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Yvonne Lawrie O'DONNELL or RADZEVICIUS

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is Yvonne Lawrie Radzevicius. My surname when I was born was O'Donnell. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1942 and I am presently 76 years of age. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I didn't know anything about my life before I went into care, I was only nine months old.

3. I have since found out that my parents were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They were married on [REDACTED] 1933 in Carndonagh, County Donegal, Ireland [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] my parents moved from Ireland to Glasgow.

By the time I came along she couldn't afford to go back so I was born in Glasgow at Stobhill Hospital.

4. Mum was an alcoholic and Dad was nowhere in sight. Dad was a lorry driver and was all over the country. [REDACTED]

5. Mum and Dad's marriage broke down and Dad moved to Nottingham before being called back up to Glasgow [REDACTED]
6. That's something that still bothers me to this day, normally it's babies that are fostered and adopted. Why wasn't I? Instead I was put into Nazareth House at Cardonald in Glasgow and at the age of ten I was sent to Australia as a child migrant.

Life in care - Scotland

Nazareth House, Cardonald, Glasgow.

General

7. I have been shown a document which contains information regarding my entry into Nazareth House at Cardonald in 1943, when I was nine months old. The document has me recorded as Yvonne Marie O'Donnell, when my name is actually Yvonne Lawrie O'Donnell. In all my time at Cardonald I was known as Marie, I had never heard the name Yvonne until I was going to Australia. That document also shows my date of birth as [REDACTED] 1942, that I was born in Glasgow and that I was baptised at St Paul's Church, Whiteinch, Glasgow.
8. My father's name and occupation are not recorded and it shows my mother was called [REDACTED] and was a housekeeper. I've since found out that Mum was actually the housekeeper for the priest at Whiteinch. While I was at Cardonald the nuns told me she was dead when she was actually working just down the road.

9. The nuns were in charge in Cardonald and there were also girls that had grown up there that were employed to help out. The children were all girls and I remember there was a lot of old people there as well.
10. Most of my memories of Nazareth House in Glasgow are good. When I look back it wasn't as strict a routine as when I was in Australia, but I don't really remember much about it. It was only the big things that happened to me that specifically stood out.

Routine

11. All I really remember of the day-to-day routine is you got up, got dressed, went for breakfast and then went to school. When we came home from school we would get our evening meal and then we went to church. I also remember we only changed clothes once a week and everybody had work to do cleaning and polishing the floors, but that's about it.

Mealtimes

12. We ate in the refectory, we never called it the dining room. There were long tables down two sides with six or eight people at each table. We took sandwiches to school and ate our breakfasts and evening meals in there. I remember always having kippers for breakfast on a Friday.
13. I don't remember the food being particularly nasty, but if you didn't like something the nuns kept putting it back in front of you every meal afterwards until you ate it.

Bedtime

14. We slept in dormitories with about fifty children in them. The dormitory I was in was a huge big room with a balcony around it. After dinner we would kneel on the floor, say the rosary and go to bed. I don't remember any children having problems with bedwetting. It wasn't a thing that was brought up.

Washing and bathing/Hygiene

15. We queued up to wash and I remember there were a lot of sinks. We cleaned our teeth with a little block of McCabe's toothpaste or with soot if there was none of that.
16. Once a week we had a bath and I remember the water was changed more often in Glasgow than it was in Australia.

Leisure time

17. We used to play netball out the back of the house where there was a court. We didn't have any toys and the only books we had were what we had at school, which were left there.
18. We also had singing and dancing and put on shows on the stage. I was a Highland dancing champion and I remember singing "Christopher Robin" on the stage at the age of five. I remember the nuns had a habit of taking photos of everything we did.

Trips and holidays

19. Some Catholic association used to come to Nazareth House and help the nuns out, I don't know who they were. They also took the children out to see films occasionally and for other little trips. My favourite film was "Superman".
20. Sometimes they would take different children out to a family for the day. I remember going to one family, although I can't remember anything about them.
21. Every July we would get on a McIntyre coach and were taken to Aberdeen to the boys' home there for two weeks. I hated it up there. We weren't allowed to wear shoes and we were taken to the beach every day and had to get in the water.

Schooling

22. We all went out to a public school where there were boys and girls. I don't remember what it was called or whether we had a uniform to wear, but I do remember going from one classroom to another. To get to the school we had to get on the tram.
23. I don't remember having any homework to do either, but the schooling in Scotland in that era was better than anywhere in the world.

Healthcare

24. Most of the healthcare was seen to by the nuns within the home, although I was taken to hospital when I was eight. I had been knocked over by a car as I got out of a tram and I was supposed to have been near death for a while, but I came through.
25. I was also burnt with porridge when I was about nine and I've still got a big scar on my neck. It happened in the refectory when a big pot of porridge accidentally fell on me. It was my fault but I don't think I got into any trouble, the nuns just did what they could to treat it.
26. Another time I went to the dentist and had all my milk teeth taken out under chloroform because they were all getting pushed out by my adult teeth. I went back to the home and got into shocking trouble because I got blood on the sheets. I got whacked.
27. About a year before I was sent to Australia, I had to go to the Belvedere Hospital in Glasgow with at least ten other girls from Nazareth House. We were there for several days and all had to get our heads shaved and go under a machine. When we came out we all had purple spots on our heads. To this day I still don't know what was supposed to be wrong with us. Some people said it was scurvy, but I don't know.

Religious instruction

28. We went to church every morning for Mass and we also had to say the rosary every day and on Sundays we had Benediction. There was often a smell in the church in the morning. If we smelt that we knew there was going to be a coffin inside.
29. We girls from Nazareth House always sung in the choir so we were up the top of the church on the balcony. Every second Sunday I used to peer over the balcony hoping to see this well-dressed lady that used to come. She always patted me on the head and gave me a bag of lollies or sweeties. I found out later that she was somebody who was a big name in Carndonagh who was trying to help my mother out.

Christmas/Birthdays/Celebrations

30. We didn't celebrate anybody's birthdays, but we always put on a big concert at Christmas. The Catholic association that used to come and help the nuns out would come and see our concert along with other people from all over. We were the best.
31. There were no presents at Christmas and every year was much the same as the last. We did get eggs in the morning, but I don't remember a special meal later on.
32. One occasion I do remember celebrating was Halloween. We would duck for apples and I remember someone holding my head under the water. Another was my first holy communion when I was dressed all in white and was picked to crown Our Lady.

Visitors

33. The only visitors I remember were people from this Catholic association that used to help the nuns out. We never spoke to them one-on-one, but they arranged different trips to the cinema and to families.
34. I never had any visits from my family, but I found out later that my godmother, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had come to Nazareth House and had asked to see "Yvonne". She was

trying to stop them sending me to Australia, but the nuns told her they didn't have an Yvonne. They knew who she was because she lived in Whiteinch, but they just kept sending her away.

35. My godmother told me later that she had wanted to foster me, but to do that she had to get Mum's permission. [REDACTED] she wouldn't sign it. My godmother didn't want me to go to Australia and went to Nazareth House to try and stop it. The last time she went she was manhandled out of the gates.
36. Nobody came to inspect the place and I never spoke to anybody about my being there.

Family

37. It was drummed into us all that nuns and priests don't tell lies. Everybody would ask about their parents, but the nuns wouldn't say anything. I was told by the Mother Superior, [REDACTED] LGE [REDACTED] that my parents were dead and that I didn't have any brothers or sisters.
38. I remember speaking to the nuns one time when a woman came looking for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were the two other girls from Cardonald that went with me to Australia. This woman wanted to tell [REDACTED] about her family, but the nuns wouldn't let her speak to her. Other times people came looking for [REDACTED] but they weren't allowed to speak to [REDACTED] either.

Emotional care/support

39. I don't really remember having any in particular worries or concerns, although there was nobody to go to if anyone did have any.

Personal Possessions

40. Nothing belonged to you and you didn't belong to anyone. We had no personal possessions and never got any pocket money. Occasionally we would buy sweets on the way to school, but I'm not sure where that money came from.

Abuse and discipline

41. I don't remember ever being disciplined as such because I don't think I ever played up. I don't remember seeing any other children getting disciplined either and I wasn't aware of any abuse. Maybe if I'd been there longer I might have, I'm aware people have since said they were abused.

Migration

Selection/information

42. I was ten when I was sent to Australia. I was later told by my godmother that the nuns at Cardonald told her to tell my mother I'd been adopted by a good Catholic Irish family. I know that they certainly never spoke to my mum about it. When my godmother found out I'd been sent to Australia, they told her I had been sent to Queensland when they knew I hadn't gone there. They were diverting any questions by telling more lies.
43. I was never asked if I wanted to go, I was told. Three of us were nominated from Nazareth House at Cardonald, me, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was five and I think [REDACTED] was six. We were all children whose families never came to see them.
44. About two or three months before we left, we were separated from the rest of the children and given special meals like egg and bacon in a room off the kitchen. We wondered what was going on, because they didn't tell us. We just thought we were special.

45. We used to go into a little room off the nursery and were given different vaccinations, like smallpox, by different doctors. One of the doctors I remember was a Dr Reilly.

Migration Papers

46. I have seen a copy of my migration form which is in the National Archives in Australia. It is dated 24 November 1952 and shows me as Yvonne O'Donnell with Marie scored out and Lawrie written in.
47. I have been shown the other side of the form which is a section for medical examination, which has the word "accident" on it. That is the first time I've seen any mention of my having had an accident.

Leaving Scotland

48. Before I was sent to Australia, I had to go to Lasswade in Edinburgh because a nun, Mother [REDACTED] LKT that had been at Cardonald was living there and wanted to say goodbye. I was supposed to have been her pet. I stayed there for a week and came back to be given a suitcase with "Y. L. O'Donnell" on it. I handed it back to the nun, Sister [REDACTED] FAF because I thought it was the wrong suitcase. She told me it was mine and that my name was now Yvonne.
49. That was the first time I learned my name was Yvonne and that was when I learned I was going to Australia. I'd never heard of Australia before, I just thought it was another home somewhere. I didn't realise it was so far away.
50. The case was brown and was full of new knickers and vests. There was also a Fair Isle cardigan in it and a little bag like a purse, but not much else.
51. When we left Cardonald we went down on the train from Glasgow to London, which took all day. We were picked up from the train station and taken to Nazareth House

in Hammersmith and went straight to church for Benediction. We were then told it was too late for us to have a meal so they gave us bread and milk. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were crying and the nuns kept telling me to make them stop.

52. We stayed in Hammersmith for one night and the following day we went down to Southampton. When we got there we were put into a big shed that was roped off into sections. The door to the shed was open and I could see part of the name of our ship, the "New Australia".

Journey on the "New Australia"

53. I have since found out that the Catholic Church were offering to pay the fare of anyone who was going to Australia if they would act as chaperones for us children.
54. There was a woman in charge of me, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and two other girls, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who was four, and [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. They were both from England. I don't know what this woman's name was. She had a bunk in our room, but we never saw her and I was left to look after the others because they were all younger.
55. We used to sneak into the pictures and I remember the first Sunday we were on the boat we went to Mass. The service was different and I realised afterwards that it was Church of England. I was horrified. I thought the ship was going to sink and we would get found out for going to the wrong church.
56. We went through the Suez Canal and I remember we had to wait for a long time because the "Queen Mary" was coming through.
57. Somebody gave us a watermelon and all the other girls got sick because it wasn't ripe. I was okay. We were never allowed off the ship and I remember stopping at Port Said and Aden. The next stop was Fremantle in Western Australia.

Arrival in Australia

58. I have been shown the passenger list for the "New Australia", which says that we arrived in the port of Fremantle, Western Australia ("WA") on 22 February 1953. It shows me as "Miss Yvonne M. O'Donnell", so they were still getting it wrong. It also shows me as going to Nazareth House Convent at Geraldton, WA.
59. When we arrived in Fremantle we were taken by bus to St Joseph's Orphanage at Subiaco and stayed there for two nights. Subiaco was like a prison with its big gates.
60. I remember most of the other children that were there. The youngest girl was [REDACTED] and there was one boy with us who was younger than her. His name was [REDACTED]
61. The following day we were taken to a zoo and then the day after that we were taken in another bus to Geraldton. It took us all day and we never stopped for lunch and never got any drinks.
62. I have passed to the Inquiry a copy of a photo of all the girls that were on the ship with me, including [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. The nuns in the photo are Sister [REDACTED] LXV on the right and Sister [REDACTED] LXW on the left. They were the two nuns that looked after us at Geraldton and all the girls in the photo were child migrants.

Life in care – Australia

Nazareth House, Geraldton, WA

General

63. Nazareth House is four miles outside Geraldton at Bluff Point. It was a nice, bright building covered in Spanish plaster, but it was away in the middle of nowhere.
64. There were old ladies and old men at Geraldton as well as the children, who were all girls. Geraldton was built for child migrants, but because the war came on they took in old people.
65. There were about fifty or sixty girls there and just the two nuns looking after us, Sister [LXV] and Sister [LXW]. I'm not sure how old the youngest girl was, but the oldest girl would have been about eighteen. There was an Irish girl called [REDACTED] who had [REDACTED]. She had been in Nazareth House before me. She was sent back to Ireland.
66. Another girl was called [REDACTED] although her actual name was [REDACTED]. She arrived after me.
67. The nuns threatened [REDACTED] a few times that she would go to the Home of the Good Shepherd. It was the home where any children who were in trouble were sent because the nuns there were wicked. [REDACTED] she got sent back to Aberdeen.
68. Sister [LXW] was the disciplinarian and [LXV] was the softie. Sister [LXW] was the most talented person I have ever known. She used to take the choir, she would play the piano and the organ, she could cook a meal fit for the queen. She could scrub floors better than anyone and she taught knitting and crochet. She came from New Zealand and she taught us some of the Maori songs. You couldn't get anything over Sister [LXW].
69. We had to go through a test when we arrived in Geraldton. I was told afterwards that I was very bright and that I would go through university with flying colours. The nuns wanted me to be a teacher and so I was sent to Stella Maris College in Geraldton instead of going to the school at Nazareth House.

70. The nuns were calling me Yvonne and it took me ages to get used to the change of name. I used to get myself in a lot of trouble because I never recognised when I was being called.

First day at institution

71. When we got to Geraldton the nuns were making a big fuss of us, taking our photographs. They took my suitcase and everything in it as well as my bag and my Fair Isle cardigan. I never saw any of that stuff again.
72. It was dark and raining when we arrived and I remember going to bed crying because I didn't know where I was or who any of the girls were, other than the ones I'd been with on the ship.

Routine

73. On a school day we got up for Mass at the break of day, seven o'clock in the morning. After breakfast, I had to walk four miles to school. When I got back from school, I had to go to church, then go down and get a drink and then do my homework. The only time I saw the other girls at Nazareth House was after I'd done my homework.

Mealtimes

74. The meals weren't too bad. I loved Thursday mornings because we had lambs' fry, which was liver and onions. If you didn't like something, it was too bad. If you didn't eat it, it came back to you for the next meal and the meal after that until you did eat it.
75. When I was at school I had to make my lunch the night before to take with me. Every day from Monday to Thursday my lunch was cold baked bean sandwiches. I liked Fridays because we had boiled eggs. I used to go and hide to eat my lunch, I didn't want anybody knowing what I had.

Bedtime

76. Lights went out at nine o'clock and that was it. Before getting into bed, we all knelt on wooden boards and said night prayers. The nuns told us that we all had to sleep on our right side with our hands across our chests. We weren't allowed to sleep on our backs because that would give us impure thoughts and we couldn't sleep on our left because that was the devil's side.
77. All the nuns, including those in charge of the old people, used to take it in turn to be "Watch nuns". We knew which nun was on by their walk. They would come round the dormitories and if they caught somebody not sleeping right, they would bang them on their toes. Some of the nuns had a torch and would use that, but it depended what they had with them what they used.
78. To this day I sleep on my left side. Sometimes I roll over onto my back.

Bedwetting

79. Some girls had a problem with bedwetting. The nuns used to show them up and hang the wet sheets out of the windows. One nun in particular, Sister LXX who was in charge of the nursery, was horrible. She used to look after us children to let LXV and LXW go for lunch and she would come in and tell everybody who had all wet their beds and embarrass them.
80. After a time, whether it was on the advice of doctors or whatever, the nuns put some contraption on the stomachs of the girls that wet their bed. It was supposed to warn them when they needed to go to the toilet, but it used to go off and frighten the living daylights out of them so they would wet the bed anyway.

Washing and bathing/Hygiene

81. I hated Saturdays or Friday evenings, whichever day it was that the nuns decided we had to have a bath. We all had to line up and if you were last you had to get in the dirty, cold water and then try and dry yourself with a wet towel. The water was never changed and there was no privacy.
82. There were also five showers, but because we were still at school and called "the children", we couldn't have a shower. It was only when we left school and became one of the "girls" that we were allowed to have a shower.

Clothing

83. At school I had to wear a uniform of a blouse, tie, skirt and black stockings with a seam down them. In the home we had also to wear a skirt and a blouse. We got a change of clothes once a week after our bath on Friday or Saturday night.
84. We didn't have bras to wear. Sister LXX made some, but if they were worn out in any way, she'd hold them up and show everybody. She was horrible. I remember her embarrassing one girl in particular who had developed more than the rest of us.

Leisure time

85. Any leisure time we had was mainly spent outdoors where there were monkey bars and swings. There was also a big well that was powered by a windmill. We'd often play down by it or stand around it chatting. We could also play tennis, swim in the pool or play basketball.
86. We had a basketball team and used to go out and play other schools. A priest, Father Brendan Maloney, used to coach us. We had our own blue and gold uniforms and we were very good. We used to play against Stella Maris College and the teachers used to say I should be playing for the school instead.

Trips and holidays

87. The only trips out were with the basketball team or with the choir. I sang in three choirs: Nazareth House, Stella Maris and in the cathedral choir in Geraldton. The local funeral director, Mr McDaid, would pick us up and take us to the cathedral for choir practice.

Schooling

88. LXV and LXW were the teachers in the school at Geraldton. LXV taught the children who would have been primary age and LXW taught the older ones. I never went to the school there, I was sent to school at Stella Maris College in Geraldton after I did the test when I arrived there. I went to Stella Maris when I was ten and I was the first child migrant to be sent there.
89. I was called the "Nazzie House bastard" at school. I had a foot in both camps, but I never made close friends either at school or at the home. I didn't grow up with the girls at Nazareth House and they always thought that the nuns treated me specially because I was sent to Stella Maris. My defence was to look down my nose and tell them I was brainier than them.
90. When I went to Stella Maris, I skipped two years because of the education I'd had in Scotland and because I have a photographic memory. At first I was put into my age group, but I was only there for a month before I was moved up to the next class and then only there for two months before I was moved up again.
91. I passed the junior certificate and the nuns wanted me to be a teacher. They applied for a teacher training bursary from the government, which would pay for the final two years of my schooling. I didn't have a say in it and I got the bursary. When it came time for me to leave, I said I didn't want to be a teacher so the nuns told me I had to work to pay off the bursary.
92. I passed the school leaving certificate when I had just turned fourteen. I was too young to go to tertiary education and too young to go to university so I was put in the kitchen with one nun who was a little bit older than me and two younger girls. That is

where I worked from age fourteen to seventeen-and-a-half. All the other girls would have left school when they were sixteen.

Healthcare

93. There were two doctors that came to Nazareth House, Dr Royce and Dr Saunders. We never went to them, they came to us, but I never had much to do with them.
94. One time a steam press came down on my hand. There was a screw loose and I told the nun in charge of the laundry at the time, Sister John Fisher, about it but she told me just to carry on. I was pressing some of the men's trousers and the whole thing fell down on my hand. They put gauze with yellow cream on the wound, bandaged it up and that was it. I still had to finish the laundry and I still have scars on my hand to this day.

Religious instruction

95. There was religious instruction in school as well as in the home. We had Mass first thing in the morning and also on Sundays. Most of the religious instruction at Geraldton was about the Catholic Church rather than God. They taught us what the Catholic Church stood for and that they were always right. Any other religion was wrong and it was a mortal sin for us to go into any other church.

Work

96. I worked in the kitchen every single day after I turned fourteen. The nuns called me at five o'clock in the morning and I would get all the breakfasts ready for everybody in the house, including the old ladies, the old men, the nuns and the children.
97. I went to Mass when the morning bell went and then went back to the kitchen where I would pass out all the breakfasts. It was only after that that I was allowed to have breakfast myself. After I'd had my breakfast I'd start preparing lunch. About two

o'clock, after lunch, I would get a break for about two hours. I would be pretty tired so I would mostly spend those two hours lying in my bed reading.

98. After the two-hour break I would go back to the kitchens and start preparing the evening meal. There was a system in the kitchen. The first week I would be on the tables, preparing the meals to go in the ovens. The second week I would be on the stoves, which meant I did all the cooking and the third week I'd be in the scullery, washing all the dishes.
99. I would be in the kitchen till half-past-eight at night and if I was on the stoves I would also have to make sure they would still be lit in the morning. The stoves were big "Aga" ones and I would have to get six coal scuttles and bring them up to the kitchen. I'd have to clean all the ash out and it was only after I'd done all that that I could go to bed.
100. Even though I was doing all that work I was never paid a single penny.

Christmas/Birthdays/Celebrations

101. The only way a birthday was celebrated was the night before you put your hair in rags to curl it. We never got any presents.
102. At Lent we all used to give up sweeties and lollies and put them in a jar under our beds. By the time Easter came they had all stuck together.
103. Christmas in Nazareth House at Geraldton was good. About half-past-ten on Christmas Eve we'd go round all the old people singing Christmas carols and then we'd go outside and sing more until it was time to go to Mass. Every single year we had to learn to sing a new version of the Mass.
104. We would all put pillowcases on the end of our beds, which would be filled with stuff depending on where each of us worked. One of the nuns used to come round and fill them and mine would be filled with a load of dirty old pots and pans as a joke.

105. In the morning we would get bacon and eggs for breakfast although I don't remember getting a special meal later on.
106. Boys that were with the Christian Brothers used to come up and we would all sit talking around a big tree outside. The nuns would be watching us like hawks. Sometimes the Rotary Club would come to give out presents while we were sitting there. If you were lucky your name would be called out and you would get a present. If you weren't lucky you didn't get anything. Most of the time the present I would get would be a half-petticoat.

Visitors

107. I remember somebody from some Catholic Welfare Department, a Miss Sanderson, came to Nazareth House at Geraldton. The nuns would tell us she was coming to make sure we were alright, but we never got to speak to her one-on-one. We had to be dressed in our Sunday clothes and we were all told to behave and we had to sing to her.
108. Sometimes there would be visiting priests, but there was never anyone visiting the children. If ever any celebrities came we never got to meet them, although we did have to sing for them. I have a tape of our choir singing Christmas carols.

Family

109. I was brainwashed into thinking that the priests and the nuns were good people who could not lie. Whenever I asked the nuns about my family and they didn't say anything I thought it was because I was illegitimate. That's what I was led to believe.
110. LXV used to say to me that she remembered my mother dropping me outside Cardonald, wrapped up in wet nappies. She was a softie, she would never be able to hit you, but she would come out with things like that and she could be really nasty.

Emotional care/support

111. There was no one to speak to at all if you had any worries or concerns. I didn't spend a lot of time at Nazareth House because I was out at school, so I didn't even have any close friends that I could speak to either.

Personal possessions and pocket money

112. We never got pocket money. Some Sundays when I was younger, before I left school, I used to walk up to a shop run by a man who was in politics, Bill Sewell. I'd maybe have a couple of pennies on me that the nuns had given me and he'd give me some lollies or sweeties. It wasn't a regular thing that we got any money.
113. When we were younger we all had a locker, although it wasn't locked. All you could keep in it was clothes and a pair of shoes. When I was older I had a wardrobe that I could lock, but I only had a change of clothing in it or what I'd managed to scrounge off the nuns.

Discipline

114. I would often get a smack from the nuns. At first they couldn't understand what I was saying because of my accent. [REDACTED] LXW [REDACTED] was a very good teacher, but she wanted everything to be perfect and she was a disciplinarian. She would come round and if we weren't sitting properly, she would rap us across the knuckles with the edge of a ruler or a wooden spoon.
115. As a punishment, the nuns would get you out of bed and make you sit on the cold tiles in the bathroom. You could be there for hours. That could be for being cheeky to one of them, or for being late for something.

Nature and frequency of abuse

116. I submitted a statement to the Australian National Redress Scheme, detailing the abuse I suffered while I was at Nazareth House at Geraldton. It is dated 25 July 2018. I have passed a copy of this statement to the Inquiry. I confirm that the facts stated in it are true. In that statement I mention two men who sexually abused me who were paid by the Nazareth House nuns. I didn't come into contact with them until I started working in the kitchen at the age of fourteen. I couldn't avoid them after that.
117. One was in charge of [REDACTED] LXY [REDACTED] who would have been about fifty years old. He had a little room with a smaller boiler in it and he used to touch me up when I would go down for the coal or when I was doing the laundry.
118. The other one was in charge of [REDACTED] He was [REDACTED] LXZ [REDACTED] and he would have been about forty and was always stinking. He never lived there but he used to bring the milk in the morning and at night. He caught me skimming the cream off the top of the milk once and so he had that against me. He used to grab me any chance he got.
119. They would both run their hands up my skirt or grab me. Most of the time I was working in the kitchen I spent trying to get away from these dirty old men. One time I caught [REDACTED] LXY [REDACTED] masturbating, although at the time I didn't realise what he was doing.
120. I've no doubt they were both doing the same to other girls as well, but we didn't talk about it. I couldn't tell any of the other girls because they would just say they were dirty old men and wouldn't listen. I didn't want them to think I was daft enough to get caught.
121. Of all the nuns, [REDACTED] LXX [REDACTED] was the worst, she was horrible. She would mainly show people up, making a fool of the girls that had wet their bed for example.
122. One time one of the other girls had done something wrong and the rest of us all knew about it but we wouldn't tell on each other. [REDACTED] LXX [REDACTED] kept poking me

trying to make me tell. I wouldn't so she thumped me on the shoulder and to defend myself I grabbed hold of her veil and it came off, which was the worst thing you could do to a nun. She grabbed hold of me and pushed my head straight through a window.

123. I had several cuts, but all the nuns did was pull the glass out of my head, I never saw a doctor or got any medical treatment.
124. Father Maloney who used to coach us for basketball ran off with one of the girls who was two classes below me, [REDACTED] After that he was excommunicated from the Catholic Church, but I'm not sure if anything else happened.

Reporting of abuse

125. I never told any of the nuns or anyone else what [REDACTED] LXY or [REDACTED] LXZ did. The men both told me that the nuns wouldn't listen to me. They said the nuns would only believe them because the nuns were paying them. Being in the position I was, I believed them.
126. I never reported what happened after I left either, I was just glad to get away from the place. When I was there, the nuns led me to believe that the police would not be interested in anything I might have had to say.
127. I remember a couple of girls ran away and were brought back by the police, frightened to death. When they were brought back they were belted by the nuns and told the police wouldn't believe anything they might have said.

Life after Nazareth House, Geraldton, WA

128. I left Nazareth House at Geraldton in 1960 when I was seventeen-and-a-half. There was no preparation for growing up, for life after school or for life after leaving

Nazareth House. You learnt how to work and how to study, but that was it. We never even knew anything about money because we never had money. We didn't know how to budget or save for things and when I got my first pay I couldn't believe it. All this money was mine, what was I going to spend it on?

129. When I left Nazareth House I went to Princess Margaret Hospital at Subiaco to train as a paediatric nurse. I was determined I wanted to nurse children, I was not going to be a teacher. The nuns were absolutely mad at me. They told me I would waste my life, but that's what I wanted to do.
130. I did three years nursing there and then I did a stint of general nursing at Royal Perth Hospital. Then I worked at Claremont Mental Hospital for a while and then I went to King Edward Hospital where I did obstetrics and gynaecology. I continued nursing in Australia for twenty years until I moved to England and got a job in the old General Hospital in Nottingham. I gave up nursing while I was there and never went back to it.
131. I got married on [REDACTED] 1966 to [REDACTED] and we had our first child, [REDACTED] in December of that year. I had another daughter before [REDACTED] and I separated and I moved to Nottingham, England, with my daughters. I did to my daughters what had been done to me. I took them away from where they had been born, from where they were going to school and away from their father and from all their mates.
132. I stayed in Nottingham until 1997 when I moved back to Australia. I tell people it's because Australia is where I call home, but it's really because I was running away from people who didn't want to know me. I was running away from my family.

Other action taken

133. I participated in the "Towards Healing" programme in WA, which had been set up by the Archbishop there. I'm not sure when that was. The idea was that every Catholic institution had to pay some reparation to the people they had brought up. I didn't know at that time that the big Inquiry in Australia, the Royal Commission, was coming up, but the Catholic Church did.
134. I had to go to this place in north Perth and meet a fellow who would be representing me and who would introduce me to the nuns. There were two nuns there from Geraldton, but I didn't know them and I had to tell them what I was upset about. They started off by telling me they didn't get paid very much and that they didn't have big pockets.
135. I found out later that this fellow who was supposed to be representing me was actually working for the Catholic Church. I can't remember his name. I was offered a certain amount of money and the nuns said that they were sorry about what happened and that it never should have happened. I was never offered any sort of counselling, they just made me sign a piece of paper to say that I wouldn't ever come back to them again. I can't remember how much money it was that they gave me.
136. After that the WA Redress Scheme took place. I had to write my statement and submit it, but I was never interviewed. I have provided a copy of this statement to the Inquiry. I confirm that the facts stated in it are true. Nobody ever spoke to me about it, I just waited for what seemed like a long time. A couple of months ago I applied to the National Redress Scheme as well.
137. The Family Restoration Fund has financed a trip to the U.K. for me and they brought [REDACTED] over here when I got sick because I couldn't fly there. The Restoration Fund also paid for me to go to Melbourne to meet [REDACTED]

138.



Campaigning/awareness raising/other organisations

139. I took part in an exhibition called "On their own" in New South Wales, which was all about child migrants. I was quite involved at the time with an organisation called Tuart Place and Philippa White from there asked me to participate. It was very interesting and I provided what information I had about my experiences.
140. I also gave them a book that had been put together about people from Carndonagh. The book was full of stories and photos of people from there, including several members of my family.

Records and family tracing

141. In 1966, when I was about to get married, I went to see Miss Sanderson from the Catholic Welfare Department. I was trying to get some information about my birth certificate, but she told me all my documents were burnt in a fire.
142. Over time I have managed to get hold of a number of photographs and records, including an extract of my birth certificate, which shows my parent's names and the fact that they were married in Carndonagh in 1933. I've never managed to get a copy of my actual birth certificate.
143. I went to the Salvation Army and the Red Cross, but I couldn't find it anywhere. Eventually the Catholic Church managed to find my baptismal certificate and they allowed me to get married with it, although I think that's actually illegal.

144. In 1975, I got a letter from my godmother, [REDACTED] because she was dying and she wanted to put me in touch with my family. All the letter said was that my mother was alive [REDACTED] When I got that letter I was delighted. I was running around waving it in the air, shouting "I'm not a bastard!". I have passed a copy of this letter to the Inquiry.
145. My godmother knew that I had been migrated to Australia, but she had been told I had been sent to Queensland. She found me through the Daily Journal newspaper and an Irish couple living in Australia.
146. In 1979 I went on a big trip with my two daughters to find my family and we moved to England. I wanted to find my mother and I ended up living in Yorkshire for six months and then in Nottingham from then until 1997 when I went back to Australia.
147. [REDACTED]
148. [REDACTED] in 1981 [REDACTED] I found Mum in London later that year. Mum was an alcoholic and was living in a filthy place. Sometime before then she had been sleeping on a London Underground train and the guard made her get off. As she did, she got off on the wrong side and was electrocuted and lost her leg. We got her out of there and put her into hospital.
149. Later we got a letter from the hospital to say that someone had come to pick her up in a wheelbarrow. We lost touch with her and a few months later the police got in touch with us and told us they'd had an anonymous phone call from somebody with an Irish accent who had found a woman dead in bed. It was my mum. I had to identify her body.
150. There was a coroner's inquest and they said that she'd had just about every bone in her body broken at some time. She was also riddled with tuberculosis.

151. While I was in the U.K. I went to Nazareth House to find information about the first ten years of my life. All I got was a piece of paper showing my admission to Cardonald. I have passed a copy of this piece of paper to the Inquiry. They had no other records so I went to the church at Whiteinch and spoke to a lady there. She told me my mum had been housekeeper there and she'd been known as [REDACTED]
152. I told the nun at Cardonald the story about the car accident, about me getting burnt by the porridge and about getting all my milk teeth taken out, but they didn't have any records of any of that. There were no healthcare records, no dental records and no school records. They kept telling me that everything had been sent to their main office in Hammersmith and Hammersmith told me my records were burnt. I was angry, it was like ten years of my life had just gone.
153. Another time I went back I met a nun called Sister [REDACTED] LGE? who said she remembered me from Glasgow. I didn't remember her, but as soon as she saw me she recognised me as the Marie O'Donnell she remembered. She handed me a photo that she said she had taken of me when I was five years old. That's the earliest photo I have of myself. I have passed a copy of this photograph to the Inquiry.

Other matters relating to migration

154. When I was living in Nottingham, I was asked by Margaret Humphreys of the Child Migrants Trust ("CMT") to appear on some radio programme which I did. Afterwards a chap phoned up and said that he had been a steward on the "New Australia". I met him and he gave me a photograph of the ship. He told me that all the crew had been told they weren't allowed to tell any of the other passengers that there were migrant children on board. He said the crew were all told they had to keep us away from all the other passengers.

Nationality

155. I have a U.K. passport, which I first got in 1979 when I moved back to Britain. I was born there so I had no difficulty getting one and I applied for a U.K. passport because I didn't want to give up my British identity.
156. I have not become an Australian citizen, which means that every time I leave Australia I have to apply and pay for a visa to allow me to return. The only way I could avoid having to do that would be to become an Australian citizen. The only way I can become an Australian citizen is to get clearance from Britain. There are reams of paperwork involved and I got sick of the process.
157. My nationality makes no difference to the pension or benefits I am entitled to. I am classed as a resident Australian, not an Australian citizen, and I have the right of abode in Australia for as long as I live.

Impact

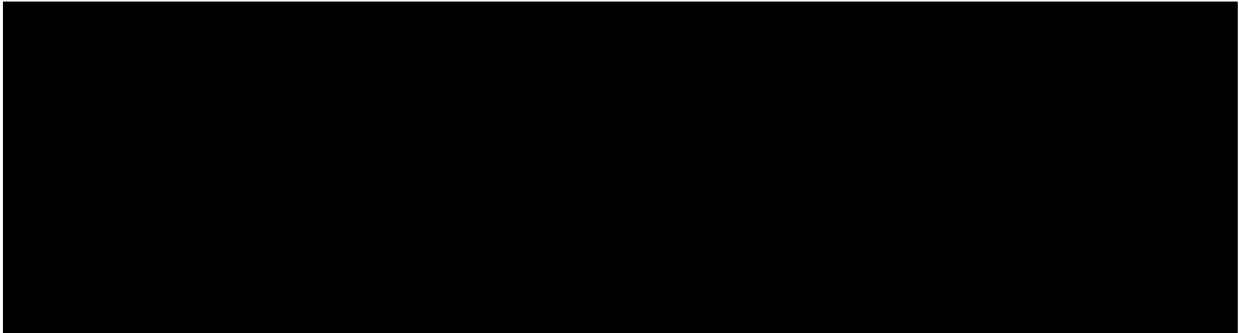
158. I can sum up the impact of my time in care and my being migrated in one sentence. Nobody ever teaches you how to show love. I love my kids, but it's only recently that I have been able to put my arms round them. Even now, [REDACTED] sometimes shies away. I love them, but I was unable to show them.
159. It was all discipline in the convents, there was no love. As a result I didn't know how to show my daughters that I loved them. I can see traits of that in the relationships both my daughters have with their own children. It doesn't stop with one generation, it goes on.
160. I wouldn't be without my daughters, but because of my taking them away to England, my daughters are now closer to [REDACTED] than they are to me. [REDACTED]



161. My eldest daughter never came back home [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] She's now in Hong Kong and the other one is still in Nottingham, but she never contacts me at all. I have no doubt that the breakdown of my relationship with my daughters is a direct consequence of what happened to me.

162. [REDACTED] has never asked me about my childhood and I've never spoken to my daughters about it either. They don't seem to want to know.

163.



164. No matter where I go, the only association I have with belonging is when I'm with groups of other child migrants. I have some good friends, but I'm still left on my own at home. I have nobody to ring for advice.

165. I had a very difficult time after my mother passed away. I met her once and the next time I saw her, just a few months later, I was identifying her body. Not long after her funeral I had a breakdown. I couldn't stop thinking for long enough to sleep. I never bothered washing myself or going to bed, I just sat in a chair. I was given a prescription for anti-depressants and I ended up taking too many because they weren't working.

166. [REDACTED] 'phoned me and sent an ambulance round because I wasn't making much sense. The ambulance men told me later that they found me sitting on the stairs outside with the door open, singing. I'd taken an overdose and I practically died three times on the way to hospital.
167. Mum was the one person I wanted to meet, but then I lost her after only seeing her once. I spent sometime in the care of the hospital, but the staff didn't understand a single word about the loss of my childhood, my family and my country. If I'd been left in Scotland I would have been able to find my family much sooner than I did. That chance was taken from me because I was sent so far away.
168. To this day I'm not close to any of the girls from Nazareth House Geraldton. I meet them and pretend to like them, but that is it. I find they are still institutionalised and they can't talk about anything else. When we get together, they bring out all the nicknames we had, mine were "savage" and "vicious" because I had a bad temper. I can't tell them about my failures with my children because I don't want to admit those failures to them.

Treatment/support

169. After I'd taken the overdose, I had supervision and counselling from the Mental Health Department in Nottingham for two years. They did not understand anything about being a child migrant and didn't know how to speak to me.
170. I have lung cancer and I see a psychologist for palliative care once a month. I talk over my time in care and the effects it has had on me with him. He understands, but he doesn't understand what being a child migrant is like. He doesn't understand what the impact of being taken from one country to another is. It's only other people who were in the same boat that can understand what those feelings are.

171. I've not had any other counselling. Up to about ten years ago I couldn't even speak to anyone about it.

Hopes for the Inquiry/Lessons to be learned

172. No church should simply be trusted to look after children. They have to be supervised properly by those who have the authority to make sure children are cared for properly.
173. Children in care should have access to their records as soon as they leave the institution.
174. Any responses now to the whole child migrant scheme are not going to make any difference. I don't think anyone is in a position to really understand what it has been like for any of the children who went through what I did. Unless someone had been brought up in exactly the same way they can't feel the things that I feel.

Final thoughts

175. I'm aware of the apologies made by Kevin Rudd, the then Prime Minister of Australia, and Gordon Brown, then Prime Minister of the U.K. I was disgusted by them.
176. Why did Gordon Brown not come over to Australia to where the Child Migrants were sent? The same with Kevin Rudd. They should have both come and apologised to us in person. It felt as if they were just saying that now they had apologised we should go away and not bother them again.

177. It was only those who could afford to or those who had their flights paid by the CMT that got an apology in person. The CMT picked who they wanted to send. I don't believe the CMT do the job they started off to do. I can go for months and never hear a word from them.
178. Even now, when I can't sleep at night, it all comes back to me. I reflect on how it's affected me and the relationship I have with my children. I still don't know where I belong.
179. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.



Dated

8TH NOVEMBER 2018