

1 Tuesday, 3 March 2020

2 (10.00 am)

3 LADY SMITH: Good morning and welcome back to a new week of  
4 hearings in our child migration case study. As everyone  
5 can see, we seem to have a video link up and running;  
6 is that right, Ms MacLeod?

7 MS MACLEOD: Good morning, my Lady, that is right. The  
8 first witness this morning is joining us from Albany  
9 from Western Australia. She is an applicant who wishes  
10 to remain anonymous and to use the pseudonym "Watto" in  
11 giving evidence.

12 LADY SMITH: Watto, good morning. You should now be able to  
13 see a different face on the screen. That's me and I'm  
14 Lady Smith and I chair the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry.  
15 I'm very grateful to you for agreeing to link with us  
16 for what is this evening to you and this morning for us.

17 Watto, we will move to taking your evidence in  
18 a moment, but before we do that, I would like you to  
19 take an oath, please, so could you start by raising your  
20 right hand as I have just done?

21 "WATTO" (sworn) (via video link)

22 LADY SMITH: Please don't hesitate to let me know if there  
23 seem to be any problems with the link or you need  
24 a break at all. We can go at your pace and be guided by  
25 you as to what's working. But if you're ready, I'll

1 hand over to Ms MacLeod; is that all right?

2 A. Yes. Definitely.

3 LADY SMITH: Ms MacLeod.

4 Questions from MS MacLEOD

5 MS MACLEOD: Hello, Watto.

6 A. Hello.

7 Q. I don't need your full date of birth, but could you  
8 confirm for me that you were born in 1948?

9 A. I was.

10 Q. And are you now 71?

11 A. I am.

12 Q. You've provided a statement for the inquiry and I'm  
13 going to begin by looking at that. I'll give the  
14 reference for the transcript: WIT.001.002.3924.

15 Do you have a copy of the statement, Watto?

16 A. I have.

17 Q. Could you turn to the final page, please? Have you  
18 signed the statement?

19 A. I have.

20 Q. In the very last paragraph do you say that you don't  
21 have an objection to the statement being published as  
22 part of the evidence to the inquiry?

23 A. That's true.

24 Q. Do you also say that you believe the facts stated in the  
25 witness statement are true?

1 A. I did say that, yes.

2 Q. You begin in your statement by giving us some background  
3 information about your early life in Scotland. You tell  
4 us that you were born in Edinburgh; is that right?

5 A. That's true.

6 Q. You also tell us that you lived with your parents and  
7 your younger brother.

8 A. That's right.

9 Q. Indeed, you tell us that he was four years and  
10 eight months younger than yourself.

11 A. Yes, that's correct.

12 Q. You initially lived in the Gilmerton area of Edinburgh?

13 A. I did.

14 Q. And did you attend Gilmerton Primary School?

15 A. I did.

16 Q. You give us a bit of background information about your  
17 parents and that they both worked on buses in Edinburgh.

18 A. Yes, they worked for the SMT.

19 Q. And indeed, in relation to your mother in particular,  
20 you describe her as a hard worker.

21 A. She was. She started working with when she was 15.

22 Went to England when she was 17, came back to Edinburgh  
23 where she was 21, and was a bus conductor from 21 until  
24 she married my father.

25 Q. I think your gran played a part in your life as well and

1           you give us some information about her.

2           A. Yes, she did. We were pretty close.

3           Q. Did there come a time when you were still quite young,  
4           when your father became ill and passed away?

5           A. Yes, I was 8.

6           Q. And I think you tell us that after the death of your  
7           father, your mother was struggling and the family moved  
8           to Craigmillar in Edinburgh.

9           A. The rents in Gilmerton because it was -- we call it  
10          a state house here, I think you call it a council house,  
11          but the rents were too high for a woman on her own with  
12          two kids. Because Uncle [REDACTED] lived in Craigmillar,  
13          I think they swapped -- the lady that lived above  
14          Uncle [REDACTED] swapped over to Gilmerton and we moved to her  
15          house in Craigmillar.

16          Q. And at the time your father died I think you tell us  
17          he was around 34 years old; is that right?

18          A. Yes, he turned 34 on [REDACTED] and he passed away about  
19          [REDACTED] something like that.

20          Q. What kind of relationship had you had with your father?

21          A. Not a good one. He wanted boys. So he wanted to teach  
22          me boxing and playing soccer, but he wouldn't play with  
23          the dolls. So when he got my brother, he was as happy  
24          as Larry, he was ecstatic he had his boy.

25          Q. At the time of his death, did you spend a period of time



1 in an orphanage in Edinburgh?

2 A. We did because I wasn't allowed to go to his funeral.

3 But [REDACTED] was too young. He was still 3, so I doubt  
4 very much he would remember what was going on. Between  
5 mum and gran, they would have shielded him quite a bit.

6 Q. Do you remember which part of Edinburgh the orphanage  
7 was in?

8 A. No, I don't. It was a new area to me.

9 Q. Did you spend around two weeks in the orphanage?

10 A. Yes, two weeks, three weeks at the most.

11 Q. I think you have some memories of that time and you  
12 share some of those with us in your statement. I think  
13 you recall a matron who was in the orphanage.

14 A. Oh, I recall that matron very well.

15 Q. What do you remember about her?

16 A. She should never have been anywhere near kids for  
17 a start.

18 Q. Why do you say --

19 A. She was horrible.

20 Q. I think in particular you remember her treatment of two  
21 young boys who were in the orphanage with you.

22 A. Yes. They wet their beds and so she put nappies on them  
23 and made them walk on the other side of the street with  
24 a nurse from the orphanage to school. And they weren't  
25 allowed to take the nappy off until such time as they

1 got to the school.

2 Q. Were they required to wear the nappy over their clothes?

3 A. It was over their clothes, over their shorts, or their  
4 trousers -- it would have been trousers because it was  
5 November.

6 Q. I think you tell us, Watto, that your recollection  
7 is that that particular matron was moved on shortly  
8 after that incident.

9 A. Well, she was moved on after because I think the nurse  
10 that was taking the boys down the street was told: don't  
11 bother taking the nappies off because I'll be watching  
12 you, I can see you from the orphanage to the school, and  
13 if you do, you'll be sacked. So I think either that  
14 nurse or a passer-by put in a complaint because it was  
15 cruel.

16 Q. Indeed, you tell us that your memories of that have  
17 stayed with you throughout your life.

18 A. Well, they have.

19 Q. Do you recall a new matron coming into the orphanage to  
20 replace the one who left?

21 A. There was a new matron -- it was a new matron that said  
22 goodbye to me when Uncle [REDACTED] came to pick me up because  
23 I'd left my colouring books and pencils in my room and  
24 I wanted to go back and get them and Uncle [REDACTED] said, no,  
25 leave them here because the kids can use them, so I had

1 to leave my colouring stuff and that at the orphanage.

2 Q. Do you recall if there was religious instruction in the  
3 orphanage?

4 A. No, not really, no -- well, there must have been, but  
5 I can't remember it. I can just remember this matron  
6 and the boys; it was horrific.

7 Q. Once you were back home with your mother and your  
8 younger brother, I think you tell us that life was  
9 fairly good at home.

10 A. It was. Didn't have much, but I was at school, [REDACTED]  
11 was in the nursery while mum worked, and she was always  
12 there every night for us. I'd go to my grandmother's in  
13 Canongate during the school holidays and mum would take  
14 [REDACTED] with her to the different places that she worked  
15 and they were very good. If the nursery was closed, and  
16 mum wanted to take [REDACTED] they were very, very good  
17 about it, that she would take him because he was only 3.

18 Q. What is your first memory of your mother showing an  
19 interest in emigrating from Scotland?

20 A. Coming into gran's shop and telling her that she was  
21 emigrating.

22 Q. How old do you think you were then, Watto?

23 A. Ten.

24 Q. What was your understanding at the time of what your  
25 mother wanted to do?

1       A. Well, she actually wanted to go to Canada, but because  
2       she was a widow, the Canadian Government were worried  
3       that she'd be a burden on their social security, so she  
4       put in for Australia and got it.

5       Q. What were your grandmother's views on the plan to  
6       emigrate?

7       A. Oh, she wanted mum to go to South Africa to -- what is  
8       it now, Zimbabwe? -- because my auntie was over there  
9       and my two cousins were over there. Mum and my auntie  
10      never got on. Never.

11             So when mum said she was emigrating to Australia,  
12      I think gran just about had kittens until mum said to  
13      her, "Well, you wanted me to emigrate, I'm emigrating",  
14      and gran said, "But not to Australia, go to Rhodesia"  
15      and she said, "No, I don't want to go to Rhodesia."

16             So she picked Western Australia because it was  
17      closer to Britain, she wouldn't have to come all the way  
18      over a continent to go west to go home if she didn't  
19      like it. That's why she didn't go anywhere else, she  
20      was stuck in Western Australia.

21      Q. So was your mother's plan then for herself and yourself  
22      and your brother to emigrate to Australia?

23      A. Well, we were coming first. That was the only way she  
24      could get out to Australia. We came first and then she  
25      came after us, about a month later.

1 Q. Do you know if anybody was involved in the arrangement  
2 for you to go first and your mother to follow?

3 A. Yes. Mum signed papers. It was somebody came up from  
4 England and they showed photos of Fairbridge Farm and it  
5 was totally different to what they showed. They had  
6 ponies, they had animals, you were living in a farm  
7 environment.

8 Q. So the person --

9 A. What they didn't show -- sorry?

10 Q. Carry on.

11 A. Well, the way they were painting it, it was like you'd  
12 have a lovely place to go. The actual place was -- for  
13 a family who wanted a farm, it was perfect, but not for  
14 kids.

15 Q. The person who came from England to show you the  
16 photographs, where did they come? Did they come to your  
17 house or somewhere else?

18 A. Yes, they came to the house in Craigmillar.

19 Q. And this person showed you photographs of Fairbridge  
20 Farm School?

21 A. Well, yes, they were showing photos, they were more or  
22 less showing mum, [REDACTED] and myself -- [REDACTED] was only  
23 6, so to him it was a big adventure.

24 Q. Did you understand at the time that this person was  
25 linked to Fairbridge?

1 A. No, but we did know they had something to do with  
2 emigration.

3 Q. Was it a man or a woman who came to the house?

4 A. It was a man.

5 Q. Were you asked at the time what your thoughts were about  
6 going to Australia?

7 A. Yes. I didn't want to go. I said to mum that she could  
8 go to Australia with [REDACTED] and I would stay with gran  
9 and mum just told me that wasn't happening. It was all  
10 of us or none of us.

11 Q. Did you have medical checks before?

12 A. Oh yes, you had to have full medical. You had to have  
13 teeth, you had to have dentistry, you had to have your  
14 checks on all your injections, full physical. I don't  
15 know if they actually had a psychologist there or not,  
16 but it was a full physical.

17 Q. So did there come a time then when you realised that  
18 although you didn't want to go to Australia and you'd  
19 made that clear, that you were going?

20 A. Well, it was a case of mum wouldn't go unless I was  
21 going, so it was the three of us, mum, [REDACTED] and  
22 myself. And then gran found out when -- sorry?

23 Q. Carry on, your gran found out?

24 A. I always thought gran came out after us without telling  
25 mum that she was coming, but when I looked through the

1 papers, because I sent back to England to get the papers  
2 given to me, all the papers that were signed and  
3 everything else, and mum wrote a letter to say that gran  
4 would be following once she closed the shop, which is  
5 about 12 months later.

6 Q. I see. So there came a time then when you and your  
7 brother left Scotland to go to England prior to sailing  
8 to Australia?

9 A. Yes, we went to Kent. We went to -- I always thought it  
10 was called Knockhall House but I don't know if it is or  
11 not.

12 Q. Was that near Tunbridge Wells?

13 A. I think so. Tunbridge Wells sounds familiar and so does  
14 Knockhall House, but one of the other girls from  
15 Fairbridge said, no, it wasn't, we lived in Brockholt(?)  
16 and I thought, no, you didn't. I could never find it  
17 when I Googled to try and find where we lived. It was  
18 a big old place, a two-storey or three-storey place. It  
19 was huge.

20 Q. And you and your brother both went there and I think you  
21 tell us you were around 11 at the time?

22 A. Yes, I was. I turned 11 in the [REDACTED] We went in the  
23 [REDACTED] holidays and then we left in [REDACTED] We were  
24 on the ship for three and a half weeks.

25 We came to Fremantle --

1 MS MACLEOD: I think there may be a difficulty with the  
2 link.

3 LADY SMITH: Yes. It's frozen.

4 (Pause)

5 LADY SMITH: Watto?

6 A. We're back again.

7 LADY SMITH: I was just going to apologise for that. We're  
8 not sure what happened, but everything seems to be  
9 working again all right now. So we'll carry on if  
10 you're ready. Is that all right?

11 A. Yes, thank you.

12 LADY SMITH: Good.

13 Ms MacLeod.

14 MS MACLEOD: Hello, Watto. You had just been telling us  
15 that you and your brother travelled down to Kent in the  
16 [REDACTED] of 1959 and that you were in a house that you  
17 remember being called Knockhall House; is that right?

18 A. Yes, as far as I know, it was Knockhall House.

19 Q. Was that house linked to Fairbridge as far as you were  
20 aware?

21 A. No, I think it was linked to the emigration department.

22 Q. I see.

23 A. Something to do with emigration, because we had to have  
24 our needles and another check while we were there.

25 Q. Were you --



1 A. And we -- yes?

2 Q. Were you there with a group of children who were going  
3 to sail to Australia together?

4 A. Yes, there were 19 in the party, but only [REDACTED] and  
5 I got off at Western Australia. All the rest went to  
6 the eastern states.

7 Q. Of the 19 children, could you give me an idea of what  
8 the age range of those children was?

9 A. [REDACTED] would have been the youngest and there was  
10 a [REDACTED] boy, he was about 14, I think. So it ranged  
11 from about 6 to 14 --

12 Q. Boys and girls?

13 A. -- 15 at the most. Boys and girls, yes.

14 Q. Were there any other Scottish children apart from  
15 yourself and your brother in the party?

16 A. That's a good question. I don't remember. No, I think  
17 they were all Poms. I know one boy was [REDACTED] because  
18 he couldn't get used to using the plates that we had  
19 to -- buttering your bread and butter. He was used to a  
20 flat plate and he wasn't used to the dip and he couldn't  
21 work out how to butter his bread. We used to have a  
22 quiet giggle at him, but we finally got him around to  
23 working out how to do the -- the round plate rather than  
24 the square --

25 LADY SMITH: Watto, when you were asked a minute ago whether

1           there were any other Scottish children, you said you  
2           thought they were all -- did you say Poms?

3       A. Yes, sorry.

4       LADY SMITH: No need to apologise. So they came from  
5           England apart from the [REDACTED] boy?

6       A. As far as I know. I think we went down to England so  
7           I presumed they would be English. I could be wrong, but  
8           I don't think so. I think we were the only two Scottish  
9           ones.

10      LADY SMITH: Thank you.

11      A. Other than the [REDACTED], so that's three. 16 of us were  
12           English, Poms.

13      MS MACLEOD: When you were in that house in Kent, Watto, by  
14           that time you knew you were going to Australia, but  
15           what was your understanding of where you were going in  
16           Australia?

17      A. We didn't. We didn't know where we were going. We just  
18           knew we were going to Australia. That was it.

19      Q. Did you know where Australia was?

20      A. No. Didn't have any idea. But we had to stand on our  
21           heads the day that we were leaving. We had to do  
22           a handstand on our bed with our feet up against the wall  
23           because we were going down under. So we all had to do  
24           a handstand on the bed so we knew which way was up.

25      Q. You tell us in your statement that your mother had

1           bought new suitcases for yourself and your brother for  
2           your travels.

3       A. Yes, she did, brand spanking new suitcases that she  
4           couldn't afford, but she didn't want anyone to think  
5           we were poor, so she spent the money on suitcases.

6       Q. And did you bring your own clothes and shoes and that  
7           kind of thing with you on the trip?

8       A. Yes, I think mum got a list of what to -- well, she just  
9           packed for us and then when we got to Fairbridge,  
10          we were given clothes there.

11      Q. We'll look at that in a moment, Watto.

12                When you were in England about to set sail for  
13           Australia, what was your understanding as to when you  
14           would see your mother again?

15      A. I knew that mum would be coming out a month after us.  
16           As far as I knew, I thought it was -- if we were leaving  
17           in [REDACTED], then she would be leaving in [REDACTED]. She  
18           didn't leave in [REDACTED], she left in [REDACTED] and she  
19           got out [REDACTED]

20      Q. You tell us in your statement at paragraph 32 that you  
21           left the UK for Australia on [REDACTED] 1959 --

22      A. That's right.

23      Q. -- and arrived in Fremantle on [REDACTED] 1959.

24      A. Yes.

25      Q. Do you remember what the ship was called that you sailed

1           on?

2           A.   The Orontes, SS Orontes.

3           Q.   As well as your group of 19 children were there other  
4           children on the ship who were emigrating to Australia?

5           A.   I don't know. We never -- we sort of kept in our group.

6           Q.   In relation --

7           A.   I don't think we really ... yes?

8           Q.   In relation to your group, who was looking after the  
9           19 children on the ship?

10          A.   There was three adult women and one man, so there was  
11          four, four adults.

12          Q.   Did you have any knowledge as to who they were or where  
13          they had come from?

14          A.   No, we were just told when we got on the boat that  
15          they'd be looking after us.

16          Q.   You give us a little bit of information about the  
17          sleeping arrangements on the ship, that there were four  
18          of you to a cabin and that because your brother was only  
19          6, he was allowed to stay with you.

20          A.   Yes, he and I shared one side and two other girls had  
21          the other side of the cabin. There were four bunks.

22          Q.   Did you feel responsible for your brother on the trip?

23          A.   Well, mum told me I had to look after him, so yes.  
24          I was the only family he had.

25          Q.   You tell us about a number of stops the ship made, for

1           example at Naples and then at Colombo, and you share  
2           some of your memories of those times with us in your  
3           statement.

4           A. Oh, we had a fantastic trip. We got to go up to see the  
5           ruins of Pompeii. We got off at Port Said, Aden -- and  
6           we were not allowed -- in Port Said and Aden the ladies  
7           told us that there would be beggars in the streets, that  
8           we must all stick together and that we would walk down  
9           the middle of the street and if we saw cows in the  
10          street, we were not to touch them because of the  
11          religion of the people there. In some religions the cow  
12          is sacred, so you could look, but you didn't touch.

13                 Then we went to Port Said during the day and Aden at  
14          night-time, and then we went to Colombo and we got taken  
15          up to the tea plantation and watched the ladies picking  
16          the tea because it was very fine tea leaves. It was  
17          fascinating to watch.

18                 We got a coconut, I think it was at Port Said, and  
19          I'm looking at this coconut and I thought, how are you  
20          supposed to break this thing and how are you supposed to  
21          get it open. I asked one of the girls and there was  
22          a soldier standing just a little bit way and he picked  
23          up the coconut and said, "Like this", and he took  
24          a machete and whacked the top off. I almost had  
25          kittens. To me, he was a big man, he must have been

1           about 6 foot 6, he was huge. I just said, "Thank you  
2           very much for the coconut", and took about five steps  
3           back and thought, I don't like the look of you!

4       Q. So you have some good memories of the trip?

5       A. Oh, we had some fantastic memories. We had a steward  
6           who had -- he must have had tics because the people  
7           bringing us out said we weren't allowed to have drinks  
8           until we were at the breakfast table. What he used to  
9           do, when he finished serving everybody their cup of tea,  
10          because our cabins were the last in that hallway, he  
11          used to bring the trolley in and he would fill up a big  
12          cup with milk and say to the kids, "Gather round". So  
13          there would be about seven kids all having and drink and  
14          then he'd go next door and he'd do the same with the  
15          other kids. So all the kids got a drink of milk and  
16          then he'd say to us, "See you tomorrow." He was  
17          fabulous. Absolutely fabulous. Loved him to bits.

18      Q. You mention that you got very good food on the ship as  
19          well, Watto.

20      A. Oh, we did. We were spoilt rotten. We had quite  
21          a choice of food and we could take food with us --  
22          if we wanted to go and eat, we didn't have to sit in the  
23          dining room, but we had to sit for our breakfast, our  
24          lunch and our tea, but for morning and afternoon tea,  
25          if we wanted to just get a bit of fruit, we could walk

1           around eating the fruit and they were quite happy with  
2           that.

3       Q.   I now want to ask you about when you arrived in  
4           Australia initially. Did you know who was going to meet  
5           you off the ship?

6       A.   No. We just got told that our suitcases were packed and  
7           that we were going -- somebody from Fairbridge was  
8           picking us up.

9       Q.   When you arrived at Fremantle, was there somebody there  
10          to collect you?

11      A.   Well, we were having breakfast and this man came in and  
12          he was tall as well, he was huge, and he had a very  
13          deep, deep voice, and he said, "I've come to collect  
14          [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]", and I'm sitting at the  
15          table, looked up and I thought, "My God." I was a bit  
16          iffy, I didn't want to get off the ship, I wanted to  
17          stay put.

18      Q.   I think you tell us that was <sup>MIP</sup> [REDACTED] the principal of  
19          Fairbridge at the time.

20      A.   Yes, that was the principal at Fairbridge. He was very  
21          good to us. He took us all round Perth, took us up to  
22          Kings Park for lunch. We didn't come straight off the  
23          ship and go straight to Fairbridge: he drove us around,  
24          he drove us around Perth and we had a nice lunch in  
25          Kings Park and then he took us to Fairbridge.

1 Q. And of your party of 19 it was just yourself and your  
2 brother who went to Fairbridge?

3 A. Yes (inaudible) at Fairbridge.

4 Q. You tell us then that you travelled to Fairbridge Farm  
5 School in Pinjarra. How long was that journey?

6 A. It'd be about an hour and a half. It would be 75 miles  
7 from Perth to Pinjarra.

8 Q. You travelled in MIP car?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Can you tell me then when you arrived at Fairbridge,  
11 what your thoughts were, what did you think of the  
12 place?

13 A. Didn't see very much. We just got taken straight to our  
14 cottages. went to his cottage and I went to my  
15 cottage and they said, "Girls and boys didn't stay in  
16 the same cottage."

17 Q. In terms of the set-up at Fairbridge, can you give me  
18 some idea of the layout? First of all, was it a large  
19 place, Fairbridge Farm School?

20 A. Fairbridge Farm was 3,300 acres. The actual village was  
21 80 acres. It had 15 or 16 cottages. The girls had the  
22 two-storey cottages, the boys had single-storey  
23 cottages. The girls' cottages always faced the main  
24 road, the boys' cottages were behind the girls' cottages  
25 on the gravel roads.



1 Q. You say that there were eight boys' cottages and around  
2 four girls' cottages?

3 A. Yes, there were 12 cottages being used.

4 Q. How many children roughly were in each cottage?

5 A. You could say there were 12 kids -- so there's about 144  
6 kids. That's not including the cottage mother's kids,  
7 they're just the Fairbridge kids.

8 Q. Do you remember if there were any other Scottish  
9 children at Fairbridge?

10 A. Yes, there was a family that came out after me, the  
11 [REDACTED]. I don't know what part of Scotland they were  
12 from. Who else? There was the [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED].  
13 They're the only ones I can remember. I couldn't tell  
14 where the other kids had come from because by the time  
15 they got to about a year after being in Australia, they  
16 lost their accents and were speaking very much like  
17 Aussies.

18 Q. In terms of the age range of children at Fairbridge, you  
19 mention I think that that went from 4 or 5 years old all  
20 the way up to about 15.

21 A. Yes, we left at 15.

22 Q. Were you in a number of cottages during your time at  
23 Fairbridge?

24 A. I started off in ... there was Quebec -- not Quebec.  
25 No, there was Wolffe, Shakespeare and Clive. They were

1 the three I was in.

2 Q. You would have been in Fairbridge from the age of 11 to  
3 15, so about four years, and I think one of the things  
4 you tell us in your statement is that you found it  
5 difficult to settle because you didn't know when you  
6 were next going to be moved to a different cottage.

7 A. Well, I was bullied for the first year I was there.  
8 Four girls decided that they were going to use me to  
9 pick on, and it wasn't until I actually thumped one,  
10 because I had had enough after 12 months. So my life  
11 picked up when I thumped one and after that they left me  
12 alone.

13 I ran down to -- I got sick and tired of being  
14 picked on so I ran down to the principal's cottage,  
15 banged on his door and just told him I wanted to get  
16 away from here from Fairbridge and I wanted my brother  
17 and I to go to my mum and he just brought me in the  
18 house. But the girls that were chasing me didn't have  
19 the sense to get out of the way when he opened up the  
20 door and he saw the girls he turned round and said to  
21 them, "you're up to your old tricks again, are you?" and  
22 then I was moved from Wolfe to Shakespeare.

23 Q. When you were in Wolfe who was your cottage mother?

24 A. MZB

25 Q. How did you get on with her?

1 A. Couldn't stand her. She was a cruel cow.

2 Q. How did she --

3 A. She always picked on -- she picked on the kids that  
4 didn't have parents. She broke a coat hanger on the  
5 back of one of the girl's legs, left great welts on the  
6 legs, but nothing was done. She must have said  
7 something wrong or didn't quite do the job like she was  
8 supposed to. It was pathetic. She would have been  
9 a 10-year-old, 11 year-old (OVERSPEAKING).

10 Q. The girl who was hit with the hanger?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. How did she treat you, Watto?

13 A. Well, I made a smart comment, I shouldn't have done it,  
14 but we did. We had to do weeding in the garden, it was  
15 a hot day -- it was a stinking hot day, actually -- and  
16 she wanted the garden weeded and so she got the whole  
17 lot of us out, but her daughter didn't come out. And  
18 somebody asked where her daughter was and I said, "Oh,  
19 she's probably inside sewing, staying inside, can't let  
20 the sun get to that poor girl, can we?" Anyway, she  
21 must have heard me because she got hold of me and told  
22 me to come to her.

23 When I did, she slapped my face and turned around  
24 and said, "For your information, my daughter is posting  
25 some letters for me down at the post office, now get

1 back and do your weeding", and she made me stay out  
2 a bit longer. She was a charming lady.

3 Q. You have mentioned there slapping you on the face and  
4 you've mentioned that she struck another child with  
5 a coat hanger. Was she regularly physically violent to  
6 children in the cottage?

7 A. One of the girls and myself, we ran away. We waited  
8 until 10 o'clock at night -- I don't know what we  
9 thought we were -- how far we were going to get, but  
10 we were getting out of Fairbridge and I was still  
11 in that cottage. We got as far as North Dandalup, which  
12 is about going on 12 miles, I suppose, away from  
13 Fairbridge. We were thumbing to get a lift and actually  
14 we were very lucky because it was a policeman who picked  
15 us up and he took us back to -- he asked us what we were  
16 doing on the road and we said we had spent our train  
17 fare and were walking to Perth. He said, "Get in the  
18 car, I'm taking you back to Fairbridge." We said, "No,  
19 we're not going, we're going to Perth", and he said, "No  
20 you're not, get in the car."

21 We went back to the cottage and the cottage mother  
22 was absolutely stunned, MZB was absolutely  
23 stunned when she opened up the door with two kids at  
24 1 o'clock in the morning because she didn't know we had  
25 taken off, she had no idea. It must have been before 12

1           because the lights used to go out as we were on DC  
2           power, so at 12 o'clock the lights used to go out.

3           She called me down -- he'd said -- because we were  
4           hanging over the rail listening to what he was saying,  
5           and he said, "Look, the kids have had a big enough  
6           fright with me picking them up and bringing them back,  
7           so I wouldn't punish them any more, they have had  
8           punishment enough for being back to Fairbridge." She  
9           was all sweetness and light, "Oh yes, you're quite  
10          right", and as soon as he left, she called me down into  
11          the kitchen with a strap and bent me over and whacked me  
12          with the strap until the lights went out -- and she used  
13          the buckle end.

14        Q. Did you have to take your clothes down before you were  
15        strapped?

16        A. Yes, bare bum with a strap. Anyway, she told me to get  
17        up the stairs and go to bed, and I told the other girl  
18        to be on the lookout because she's coming up the stairs.

19                She went to pull back the bedclothes of this other  
20        girl and the other girl just swung out the bed and  
21        pushed the bed in against her legs, and she fell over on  
22        the bed. It wasn't very funny, but we thought it was.  
23        We thought it was poetic justice.

24                After that, she said, "I'll fix you", and we had to  
25        go up and see MRU a couple of days later and we

1 got the strap again. The reason we got the strap was to  
2 show the other kids they couldn't run away. So we got  
3 belted twice for it.

4 Q. Was that MRU [REDACTED]?

5 A. Yes, that was MRU [REDACTED].

6 Q. And I think you tell us in your statement, Watto, at  
7 paragraph 112 that your backside was still sore from the  
8 initial strapping you had got when you were then belted  
9 again by MRU [REDACTED]?

10 A. Yes. But she just turned round -- all she wanted to do  
11 to us was -- we had to turn round and say, yes, we  
12 understood why we were getting the belting the second  
13 time. We weren't going to turn round and say, no, we  
14 don't understand because she probably would have done it  
15 again just to make sure that we did know. So we just  
16 agreed and said, yeah, we know, we know, and it was to  
17 stop the other kids from running away, which it never  
18 did.

19 Q. How did you have to address MZB [REDACTED]? What did you  
20 call her?

21 A. Auntie.

22 Q. How did you feel about that?

23 A. Yuk, no. She was no relative of mine. I didn't see why  
24 we had to call them auntie. Why couldn't we just call  
25 her MZB [REDACTED]? She was a cottage mother.

1 Q. You have told us that your brother was in a different  
2 cottage to you.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Did you see much of [REDACTED] at Fairbridge?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Were you encouraged --

7 A. Only to go down -- if I wanted to see him I could see  
8 him at 5 o'clock when we were going down to the  
9 dining room to have our tea but, "Don't go down to the  
10 boys' cottages." You weren't allowed to go to the boys'  
11 cottages. What for, I don't know. It was horrible.

12 Q. You give us some information about the routine, the  
13 day-to-day routine at Fairbridge, and the things you had  
14 to do. One of the things you tell us is that there were  
15 a lot of jobs for the children to do and a roster for  
16 jobs; is that right?

17 A. Yes, we had a roster, a weekly roster, and it was an old  
18 girl and a young girl in the lounge, old girl and young  
19 girl in the dormitories, one girl in the kitchen. We  
20 had to have the 12 anyway, because there were 12 jobs.  
21 One had to clean the cottage mother's rooms out as well.

22 Q. So if we look at kitchen duty, first of all, Watto, when  
23 you got on kitchen duty what did you have to do?  
24 What was your job?

25 A. You had to get up half an hour earlier than the other

1 kids, you had to put the porridge on, you had to cut the  
2 bread for toast. You had to skim the milk off the billy  
3 to make cream. You had to set the table -- no, you used  
4 to set the table the night before, but you had to make  
5 the porridge. I always, always made it too thick.

6 Q. Were there staff to assist with those jobs, Watto, or  
7 was it left to the children?

8 A. Only the cottage mother.

9 Q. Did she help in that?

10 A. She supervised -- not on your nelly. They didn't want  
11 to get their precious hands dirty, of course not.

12 Q. What about the cleaning roster? If you were down for  
13 cleaning, what did that entail?

14 A. Saturday mornings, if you were in the dormitory, you had  
15 to strip the bottom sheet off the bed, put the top sheet  
16 down as a bottom sheet, put a clean sheet on top, change  
17 the pillowcase.

18 You had to move -- you had to dust in the  
19 dormitories. You had to dust in the two rooms that had  
20 your clothes because you had like boxes, all shelving,  
21 but there'd be nine and nine. So you'd have a box for  
22 yourself and that would be -- you'd put your shorts and  
23 your T-shirts and your -- your uniforms used to hang up.

24 Then once you'd cleaned in the two rooms, you had to  
25 push all the beds over to one side, you had to sweep,



1           you had to polish the floors, you had to put the polish  
2           down on the floors and then we used to have to use --  
3           what we used to do is we used to sit the youngest child  
4           on -- it was like a square block with a handle, and  
5           underneath was a belt. So when you were polishing the  
6           wooden floors you used to get the kids to stand on the  
7           top, hold on to the handle, and then you'd run up and  
8           down the side to polish the floor. When you'd done that  
9           side you had to move all 12 beds back over and do the  
10          other side, and then put them all back when you had  
11          finished.

12        Q. Was it hard work?

13        A. If you were in the lounge -- yes. I mean, it was  
14          physical. You try making 12 beds!

15               And then in the --

16        Q. I think you mention in --

17        A. And in the lounge --

18        Q. Just staying with the beds for a moment, you mention  
19          that they had to be made up army style.

20        A. Oh yes, you had to make sure you did the hospital tucks  
21          and everything was tucked in and if you had a net for  
22          the mozzies, that had to be -- it used to hang from the  
23          ceiling and then you would tuck it in and around once  
24          you got into bed to stop the mozzies getting you. But  
25          that all had to be tidy.

1                   And then the cottage mother would --

2       Q. Am I understanding that all the cleaning of the cottage  
3       was done by the children?

4       A. Yes.

5       Q. And did the cottage mother supervise in any way or check  
6       the work?

7       A. Yes, she'd come and check you --

8       Q. Did anything happen --

9       A. And if you didn't do it right, you'd have to do it  
10      again.

11               That was on a Saturday morning, we all had to do the  
12      cleaning of the cottage. In the lounge room, it used to  
13      have seats that you could lift the lids off, and that's  
14      where you'd put all your stuff, to keep the place tidy.

15               But you had to do -- you had to polish all of those,  
16      you had to clean the fire out if it was winter, reset  
17      it, clean all the -- dust everything -- and it was all  
18      wood. Clean the windows.

19               You had to do the floors the same -- the same thing  
20      as upstairs, move the table and chairs over, do one  
21      side, move it back, and do the other.

22               Then you had to wash the windows with wet newspaper  
23      and dry newspaper. The little windows had about  
24      six panes in it to make up one window.

25      Q. So I think the picture that you're providing is that you

1           spent a lot of your time cleaning.

2           A. Well, we did on a Saturday morning. We had to really  
3           clean top to bottom. That was the laundry, the lounge,  
4           kitchen, pantry, up the stairs, dormitories, bathrooms,  
5           and in the cottage mother's area, which was -- she had  
6           her room, her sitting room, and her daughter would stay  
7           with her. She wouldn't come up and sleep in the  
8           dormitories with us, she stayed with her mother.

9           Q. During the week, did you go out to school?

10          A. Yes. We had to go barefoot while we were at primary  
11          school. We weren't allowed to wear shoes. The boys  
12          could walk on the gravel, but the girls had to walk on  
13          the bitumen, and that was rain, hail or shine.

14          Q. How far away was the school?

15          A. From my cottage you would have to go up just before the  
16          dairy and then walk down between the cottages, so  
17          I suppose it'd be a 10-minute walk.

18          Q. How did you --

19          A. And then we had to leave --

20          Q. How did you find the schooling? Did you learn much in  
21          school?

22          A. I mucked about -- in high school I mucked around.  
23          Primary school was all right. In high school, I cut my  
24          nose off to spite my face. I didn't want to be at  
25          Fairbridge at all so I just dug my heels in and didn't

1           want to learn. Stupid.

2           Q. You tell us that the food at Fairbridge was quite good.

3           A. Yes, it was. We had an Italian gardener and he used to  
4           grow a lot of veggies. He had a big veggie garden and  
5           when we were going down, if we were going down to the  
6           footy oval, we used to quietly go in and pinch a bit of  
7           the rhubarb. If he caught us, you used to yell at us  
8           and say, "Hey, stop pinching my rhubarb", but he would  
9           cut a couple of stalks and cover it up for us and say,  
10          "Next time ask me."

11          Q. Did you have difficulties with bed-wetting?

12          A. Yes. I worked out why. Everybody thought it was  
13          because my father had died and it had nothing to do with  
14          him. It was watching those boys walking down the street  
15          with nappies on because I never wet the bed before that  
16          and I wet the bed until I was 10 --

17          Q. And you started wetting the bed when you were in  
18          Edinburgh I think you tell us?

19          A. Yes.

20          Q. And you're now linking it to the incident at the  
21          orphanage in Edinburgh?

22          A. I am because I was -- when my father died I was quite  
23          happy that he had, it just meant mum didn't have to go  
24          through the rigmarole of a divorce. It would have been  
25          messy because there was no such thing as irreconcilable

1 breakdown of a marriage, you always aired your dirty  
2 linen. It would have been -- not so much for [REDACTED] but  
3 I would have been old enough to know what was going on.

4 Q. Did you receive some medical attention in Edinburgh for  
5 the bed-wetting?

6 A. I had to go and see a psychologist who was trying to  
7 work out why I was wetting the bed, but then I had to  
8 stop seeing her because we were coming out to Australia.

9 Q. And the bed-wetting continued when you arrived at  
10 Fairbridge?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Something you tell us in your statement, Watto, is that  
13 the way in which bed-wetting was dealt with at  
14 Fairbridge depended on the cottage mother and the  
15 cottage you were in.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. In your first cottage, in Wolffe, how did [REDACTED] MZB  
18 deal with bed-wetting?

19 A. Well, you had to get up and you had to wash the sheet  
20 and hang it out. Then you'd have to go and have a wash  
21 so you didn't smell.

22 Q. Would she say anything to you if you wet the bed?

23 A. No, because I used to actually -- I used to dream that  
24 I was getting up out of bed and I was walking down the  
25 stairs, I was in the toilet, and I was sitting on the

1 toilet, and I would think I made it, and I'd wake up and  
2 I was still in bed.

3 It used to frustrate me. So I'd get up and just  
4 take the sheet off, wash it and hang it out, wash  
5 myself, get dressed, and just go and sit in the lounge.

6 Q. How did other children in the cottage respond to your  
7 wetting the bed?

8 A. Well, one girl -- she was older than me, she filled  
9 up -- it wasn't in Wolffe, it was in one of the other  
10 cottages -- she filled up the trough with cold water and  
11 said, "Sit in it, otherwise I'll -- if you don't, I'll  
12 thump you." And I wasn't going to get in cold water,  
13 I thought, no.

14 Anyway, the cottage mother came out and said,  
15 "What's going on?" and I just said, "She says I've got  
16 to sit in cold water, because I've wet the bed", "Oh,  
17 she did, did she?" Her name was [REDACTED], the one  
18 that was telling me I had to go and sit in this cold  
19 water. When I wouldn't go, she was going to come over  
20 and really whack me one and I thought, "I don't care,  
21 I'm not going in the water."

22 So the cottage mother came out and said to me, "Go  
23 and have a wash", and she got hold of [REDACTED] and she  
24 said, "Now, seeing you are so smart, you sit in the cold  
25 water and see how you like it." She didn't keep her in

1           there for long, but she made her sit in it until her  
2           backside got wet and she said, "The next time you ever  
3           do that again, I'll have you down to the headmaster",  
4           MIP           it would have been then. She said, "That  
5           doesn't happen in my cottage."

6           Q. Was that overspeaking.

7           A. It would have been Shakespeare, it would have been her.  
8           She was gorgeous. She was an older woman, but she --  
9           I don't know, she was totally different, completely  
10          different to MZB           . Different nature.  
11          She was just kinder.

12          Q. When you first arrived at Fairbridge, was there an  
13          incident where you were bitten by mosquitoes?

14          A. Yes. I had my legs in bandages for six months, from the  
15          tip of my toes up to my knees. My legs were poisoned  
16          and I got told I'd be lucky if I didn't lose them.  
17          I had to have six penicillin needles, one every day for  
18          six days.

19          Q. I think you mention that MZB           dragged you to  
20          the sister.

21          A. Yes, I had two ulcers on my legs where they had got  
22          infected and I didn't want to go up there because  
23          I didn't know what they were going to do to me, so  
24          I just thought, I'll be all right, I'll be all right,  
25          but that was stupid, I should have gone straight up.

1           When I got my legs in bandages, I had to go up every  
2           day and then every week for six months and then they  
3           decided to take the bandages off and they put  
4           MercuroChrome on, which was a red antiseptic, they put  
5           it on my legs, so the kids all yelled out, oh, she's  
6           changed her socks, they're red now instead of white. So  
7           we had a quiet giggle about that.

8           But I've still got the scars, the pockmarks on my  
9           legs, where my legs were bad, really bad. They're still  
10          lumpy.

11        Q. Did you get any visits from welfare workers or anybody  
12          of that nature?

13        A. No. Of course not. We had to show that we were -- if  
14          anybody came to see the kids, they always made sure that  
15          we had our uniform on, that we had our socks and shoes  
16          on. They didn't want to see kids running about  
17          barefoot. That would never do.

18        Q. So if somebody was coming that was known in advance, was  
19          it?

20        A. Oh yeah, they'd get us into the uniform and stuff like  
21          that.

22                There was one man that did come and he came to  
23          Fairbridge and he wrote to -- I don't know if it was  
24          McAlpine or somebody -- and he said that:

25                "When you look at the kids at Fairbridge, they are



1           unwanted and unloved."

2           I thought, how true. We were a job to the women  
3           rather than them looking after us. It was their job.  
4           Some of the cottage mothers were really good; other  
5           ones, they should never have been anywhere near kids.  
6           They had no understanding of kids.

7           Plus the fact if you had 12 kids in the cottage, not  
8           everybody had -- were sisters. We might have two that  
9           were sisters and all the rest were from a different  
10          family. So you had 4-year-olds to 15-year-olds, all  
11          different, different families, and they had to look  
12          after us so you can understand why it was regimented.  
13          It wasn't fun but it was regimented.

14        Q. You mentioned that your mother came over to Australia  
15        in [REDACTED], so a couple of months after yourself  
16        and your brother. Did you see your mother when she came  
17        over?

18        A. Well, when she first landed and found out that she  
19        wasn't going to be a cottage mother, she refused to go  
20        to the job they offered her until she saw us. So they  
21        brought her down on a train to see us and of course when  
22        we left Scotland, we wore shoes. When she came on the  
23        train and saw us, we were barefoot. My arms were  
24        covered in mozzie bites, my face, my legs. [REDACTED] was  
25        the same, he was covered head to foot in mozzie bites.

1           She just looked at the principal and said -- my  
2           mother never, ever swore. If she said "damn" she'd go  
3           bright red, but she looked at the principal and said to  
4           MIP           "What the hell have you done to my children?"

5           Q. And what did he say?

6           A. "It's all right, they're fine. It looks worse than what  
7           it is", and mum just looked at him and said, "Really?"  
8           she said, "If that's so, well ..."

9           We were getting on the train with her and mum  
10          automatically said to           , "You go first", and then  
11          I would have gone next and then mum. And MIP             
12          yelled out, "           out! Your mother gets in  
13          first." And mum just looked at MIP           and said, "Oh  
14          no they don't, my children get in before me", and he  
15          just looked at her and said, "Rightio, Mrs           ,  
16          If that's what you want."

17          But mum wasn't impressed and she wasn't happy, not  
18          at all, and she had to go back to Perth and do the job.

19          Q. Did you learn that your mother had thought she was going  
20          to get a job at Fairbridge as a cottage mother?

21          A. That was what she was -- as far as I know that's what  
22          she was told. Basically when she came out here they  
23          were going to get her a job and she assumed that the job  
24          would be where we were. What they didn't tell her was  
25          if you have a girl and a boy, you couldn't be a cottage

1 mother. You had to have either one child, two girls or  
2 two boys, you couldn't have mixed. So when she found  
3 that out -- sorry?

4 Q. Carry on.

5 A. Well, when they said to her they had a job for her in  
6 one of the hospitals, she just turned round and said,  
7 "I'm not going anywhere until I see my children",  
8 because she hadn't seen us for three months.

9 Q. So what did your mother do in terms of work?

10 A. She worked as a pantry maid in -- she worked in the  
11 King Edward's, she worked in -- which was a woman's  
12 maternity hospital. She also worked in the government  
13 hospital for returned soldiers that were sick. And  
14 before gran came out she actually -- she lived in  
15 Donghurst(?), on the property where the hospital was.

16 Q. Once your mother got a house, when she had a job, were  
17 you and [REDACTED] able to go and stay with her for  
18 weekends?

19 A. Yes, at weekends we could, holidays we could, but  
20 we weren't allowed to go and live with her because the  
21 reason they gave was that gran was too old, and gran  
22 would have been 70.

23 Q. So by this time your grandmother had followed your  
24 mother out to Australia?

25 A. Yes. That's why mum got the house, otherwise she was

1 quite happy to stay in the --

2 Q. Is it your understanding that because your mother was at  
3 work, your grandmother was seen as the person who would  
4 be there to care for you and she was seen as being too  
5 old?

6 A. Yes. So we had to stay put until I left at 15 and then  
7 they wanted [REDACTED] to stay on, but my grandmother said  
8 to my mum, no, if [REDACTED] comes out of Fairbridge, so  
9 does [REDACTED], he's not staying there by himself. So he  
10 came up for Christmas holidays, we both did, and he  
11 never went back.

12 If you take a look at his records, it says that they  
13 discharged him from Fairbridge in the [REDACTED] but he  
14 actually left Fairbridge [REDACTED] before. So that  
15 would have been 1963. They reckoned [REDACTED] 1964 was when  
16 he left and it wasn't, he left the same time as me.

17 Q. Once your mother and your grandmother were in Australia  
18 and you were going there some weekends, did you tell --

19 A. Once a month.

20 Q. Did you tell your cottage mother and the principal at  
21 Fairbridge that you wanted to live with them full-time?

22 A. I actually said, before gran came out, because I went to  
23 go down to see my brother the first day that we came to  
24 Fairbridge, and I just walked out of the cottage to go  
25 down to his cottage, and MZC [REDACTED] stopped me and

1       said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going down to  
2       my see brother." He said, "You can't go to the boys'  
3       cottages." I said, "I want to see my brother." He  
4       said, "You can't go there; you'll see your brother when  
5       you go down to the dining room and you might be able to  
6       play with him at 5 o'clock at night on the way home back  
7       to the cottage." And I said to him, "Oh it's all right,  
8       that's fine, because when my gran comes out, we'll be  
9       leaving here anyway", and he just looked at me and said,  
10      "I wouldn't count on it." And he was right: we had to  
11      stay there for four years until I left because the  
12      welfare department in Western Australia wouldn't let us  
13      go back to mum and gran.

14      Q. There's another person you mention in your statement and  
15      that's MZC . Was he somebody who was in  
16      charge of overall discipline at Fairbridge?

17      A. He was sort of the one between the matron and the  
18      principal. He was more in charge of the boys rather  
19      than the girls, but he had a soft spot for the girls.  
20      We got away with a lot more than we should have done.  
21      Rather than use the cane, which he used for the boys, we  
22      used to go down to his office and he had a cupboard that  
23      had canes in it, different sizes, and he'd say to the  
24      boys, "Pick the cane", and then the boys had to pick the  
25      cane and he'd give them a couple of slaps on the

1           backside with it. But he never actually give them  
2           one -- if they got a bit cheeky he'd give them another  
3           one for good measure, but that was it. That was his way  
4           of disciplining. After talking, if talking didn't work,  
5           then the cane was the next thing. He never ever used  
6           the cane on a girl, ever. He wouldn't. He refused.

7       Q. When it came your time to leave, when you were 15, did  
8           somebody tell you that you could leave or how did it  
9           come about that you were able to go and live with your  
10          mother?

11       A. We always knew that when you turned 15, regardless of  
12          whether you had a parent or not, you left. The boys  
13          left and the girls left. Once they turned 15, that was  
14          it, they were sent out.

15       Q. Were you given any preparation for leaving?

16       A. They sort of just gave us a -- took us to Perth to get  
17          clothes and then we came back up on the bus and we went  
18          to our parents. But the kids that didn't have parents  
19          were more or less -- had to find work, had to -- I don't  
20          know, they just -- once they turned 15 it was like they  
21          said, "That's our duty done by you, get out in the world  
22          and see how you go." There didn't seem to be any  
23          back-up except for -- the Young Victoria League  
24          sometimes looked after the kids and kept an eye on them.

25       Q. Once you were 15 and able to go and live with your

1 mother and grandmother, did you have any contact either  
2 with Fairbridge or anybody else from the welfare  
3 department?

4 A. No, no, no, no way. Couldn't wait to get out of the  
5 place. I wasn't going to go back there and say, "How  
6 are you?" Not on your nelly.

7 Q. You tell us that you worked in the government print for  
8 a couple of years after you left; is that right?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And you tell us that you got married at 18 and went on  
11 to have three daughters.

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. You tell us that that marriage broke down and that you  
14 then remarried in 1983.

15 A. Yes, I did.

16 Q. And then you moved down to Albany, where I think you  
17 still are, in 1989?

18 A. Yes. We've been here 31 years. Wow.

19 Q. Did you keep in contact with your brother?

20 A. Not really. He was very much like mum. He liked to  
21 travel and if you saw him once in every couple of years,  
22 you'd be lucky. I went to his wedding, but he travelled  
23 all over Australia, he went to New Zealand, he went back  
24 to Britain, I think he went to Europe. You never knew  
25 when you were going to see him.



1 Q. Did he ever discuss with you his own experiences of  
2 Fairbridge?

3 A. He hated it. He hated the place. He got accused of  
4 stealing and it wasn't him that did the stealing, it was  
5 MZC [REDACTED] boy that did the stealing.

6 Fairbridge changed [REDACTED] a lot. As a youngster at  
7 home, he was a lovely natured kid. He used to play with  
8 a little girl next door to us that lived in Gilmerton  
9 and they ... what was the name? She was Mrs [REDACTED]  
10 daughter, but she had ... She couldn't sit up properly  
11 and she used to dribble a lot, but [REDACTED] used to go  
12 next door and Mrs [REDACTED] would ask mum, "Could [REDACTED]  
13 come and ..." [REDACTED] was the little one's name. She  
14 was a gorgeous kid but I don't think she lived very  
15 long. But at the time he was there, he had a lot of  
16 patience with [REDACTED] he used to play a lot with  
17 [REDACTED] and Mrs [REDACTED] could go into the kitchen and  
18 do her ironing and just check on [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]  
19 while they played in the lounge. He used to play with  
20 [REDACTED] for hours. He was a lovely kid, he had a lovely  
21 nature, but Fairbridge changed all that.

22 It turned out that -- well, they accused him of  
23 stealing and he said he didn't steal, "Well, you must  
24 have done", "Well, I didn't." But he hated it, he hated  
25 the place.



1 Q. When you say Fairbridge changed him, in what way? What  
2 changes did you see in him?

3 A. Well, he used to be, like I say, a loving kid, and if  
4 I -- as he got older and got out of his teens and into  
5 his early 20s, if I said to him -- because he was  
6 a silly bugger, he got into a bit of trouble when he  
7 left Fairbridge, with the police, and gran and mum and  
8 myself, we tried to straighten him out, but it took  
9 a short term in prison for him to realise that he'd been  
10 stupid, and he said that himself when he got into his  
11 30s and 40s, that he'd been an idiot as a young child.

12 But if you tried to ask him anything about what  
13 he was doing and how he was going, you'd get, "What's  
14 this, the third degree?" So in the end I never bothered  
15 asking him. I just thought, well, if he feels like I'm  
16 cross-examining him and he doesn't want to tell me  
17 anything, that's the way he is.

18 He was a very open kid as a young kid, he was  
19 a loving kid, and he turned out to be a kid that was --  
20 he wasn't very trusting. He didn't trust a lot of  
21 people.

22 Q. And you tell us, Watto, that [REDACTED] passed away in 2013.

23 A. Yes, he did. He was 60.

24 Q. Have you sought to recover some records from your time  
25 at Fairbridge?

1 A. I did, I asked for my records and my brother's records,  
2 and they only sent mine out. They didn't send out his.  
3 Because they had his name, but when I opened up the file  
4 it was all my information, and I thought: this isn't his  
5 information.

6 Q. And did you eventually get his records as well?

7 A. No, I haven't got them.

8 Q. In your own records, were you able to see some reports  
9 written about yourself?

10 A. Oh yes, yes.

11 Q. I think you mention in your statement that the reports  
12 showed you that, for example, MZB [REDACTED] didn't know  
13 you at all.

14 A. Of course she didn't know me. She had 12 kids she had  
15 to look after. In their defence, I mean, she was  
16 a bitch, and it wouldn't matter which cottage she was  
17 in, she was just a first class bitch when it came to  
18 kids.

19 But those cottage mothers had to look after the  
20 children for 12 weeks before they got a break. Now,  
21 that's 12 kids from the age of 4 to the age of 15, all  
22 different personalities, all got problems, and the only  
23 one that they could go to for help would be either  
24 MZC [REDACTED] or MRU [REDACTED]. So I mean, it's hard  
25 enough looking after your own kids without looking after

1 kids that are strangers. It's very, very hard. And  
2 they'd get a whole week off. Whoop-de-do. They should  
3 have had two weeks, three weeks off. And another  
4 cottage mother would come in as a relief cottage mother  
5 and that was how they used to do it. I wouldn't have  
6 liked their job.

7 Q. And in the records that you recovered, I think you say  
8 that there were reports from the cottage mothers but  
9 also principal's remarks, school reports and health  
10 reports.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Are those the sorts of things you recovered?

13 A. Yes. I got that, I got the paperwork that mum had  
14 signed from England. I got the ship she come out on,  
15 what she wanted to do, a record of the jobs she had in  
16 England and Scotland before she came out of here.

17 Q. So do you have a file then with that kind of  
18 information?

19 A. Yes, I've kept it.

20 Q. You mention redress in your statement, Watto, the  
21 Western Australia Redress Scheme. I think you mention  
22 that you and your brother got -- made an application and  
23 got a redress payment.

24 A. Yes, we got -- it was called an ex gratia payment so we  
25 couldn't go back. Once they paid that money, we could

1 not go back and try to get more, and we couldn't go back  
2 and say anything about the government. It was  
3 a pay-off.

4 Q. And I think you --

5 A. It was just to shut you down.

6 Q. And you think that was about 2009 or 2010, about  
7 10 years ago?

8 A. Yes, it would have been, yes, because [REDACTED] got it and  
9 he died in 2013.

10 What started it off was the abuse of children under  
11 the welfare's care that were sexually abused and then  
12 they changed it from sexually abused to physically and  
13 mentally abused. They thought they were only going to  
14 get -- it originally started off that children that had  
15 been sexually abused while under the welfare's care  
16 would get AU\$80,000, but they got that many people  
17 writing in that they had to cut the payment in half to  
18 \$45,000. Then, depending on your circumstances, you got  
19 pro rata of that. [REDACTED] and I got \$13,000 each, and  
20 I said to [REDACTED], look, it's not going to change what  
21 happened, but if they want to pay you the money to ease  
22 their conscience and you want to go travelling, take it.

23 Q. Have you ever been back --

24 A. It won't change anything -- back where?

25 Q. Have you ever been back to Scotland?

1 A. No. Going in August.

2 Q. What did you think the impact has been on you, Watto, of  
3 migrating to Australia from Scotland at the age of 11?

4 A. Oh, I don't know. It's hard to say. I think Fairbridge  
5 toughened me up a bit and then fairly young, bringing  
6 kids up, we never had a lot of money. [REDACTED] and I have  
7 only -- [REDACTED] and I have only been able to travel since  
8 about 2013 when his mum passed away and he got money  
9 from her. So he wanted to travel, so we travelled.

10 Q. Do you have family in Scotland?

11 A. I've probably got ... Well, that's if they're still  
12 alive. I know I've got two cousins, probably five  
13 cousins on my father's side, there'd be second cousins,  
14 third cousins. I could walk down the street and  
15 I wouldn't know them. As soon as mum came out here, she  
16 cut all ties. I don't know why, but she just did.

17 Q. Do you think --

18 A. And if I asked her anything about it, she'd just say,  
19 "Oh well, that's the way it is", she wasn't a good  
20 writer.

21 Q. Do you think about Scotland?

22 A. Yes, I quite often Google -- I'll go and Google and try  
23 and find the places ... I actually did Google  
24 Gilmerton, [REDACTED] and I saw the house  
25 we used to live in. I tried to get [REDACTED]

1 but could not find it, not for love nor money could I.

2 And then where Craigmillar was, there's nothing  
3 there now, it's got a lot to do with the university  
4 buildings where students stay, but actually, where we  
5 lived it's just -- there's nothing, all the houses have  
6 gone.

7 Q. And how do you feel about your upcoming trip to Scotland  
8 after --

9 A. Oh, I can't wait. Can't wait, can't wait. Want to go.

10 Q. In your statement you give us some information about the  
11 impact you think your time at Fairbridge had on you.

12 You say:

13 "[You] hated it there and just wanted to be at home  
14 with [your] mum and [REDACTED]"

15 A. Yes, I did. I couldn't understand why, if my mum was  
16 living 75Ks away, why did I have to stay in Fairbridge?

17 Q. You say that you are hopeless when it comes to being  
18 regimented.

19 A. Oh, I hated it. It was like being in the army. You got  
20 told when to get up, when to go to bed. I was used to  
21 going to bed at, say, 8.30, 9 o'clock at night. When  
22 I got to Fairbridge, I was in bed by 7.30 because I was  
23 11, and they put us up by quarter of an hour, half  
24 an hour as you got older until you got to 15, and then  
25 you were in bed by 9 o'clock. A 15-year-old going to

1           bed at 9? 9.30 would have been good, but no, it had to  
2           be 9 o'clock. It was always regimented.

3       Q. You also say that it had an impact on your schooling  
4           in that you didn't apply yourself at school, possibly  
5           because you weren't happy.

6       A. No, I didn't want to be in Fairbridge and I cut my nose  
7           off to spite my face. What I should have done was  
8           knuckle down and studied, because they were paying for  
9           it, so -- but no, I just wanted to be away from there,  
10          and anything to do with Fairbridge or Pinjarra, I didn't  
11          want anything to do with.

12                It's different now I'm an adult and I can go down to  
13           Pinjarra and stuff like that because our daughter lives  
14           in Mandurah, which is just about 12 miles further over  
15           towards the sea. That doesn't worry me, but I wouldn't  
16           go into Fairbridge. I've gone past it but I won't go in  
17           it.

18       Q. In terms of lessons that you think could be learnt from  
19           your own experience, one thing you say is that:

20                "[You] don't think children should have to call  
21           people in the role of cottage mother or similar,  
22           aunties. [You] think that children should call these  
23           people by their own name."

24       A. Well, they're not a relative. They're not aunties at  
25           all. They're people paid to look after you, so why

1           would you want to have to call them auntie? What's  
2           wrong with calling them MZB ? That was her  
3           name.

4       Q. And you also think that there should be two people  
5           looking after children, not just one.

6       A. Well, they should have -- I don't know, it just  
7           seems ... I mean, we couldn't go to the swimming pool  
8           at the same time as the boys. The only time we were  
9           actually all together was in the dining room at  
10          5 o'clock at night.

11               We were not allowed to walk on the gravel roads  
12           because the boys' dormitories faced outwards on the  
13           gravel road. I mean, we were 15. What the hell were we  
14           worried about boys' dormitories for?

15       Q. One of the final --

16       A. (OVERSPEAKING) -- sorry, we had a two-storey cottage and  
17           you couldn't see anything. The dormitories used to face  
18           the gravel road, yes, but every cottage was on stilts.  
19           So unless you were a 10-foot giant, you couldn't see  
20           in the windows anyway. So why did the girls have to  
21           walk on the bitumen road, which was bloody hot in  
22           summertime, and then the boys were allowed to walk on  
23           the gravel road? But we had to go all the way along and  
24           around. We used to cut through on the gravel roads and  
25           if we got caught, tough. I mean, our feet by the time



1           we had finished were like leather, but ...

2           I mean, it was archaic, the way you used to say, oh,  
3           the boys' dormitories face there so you can't walk down  
4           the gravel road. They were boys.

5           I mean, the girls weren't allowed up past the dairy  
6           because you might want to go up to the hayloft. The  
7           hayloft was just an open barn, it was just  
8           a three-sided -- with a roof where they used to put the  
9           hay on. If you were going to go and have sex, would you  
10          want to go in the hayloft? I can think of a hell of  
11          a lot more comfortable places. But the girls used to go  
12          up and just look at this hayloft and think, what's so  
13          special about the hayloft?

14          You weren't allowed to touch the animals, Mr Halley,  
15          who was the dairy manager, he had the calves that  
16          couldn't feed and we were allowed to feed them. He used  
17          to make the (inaudible) up for them and put them in the  
18          little pens and we'd feed them, but the girls could do  
19          that. But we weren't supposed to, but he used to just  
20          turn round and say, "I'm watching what you're doing,  
21          you're doing fine, you go ahead."

22          So we got to look at the animals. But we couldn't  
23          go up and ride the horses because one girl tried to run  
24          away and because she tried to jump the fence, the  
25          horse's back foot went into a pothole and it ripped the

1 horse's stomach. But the horse was fine, they managed  
2 to fix the horse up, but after that the girls were not  
3 allowed past the dairy. It's pathetic, absolutely  
4 pathetic.

5 We couldn't swim at the same time as the boys.  
6 We were sitting in church, we had the first eight pews  
7 for the girls and then the boys sat behind us and on the  
8 other side. You couldn't sit together as a family. You  
9 were in church, everybody could see you, what were you  
10 going to get up to in church? It was really pathetic.

11 Q. One of the final points you make in your statement  
12 is that:

13 "Children shouldn't be told lies about where they're  
14 going to."

15 I think you are referring there to the lack of  
16 information you feel you had about where you were going  
17 to in Australia and:

18 "[You] think that children should be told exactly  
19 what's happening and where they're going."

20 A. Well, they should be. You turn round and say to a kid,  
21 "Do you want to go for a boat ride?" If you were told  
22 that, you'd think you were on a river. You turned round  
23 and you'd go on a great big racking(?) ship and you'd  
24 travel 12,000 miles where you don't know anybody, you've  
25 got no idea where you're going, you've got to rely on

1           strangers that you don't know. I mean, it's cruel. It  
2           really is cruel.

3           Those kids had nobody at all. The kids that had  
4           parents were marginally better than the ones who didn't.  
5           The ones who didn't had to rely on the cottage mothers  
6           bringing them up, and when one cottage mother said to  
7           another cottage mother, "They're nothing but little  
8           animals", what does that make them?

9       MS MACLEOD: I see.

10           Thank you. I don't have any more questions for you.

11           My Lady I'm not aware of any other questions for  
12           Watto.

13       LADY SMITH: Are there any outstanding applications for  
14           questions? No.

15           Watto, that completes everything we have to ask you  
16           this evening. Thank you very much for engaging with us  
17           and talking to us over the video link and thank you also  
18           for the detailed written statement you've provided to us  
19           earlier. This is of enormous assistance to me in the  
20           case study that we're dealing with at the moment and I'm  
21           very grateful to you for your contribution. I'm now  
22           able to let you go and relax. Thank you.

23       A. Thank you. Goodbye.

24       LADY SMITH: Bye-bye.

25                       (The video link was terminated)

1 I think we'll take the break now.

2 (11.40 am)

3 (A short break)

4 (12.00 pm)

5 LADY SMITH: Mr MacAulay.

6 MR MacAULAY: My Lady, the next witness is also an  
7 applicant, she wants to remain anonymous and to use the  
8 name "Michaela" in giving evidence.

9 "MICHAELA" (affirmed)

10 LADY SMITH: Please sit down and make yourself comfortable,  
11 won't you? Michaela, the microphone does matter. We  
12 need to hear you through the sound system, so if you can  
13 stay in a good position for that, that'd be really  
14 helpful. In a moment I'll hand you over to Mr MacAulay  
15 and he will explain to you what happens next.

16 If at any time you want a break or you don't  
17 understand what's going on, do feel free to ask me.  
18 It's important that you feel comfortable with the way  
19 you're able to give evidence; is that all right?

20 A. Yes, thank you.

21 LADY SMITH: I'll hand over to Mr MacAulay.

22 Questions from MR MacAULAY

23 MR MacAULAY: Good afternoon, Michaela.

24 A. Good afternoon.

25 Q. In the red folder in front of you, you'll find your

1 statement. I'll give the reference for the statement  
2 for the transcript: WIT.001.002.5880. Could I ask you,  
3 Michaela, to turn to the final page of the statement?  
4 Can you confirm you have signed it?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And do you tell us in the last paragraph that you have  
7 no objection to your witness statement being published  
8 as part of the evidence to the inquiry? Is that  
9 correct?

10 A. That's fine, yes.

11 Q. Do you also say that you believe the facts stated in the  
12 witness statement are true?

13 A. Yes, they are.

14 Q. Michaela, I don't require your date of birth, because  
15 you want to remain anonymous, but to provide us with  
16 some sort of time frame, can you confirm for me that you  
17 were born in the year 1946?

18 A. I was.

19 Q. I'll be asking you questions based on your statement.  
20 If I ask you a question about something that you don't  
21 remember, just say so. And if something comes to mind,  
22 just tell us about that as well. Do you understand?

23 A. I do.

24 Q. You will also see that the statement will come up on the  
25 screen in front of you; some people find it easier to


1 look at the screen rather than look down on the text  
2 itself.

3 Can I begin by taking from you, as you tell us in  
4 your statement, that you actually, before you went into  
5 the care of the Sisters of Nazareth in Aberdeen, have no  
6 real memories of life before that; is that right?

7 A. Not a lot, no.

8 Q. Because you went into Nazareth House Aberdeen before  
9 you were 5 years of age.

10 A. That's true.

11 Q. According to the records that the inquiry has seen, you  
12 were admitted to Nazareth House Aberdeen on  
13  1951.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. So you would not quite be 5 by then; is that correct?

16 A. That's correct.

17 Q. Since that time and later on in life, did you find out  
18 something about your family background?

19 A. Yes. I was writing to the Salvation Army and other  
20 institutions like that, and the information I got back  
21 was that I was illegitimate because my mother and father  
22 were not married, that my mother was a waitress and my  
23 father was a chairmaker. So I wrote back to them and  
24 said, couldn't my father not make tables as well as  
25 chairs, and I was just ignored.

1 Q. I think this was later on in life that you discovered  
2 this?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Did you ever in fact meet your mother?

5 A. Never.

6 Q. When you were admitted to Nazareth House, you at that  
7 time had a [REDACTED] brother; is that right?

8 A. That's right.

9 Q. Can you remember if that brother was admitted with you  
10 to Nazareth House?

11 A. I don't remember if he was admitted with me, no.

12 Q. Again, the records do show that he was admitted at the  
13 same time as you, but I think we understand that in  
14 Nazareth House Aberdeen at that time, the girls were  
15 separated from the boys; is that correct?

16 A. I assume it was correct because I don't remember [REDACTED]  
17 there.

18 Q. And do you remember seeing boys there at all?

19 A. No, not at all.

20 Q. I'll come to your experience of Nazareth House Aberdeen  
21 in a moment, but according to the records you left  
22 Nazareth House in Aberdeen on [REDACTED] 1955. That's  
23 when you'd be aged 8?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And the following day, [REDACTED], you sailed out,

1 heading off to Australia?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And I'll look at that with you shortly.

4 Just to look at the position in Nazareth House,  
5 do you have much of a recollection of your life in  
6 Nazareth House?

7 A. Very little.

8 Q. I think one thing you do tell us is that when you were  
9 in Nazareth House, you had problems with your eyes;  
10 is that correct?

11 A. Yes, I did.

12 Q. And how was that dealt with?

13 A. Well, I had glasses -- when I left Nazareth House to go  
14 to Australia I had glasses.

15 Q. Had the glasses been organised for you through  
16 Nazareth House?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Do you remember ever having a visitor when you were at  
19 Nazareth House?

20 A. Yes, I do.

21 Q. Can you tell me about that? What's your recollection?

22 A. A lady used to come there, and she must have walked  
23 there, and I would go with her to a home where she would  
24 put ringlets in my hair with rags and paint my nails and  
25 I had to sit in front of the fireplace until the nails



1           dried. I'd stay with her for a couple of days and then  
2           she would take me back to Nazareth House.

3       Q. How often do you think this happened?

4       A. Not a real lot, but maybe every few weeks she would come  
5           and take me out.

6       Q. Looking back, do you have any thoughts as to who this  
7           lady might have been?

8       A. I thought it may have been my mother.

9       Q. But this was a lady in any event that seemed to live  
10          in the area of Nazareth House, Aberdeen; is that right?

11      A. Yes.

12      Q. In relation to something like the food, for example,  
13          do you have any recollection as to what the food was  
14          like in Aberdeen?

15      A. No, I don't remember what the food was like.

16      Q. Do you have any recollection of any physical punishment  
17          or ill-treatment when you were there?

18      A. No, no ill-treatment.

19      Q. What about happy memories? Can you think back and  
20          conjure up any happy memories from Aberdeen?

21      A. No, there was nothing happy or nothing unhappy.

22      Q. Okay. Can I then look at the time when you came to  
23          leave Aberdeen and Scotland. What's your recollection  
24          as to what happened in the lead-up to that taking place?

25      A. In the lead-up, we were taken up into an office and our

1 name was -- my name was [REDACTED]. We got taken up  
2 to the office and our name got changed to [REDACTED] and  
3 for the last few weeks before we went to sail we kept  
4 going up there and they'd say, "What is your name?" and  
5 then we were quite sure it was [REDACTED].

6 Q. When you say "we" --

7 A. My brother and I.

8 Q. At that time then you were aware that your brother was  
9 present at least for that purpose?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Who spoke to you when you were taken to the office?

12 A. Oh, I don't remember.

13 Q. Was it a nun?

14 A. Yes, it was a nun who talked to us, yes.

15 Q. So you have in providing that information disclosed  
16 names but you needn't be concerned about that because  
17 these names will not be made public. But I think what  
18 you said was the name you were using at Nazareth House  
19 at that time was no longer to be used.

20 A. That's right.

21 Q. And another name that you have mentioned was to be your  
22 name from then on; is that the position?

23 A. That's right, yes.

24 Q. That's then in the lead-up to going to Australia. What  
25 then was the next stage in your preparations for going

1           there?

2       A. Well, we were asked did we want to go there, and they  
3       just said there was apples and bananas on the trees so  
4       I said, I'll go, and so that was it, we were sort of  
5       packed up and then after that we went down to  
6       Southampton to get on the boat.

7       Q. Again, can I just understand the arrangements for that.  
8       You mentioned a lady.

9       A. Yes.

10      Q. Who was present and where was this?

11      A. Well, two ladies went with us from Nazareth House down  
12      to where the boat was and they were on the boat all the  
13      way to Australia.

14      Q. In Aberdeen, you mentioned this lady that spoke to you  
15      about Australia.

16      A. Yes.

17      Q. Were you taken to a room or how --

18      A. To a room. We went to a room.

19      Q. How many children were in the room?

20      A. Just [REDACTED] and I.

21      Q. Was it just the one lady who spoke to you?

22      A. Yes.

23      Q. And this lady was not a nun, it was somebody else?

24      A. No.

25      Q. And can I just understand what the nature of the

1 conversation was?

2 A. "You might be going to Australia and it's a nice place,  
3 there's lots of sun but there's apples and bananas on  
4 the trees; would you like to go?" And I said yes.

5 Q. What about [REDACTED], what was his --

6 A. I think he went along with what I wanted because at that  
7 time it was very cold in Scotland.

8 Q. Just looking at your brother [REDACTED] who you've  
9 mentioned, did you have any recollection of [REDACTED]  
10 before that?

11 A. No.

12 Q. How long before you left Aberdeen do you think that this  
13 meeting with this lady took place?

14 A. Thinking about it as an adult, it was probably a month  
15 or so before we left.

16 Q. I think I've taken from you already that you left  
17 Aberdeen on [REDACTED] 1955. Did you then go down to  
18 England?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And did you meet up with other children when you went to  
21 England?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. So it was just yourself and [REDACTED] from Scotland?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And how many children did you meet up with in England?

1 A. Four others.

2 Q. Are you able to tell us what their nationalities were?

3 A. Two were English and two were Irish.

4 Q. We know from the records that you and [REDACTED]  
5 [REDACTED] at this time.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. What about the children you met up with?

8 A. There was a brother and sister and they were English and  
9 they were younger than [REDACTED] and I. Then there was an  
10 older brother and sister and they were from Ireland.

11 Q. Did you then travel as a group?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And I think you did mention that there were two ladies  
14 who were supervising you on the trip, is that right?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. I think you tell us in your statement, Michaela, that  
17 the ship you sailed on was called the Strathaird.

18 A. That's right.

19 Q. And I think you sailed from London to Sydney; is that  
20 correct.

21 A. I don't know whether it was Sydney or Western Australia,  
22 Perth.

23 Q. Okay. What was the trip like?

24 A. It was great. We liked it. We were sort of ...

25 Q. One of the things you mentioned in your statement,

1 I think it's at paragraph 8, is that you have  
2 a particular recollection of the food on the Strathaird.

3 A. Yes, it was great food, it was wonderful food.

4 Q. At the time you knew that you were going to a place  
5 called Australia; is that right?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Did you know with any more precision as to where exactly  
8 you were going?

9 A. No. It could have been round the block. We had no  
10 idea.

11 Q. In paragraph 21 of your statement, which I'll put on the  
12 screen for you, what you say is this:

13 "I had no thoughts about family being left behind in  
14 Scotland or anything because my life experience was  
15 always Nazareth House. I had no concept of family."

16 Can you explain what you mean? I take it that's  
17 looking back, but can you explain what you mean by that?

18 A. Well, we were going somewhere else and it appeared that  
19 there were no family, only this lady that used to take  
20 me out, so there was no sort of sentimental value of  
21 leaving Scotland to go to Australia. It was just like,  
22 oh well, we're going there, and that's it.

23 Q. At this time in your life, when you were 8 years of age,  
24 what then was your thinking about whether or not you had  
25 a mother and a father?

1 A. I had no thoughts about it at all.

2 Q. Did you think that you were an orphan or what was the  
3 position?

4 A. I didn't think that, I just didn't think anything about  
5 that. I just thought, well, we're just going to  
6 Australia.

7 Q. I think then when you got to Australia, you went to  
8 a place called St Joseph's Home in Neerkol, Queensland;  
9 is that right?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And that was run by the Sisters of Mercy?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. You tell us in your statement that the six of you,  
14 yourselves and the four you mentioned, travelled by bus  
15 from Sydney to Neerkol.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. What was your first impression of St Joseph's?

18 A. The first impression was how hot it was, because it  
19 was [REDACTED], and when we sort of got out, the six of us  
20 were standing there, and I saw this child, who would  
21 have been 10 or 12, with a bag, like a big sheet where  
22 you put all the linen into it and then fold up the  
23 sheet, and they carried it over their shoulder to the  
24 laundry, and I thought, oh well, I won't be doing that,  
25 I won't be here for long, my mother will come and get

1           me. And then I thought, oh dear, no, I don't like this  
2           place.

3           Q. That was your first impression, you didn't like it?

4           A. Not at all.

5           Q. So far as size is concerned, can you give me an  
6           understanding of how it appeared to you as a child at  
7           that time?

8           A. What, the orphanage?

9           Q. Yes.

10          A. Oh, it was like it was the only place in the world. It  
11          was on 3,000 acres on land, so it was just massive. It  
12          was like, well, this must be where everybody lives.

13          Q. I understand you're not concerned with looking at  
14          photographs. Can I put a couple of photographs on the  
15          screen and see if they're of any assistance in  
16          identifying what the place might have looked like?

17          A. Yes.

18          Q. The first is INQ-148. This is quite an old photograph,  
19          I think. Does that ring any bells with you?

20          A. Yes, it's a dormitory.

21          Q. This is the dormitory area?

22          A. Yes.

23          Q. Were there other areas then, quite apart from this?

24          A. Yes. The dormitories were -- one was for the small  
25          girls, they were girls up to about the age of 10, and



1           then another dormitory like this would be for the girls  
2           from 10 to 14, and the same for the boys.

3       Q.   The other photograph I would like you to look at is at  
4           INQ-166. Do you recognise this?

5       A.   I recognise the church.

6       Q.   Is that the building in the centre with the cross?

7       A.   Yes. With the cross, yes. That's the church.

8       Q.   What about the other building to the right?

9       A.   The one on the right is -- I think that was the small  
10           girls' and small boys' dormitory. The other one was the  
11           girls' dormitory.

12      Q.   Was there a main building then that we haven't captured  
13           in those photographs?

14      A.   The school.

15      Q.   Was that in the main building?

16      A.   It was apart from that. It was just another big  
17           building and the school was just one building. It  
18           didn't matter whether you were in grade 1 or grade 7, it  
19           still was in the one building.

20      Q.   Do I take it then from the photographs we've looked at  
21           that Neerkol was made up of different buildings?

22      A.   Yes.

23      Q.   So far as boys and girls were concerned, are you able to  
24           tell us what the age range was? You were 8 years of  
25           age, for example. What was the --

1       A. There were younger boys and girls than us and there were  
2       boys up to the age of 14. The ones that were over 14  
3       that didn't go on to higher schooling worked there, so  
4       there were other boys, say, from 15 to 18, and a bit  
5       beyond.

6       Q. And it was an orphanage; is that correct?

7       A. Yes.

8       Q. How many boys and girls were there altogether, can you  
9       tell me?

10      A. Well, to a child it seemed like hundreds.

11      Q. So far as the child migrants were concerned then, you've  
12      mentioned the six of you. Were there any other  
13      child migrants?

14      A. I don't remember any other child migrants because we  
15      always sort of -- us girls that were migrants stuck  
16      together because the Australian girls would always bully  
17      us and called us English pigs. We thought, oh god, you  
18      know, so in return for that, because we knew that  
19      Australia had Aborigines, so we used to call them  
20      Australian blacks. That's how we sort of fought about  
21      it.

22      Q. Do I take it then that in the main, the children at the  
23      orphanage were Australian?

24      A. They were Australian. Not all Aborigines, there were  
25      a lot of white children there.

1 Q. Were there also Aboriginal children there as well?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. When you set off from Scotland were you provided with  
4 a suitcase with things in it?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Did anything happen to that suitcase?

7 A. When we got to the orphanage, the nuns took the suitcase  
8 and took away our clothes, and we just then had to dress  
9 like everybody else, so they just sort of had home-made  
10 clothes.

11 Q. Do you know what happened to the suitcase and what was  
12 in it?

13 A. I don't know. Just our clothes were in it and we never  
14 saw them again. They took them.

15 Q. Did you see any of that again?

16 A. No.

17 Q. When you were addressed by the nuns, how would they  
18 address you?

19 A. They dressed us in underwear that was made from calico  
20 and they were made there, and just dresses that they  
21 sort of got out of the cupboards and they just had our  
22 numbers on, whichever number we were. They just had  
23 a number on and they would call out number so-and-so and  
24 you would go and get your dress.

25 Q. If a nun spoke to you, how would she speak to you?

1           Would she use your first name, second name or something  
2           else?

3           A.   Some of them would talk to us as a number and others  
4           would talk to us by our surname.

5           Q.   The dormitory buildings that we've seen some of, can you  
6           give me some understanding as to how the dormitories  
7           were laid out? How many children would be in  
8           a dormitory, for example?

9           A.   Oh, probably 30 to 40 beds in the dormitory, then  
10          a little alcove and a nun would be in that little part  
11          there.

12          Q.   So far as the age range within the dormitory would be  
13          concerned, can you help me with that?

14          A.   The age in the small dormitory would be 4 to 10 and in  
15          the bigger dormitory it would be 10 to 14 or 10 to 15.

16          Q.   When you arrived there, did you go into the small  
17          dormitory, the 4 to 10 dormitory?

18          A.   Yes.

19          Q.   Did you move then at a point in time?

20          A.   Yes.

21          Q.   Was the arrangement similar for the boys?

22          A.   Yes.

23          Q.   In your first period there, how happy were you to be  
24          there?

25          A.   I was very unhappy. I used to tell everybody my mother

1           was coming to get me.

2           Q. What reaction did you get to that?

3           A. "Oh, no one comes here, you'll be here forever."

4           Q. You tell us about an incident when you saw a nun strike  
5           a child across the face; was that early on in your time  
6           there?

7           A. Yes.

8           Q. Can you tell me what happened?

9           A. It was in the schoolroom. The school had all the  
10          classes in the one room and if you sort of didn't sit up  
11          straight or didn't do the work enough, they would just  
12          come and slap you across the face. That was it, you  
13          know, and there was nothing you could do about it, there  
14          was no one there to help.


15          Q. Did something happen on this occasion when -- this  
16          incident you tell us about?

17          A. No, nothing. Nothing happened. It was just that's how  
18          it was.

19          Q. Can I look at a little bit of some aspects of the  
20          routine -- first of all, what I haven't taken from you  
21          is that on the ship something happened to your glasses;  
22          is that correct?

23          A. Yes.

24          Q. What happened?

25          A. Well, the younger children that were with us -- 

1 he was a 4-year-old, and on the ship there was a little  
2 corner, like a little cafeteria, and they had fish and  
3 chips there and the chap there liked [REDACTED] and would sit  
4 him up all day on the counter, giving him fish and  
5 chips. At closing time [REDACTED] would always leave with  
6 a bag of chips. I got a bit clued up and thought, well,  
7 he's had them all day, he's not going to have them now,  
8 so when the cafeteria closed, and I was standing behind  
9 the counter, I grabbed him and I grabbed the chips, so  
10 he just reached up, took my glasses and threw them  
11 overboard, and that was the end of that.

12 Q. So when you arrived at St Joseph's, did you tell the  
13 nuns that you'd lost your glasses and you needed  
14 glasses?

15 A. I just said to them, "I wear glasses and I haven't got  
16 them, I'll have to get a pair", and they said, "You're  
17 like everybody else, you don't need glasses", so that  
18 was that.

19 Q. In your time at St Joseph's, did you get glasses?

20 A. I had already finished school when I got glasses.

21 Q. Did the fact that you didn't have glasses have an impact  
22 on your schooling?

23 A. Oh yes. I could not distinguish on the blackboard 8s  
24 and 6s and 5s and 3s, so I got most of my schoolwork  
25 wrong. And the nun would sit at the front and if you

1 got it wrong, she'd lean over the desk and whack you  
2 with the bamboo. So that went on and on. When she got  
3 sick of us, that we're not clever, sitting at the front,  
4 she would make us go to the back of the classroom and by  
5 that stage I could hardly see anything.

6 So when the girls that were my age finished primary  
7 school there, the girls went on to Rockhampton, to the  
8 Range College, and they got fitted out for clothes and  
9 I said, I'll be next, and I never got fitted out for  
10 clothes. To this day they have never told me why I  
11 didn't go. So then I just had to stay there and start  
12 work.

13 Q. I'll look at that in a little bit of detail later.

14 First of all, as far as the school itself was  
15 concerned, primary school, was that in-house, so to  
16 speak?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. But was it only a primary school?

19 A. Up to grade 8.

20 Q. What age would that be?

21 A. 14, 13/14.

22 Q. Would it be at grade 8, 13/14, that certain children  
23 would move to the school at Rockhampton?

24 A. Yes, the girls would go to Rockhampton and the boys  
25 would go to another boarding school called St Brendan's

1           and that was up in a town called Yeppoon.

2           Q. Was that some distance away?

3           A. Yes.

4           Q. And did your brother go to that school?

5           A. Yes, he went there.

6           Q. I think he was clever?

7           A. He was very clever, yes.

8           Q. You've mentioned the nuns. Are you able to provide us  
9           with any names of nuns that you can remember?

10          A. Yes, there was Sister DGR, Sister DGT --  
11          she was the one who taught us and would hit us because  
12          we weren't clever. There was Sister Marie. I can't  
13          think off the top of my head. There were about 13 nuns  
14          there.

15          Q. Was there a nun in charge whose name you can remember?

16          A. Mother Eymard, she was the mother in charge of the whole  
17          show.

18          Q. Would you have much to do with her?

19          A. No.

20          Q. So which particular nuns then would you have more to  
21          deal with than others?

22          A. You had more to deal with the ones that were in the  
23          dormitories, that looked after the girls and the boys  
24          in the respective dormitories.

25          Q. You tell us at paragraph 33 that you woke up quite early



1 in the morning, I think 6.30 am, and you'd have to make  
2 your bed and get dressed; is that correct?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. How were children who wet the bed treated?

5 A. When you got up in the morning, one child would be  
6 selected to look into everybody's bed and see which had  
7 wet the bed, and those ones would go up the front of the  
8 dormitory and they would have to -- they just got belted  
9 with the bamboo, with the cane.

10 Q. Who would do that?

11 A. The nuns.

12 Q. Again, can you name any particular nuns?

13 A. The ones that were in charge of the dormitories. There  
14 was DGR [REDACTED], Sister DGS [REDACTED] Sister MWT [REDACTED]. They  
15 would do that.

16 Q. When you say they'd be struck with the cane, which part  
17 of the body?

18 A. On the backside.

19 Q. On top of the trousers or pyjamas?

20 A. Sometimes and sometimes they had to lift up their  
21 dresses.

22 Q. You did not wet the bed?

23 A. Only once I wet the bed, I woke up, I thought I was on  
24 the toilet and I couldn't stop, so I thought, oh dear,  
25 I'm going to get it in the morning, so I stripped the

1           sheet off the bed and went on to the veranda -- because  
2           the dormitories were all surrounded by verandas-- and  
3           I shook the sheet until it was dry and I thought,  
4           they're not going to get me, but there was a big yellow  
5           patch in the sheet and so they knew I had wet the bed.

6       Q. Were you caught?

7       A. Oh yes.

8       Q. Did that treatment you have mentioned happen to you?

9       A. Yes.

10      Q. But that was just on the one occasion?

11      A. Yes.

12      Q. Were there regular bed-wetters?

13      A. Oh yes.

14      Q. And did they have to do anything with their sheets?

15      A. They all had to go to the laundry, you had to take them  
16      down -- you took them down the back and we had in the  
17      laundry -- we didn't go to the laundry straightaway.  
18      Outside all the dormitories there was an area where they  
19      had boilers, big round boilers. You'd put the sheets in  
20      and move them around with a stick. That's how they  
21      washed the sheets.

22      Q. Another aspect of the routine you mention in your  
23      statement is mealtimes. You provide us with some  
24      details as to what the meals were like and what  
25      happened. Can you just tell me about that?

1       A. When the mealtime came, the boys were on one side of the  
2       dining room and the girls on the other side. You  
3       weren't allowed to talk. You sat down and you got --  
4       for breakfast, there was six at a table and there was 12  
5       pieces of bread and syrup in the morning and tea already  
6       milked and sugared in a pot. That's what you got for  
7       breakfast.

8               For lunch it was the same seating arrangement and  
9       you got some sort of stew with cabbage and pumpkin and  
10      you got sweets that were sago and tapioca, those sort of  
11      sweets.

12             Then for dinner you got 12 pieces of bread on the  
13      table and bread and dripping and cocoa made with water  
14      and that was the evening meal.

15      Q. So how would you describe the food?

16      A. Dreadful, dreadful.

17      Q. Did you have to eat the food?

18      A. Oh yes, you had to eat it.

19      Q. And if you didn't?

20      A. You stayed there until you ate it. That's how it was.

21      Q. Did you on occasion try to remove food out of the  
22      dining room and get rid of it somewhere else?

23      A. Oh, I didn't like the meat. You'd be chewing it and  
24      chewing it, so when you could leave, I would go down the  
25      back somewhere and spit it all out. But you wouldn't

1 take food. Oh no, you wouldn't dream of it.

2 Q. Were mealtimes supervised by the nuns?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. You mentioned a particular nun, I think it's

5 Sister MWT, who would do this task of supervision.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Would she do something if something caught her  
8 attention?

9 A. If you sort of leaned over a little bit like that  
10 (indicating), she had a bell, a metal shiny bell, and  
11 she'd put her hand in where the donger part was and if  
12 you leaned over, she would bang you through the back to  
13 straighten you up with the bell.

14 Q. So far as washing is concerned and bathing, can you just  
15 describe what happened -- what the procedure was there?

16 A. You got a bath. In the early days there was just cold  
17 water and you had to -- the nuns would walk in -- they  
18 didn't have bathrooms as such, they just had screens --  
19 and they would look on the screens and make sure you  
20 were sitting down in the cold water. Because they did  
21 have a boiler, which boiled the water, but we never got  
22 the hot water. So they made you sit down in the cold  
23 water for a bath.

24 Q. Would you share water with other girls?

25 A. No, you had your own water.

1 Q. You also tell us about the arrangements that were in  
2 place in connection with trips and holidays and in  
3 particular that on holidays you'd go and stay with  
4 families.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And that could be for a period of a number of weeks;  
7 is that right?

8 A. Yes, the school holidays, six weeks.

9 Q. So how did you find that?

10 A. I went to one lot of family called MWU - MWV and they had  
11 two daughters, one might have been older than myself and  
12 one younger. So I'd go there and the girls would go off  
13 to the matinées on a Saturday and most of the houses  
14 there were high-set houses with stairs going up, and  
15 I used to have to scrub the stairs and clean the house  
16 while the girls all went and had a nice time. So I did  
17 that on the school holidays.

18 Q. Did you see yourself as really going there to work?

19 A. Yes, I was just like a little slave.

20 Q. Did you go back to that family?

21 A. I did once because they used to come back and they would  
22 ask for a certain child. The third time they came back,  
23 I said, "No, I'm not going." They said, "If you don't  
24 go, you'll have to stay here for Christmas", and I said,  
25 "I'll stay here for Christmas."

1 Q. Was that because when you were there, you were simply  
2 being used as a worker?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Did some children have good experiences with families?

5 A. Oh yes. I had good experiences with another family and  
6 they actually asked me what I wanted for Christmas and  
7 I thought, oh gosh -- so at school we had the old desks  
8 and we made our own ink out of black powder and you  
9 dipped the pens in. They asked me what I wanted and  
10 I said I wanted a bottle of blue Swan ink, and I got it,  
11 and I really thought, god, this is what Christmas is all  
12 about, you get a little bottle of ink. Then you'd go  
13 back after Christmas and you'd have to hand in all the  
14 presents that you got, but I didn't hand in the ink.  
15 I thought, no, they're not getting my ink, but I wasn't  
16 going to use it because it was blue and they would know  
17 that I'd got it somewhere else and didn't hand it in.  
18 So after a few years of having it, it had all turned to  
19 powder so I couldn't use it anyway.

20 Q. Was that the procedure then, if you were given gifts,  
21 the gifts would be handed in --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- to the nuns?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And what would happen to the gifts?

1       A. Well, once a year, they had a day called birthday day,  
2       and everybody had to celebrate that day for their  
3       birthday, which was on 8 September, and they would give  
4       out the presents that they'd already taken from the  
5       children at Christmas.

6       Q. Would these be the presents that the child had actually  
7       got or could it be a present that one child got was  
8       being given to another child?

9       A. Yes, you didn't get back the same present.

10      Q. If you didn't then go to a family, what would the  
11      arrangements be for the holiday period?

12      A. The nuns had a property down at a place called Emu Park  
13      and it was a resort. Now it's -- god, you can't even  
14      buy a bit of land there now, it's very expensive, but  
15      they had the place there and part of it -- we were  
16      really quite free to do what we liked. We couldn't run  
17      away.

18             At lunchtime they would send us down to the patch  
19      where they had mango trees and they'd say, "Get your  
20      lunch off the trees", and, "Make sure you wash your  
21      hands and face", because if you got mango sores, you'd  
22      be in trouble because the juice would drip down your  
23      arms and you weren't allowed to get the sores from it.

24             But it was okay there. You could walk along the  
25      beach and it was better than being made like a slave as

1 a child.

2 Q. You've already mentioned schooling and the difficulty  
3 you had because of your eyesight and, in particular,  
4 that you weren't able to move on at the age of 13 or 14  
5 to the school in Rockhampton.

6 A. Mm.

7 Q. At the age of 14 then, what did you do?

8 A. The work? I worked in the presbytery for probably  
9 a year, 18 months, with the priest there. I would go  
10 there and -- it was like a house, and I would clean that  
11 house from top to bottom. I would clean his shoes and  
12 I would take his washing down to the main laundry where  
13 somebody would wash it, and then I'd have to go and pick  
14 it up in the afternoon and bring it back. I would go to  
15 the kitchen and bring up his meals and when he had  
16 finished I would take the plates back to the kitchen.

17 Q. Was this essentially a full-time job?

18 A. Yes. I was there every day.

19 Q. Did you say for about a year and a bit?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And that would take you to the age of, what, 15, 16?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And thereafter, what did you do? Because I think you  
24 say you left at the age of 17 or 18; is that right?

25 A. I left the orphanage at 18, yes.



1 Q. So what did you do in those remaining years?

2 A. Then I got taken up to the small boys' dormitory and  
3 there was -- there'd probably be 30, 40 small boys up to  
4 the age of 10. I would look after the clothes, change  
5 the beds, and look after the nun's little alcove where  
6 she slept as well.

7 I would do the washing, iron the nun's clothes for  
8 her, starch them and iron them up nicely, and clean the  
9 shoes of the boys. You had one pair of shoes for church  
10 on a Sunday, make sure they were all cleaned. Just  
11 generally look after the boys.

12 Q. And again, was that essentially a full-time job?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. For any of that work, whether it was for the priest or  
15 in the dormitory, were you ever paid anything?

16 A. Once a year, we went into Rockhampton to the show and  
17 the nuns would give us a little bit of money. Other  
18 than that, there was no money except when I left, they  
19 told me, when I finally left, they gave me a bank book  
20 and said, "This represents money, you go to the bank,  
21 you take the book, and ask them for the money, and  
22 they'll give you the money." I thought, oh well, what  
23 happens then?

24 So when I first had the book, and after I had left  
25 the orphanage, I went to the bank and I went up to the

1 counter, I gave them the book and they said, "How much  
2 money do you want?" They looked at it. I said, "How  
3 much have you got?" Then these other people came out  
4 and took me into an office and I asked, "What's going  
5 on?" and they said, "You're attempting to hold up the  
6 bank", and I said, "No, the nuns just told me if I give  
7 you the book, you'll give me the money", and then they  
8 realised I had no idea what I was doing. So I quickly  
9 learned that isn't how banks work.

10 Q. But was there money in the bank for you?

11 A. Yes, there was some money in the book.

12 Q. That was when you left the orphanage?

13 A. Yes, I'd left by then, yes.

14 Q. Your brother, who you've referred to already, [REDACTED]  
15 he was able to go to the other school outside the  
16 orphanage?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. But generally speaking, what sort of contact did  
19 you have with [REDACTED] during your time at the orphanage?

20 A. None. I just saw him in the classroom and I saw him in  
21 the dining room. Other than that, I didn't see him at  
22 all.

23 Q. One of the things you tell us in connection with your  
24 life there is how you would have teeth removed --

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. -- for a particular purpose. Can you just tell me about  
2 that?

3 A. The dentist used to come -- it was in a railway  
4 carriage -- you went out to the dentist, it was still  
5 at the orphanage, and we would go there and we'd tell  
6 him we had a toothache here or a toothache here  
7 (indicating) --

8 Q. You're pointing to the back area of your mouth?

9 A. Yes, and he would just pull out the teeth. Then  
10 we would go back and we'd all say to each other, how  
11 many -- because we had mouths full of cotton wool --  
12 "How many teeth did you get out?" and we'd tell them.  
13 The more teeth you got out, the more food you got, so we  
14 just said we had toothaches. So instead of bread and  
15 dripping for dinner, you might get a boiled egg or you  
16 might not get the dripping, you might get jam.

17 Q. So this was really a ploy to get food, effectively?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. How many teeth over the time did you have removed for  
20 this purpose?

21 A. Most of my back teeth.

22 Q. Did other children do the same?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Did the dentist simply go along with this then?

25 A. Yes, we just said we had a toothache, so he'd just pull

1 out the teeth.

2 Q. You also give us an example of a girl who became  
3 pregnant and what happened.

4 A. At that stage I was working there, so we slept on the  
5 veranda, the girls that worked slept on the veranda of  
6 the dormitories, and there were two toilets there and  
7 there were no doors on them, just a curtain. My friend  
8 and I heard this girl moaning and groaning, so I went to  
9 the nun, banged on the little place where she was  
10 sleeping and I said, "There's something wrong with this  
11 girl, she's sick, she's bellowing out in the toilet."

12 By the time we got there, there was this baby and my  
13 friend and I were looking around, we didn't know where  
14 it had come from. So she said, "I'll stay with her",  
15 and she went down and she got the priest -- because the  
16 orphanage had a car, so they got the car, and they came  
17 up and took her away with the baby and we never saw her  
18 again.

19 My friend and I had to clean up the mess and we  
20 didn't know where the mess came from. To us, it had  
21 nothing to do with the baby. It was just: what's  
22 happened here? So that was it and off you went.

23 Q. What age were you at this time?

24 A. About 16.

25 Q. And the girl involved?

1 A. She would have been 16, 17.

2 Q. But was she a girl who was living in the orphanage?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. I think you said she was never seen after this?

5 A. We never saw her again.

6 Q. What happened in the aftermath?

7 A. After that, they got the doctor out to examine us girls  
8 and we all had to go and line up and the doctor would  
9 take the girl and they would come out crying and weeping  
10 and I thought, God, I don't know what's going on in  
11 there but I'm not having that, and I kept going to the  
12 back of the line and by the time it was nearly my turn,  
13 it was time the doctor had to go back into town, so he  
14 didn't touch me.

15 Q. But he had examined other girls --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. -- in the line?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. At this time, at the age of 16, had you received any sex  
20 education?

21 A. Yes. We went up to the -- the nun took us up one at  
22 a time into the room and she said, "I need to talk to  
23 you about life." She said, "You've got a pearl and when  
24 you lose it, you don't get it back". And I'm waiting to  
25 see what she was going to tell us, and that was it. She

1           said, "You can go now, send in so-and-so." I came out  
2           and said, "I don't know what she's talking about.  
3           We haven't got any pearls", and that was all, that was  
4           the sex education we got.

5       Q. When you came to leave, was that it? Had you had any  
6       further sexual education?

7       A. No.

8       Q. You've already told us about your work looking after the  
9       priest and one of the things you said was you would take  
10      his meals to him.

11      A. Yes.

12      Q. Are you able to compare the food that the priest got to  
13      the food the children got?

14      A. Oh ... god, it was like he got a banquet to what we got.  
15      If he didn't eat it all, I just used to eat it before  
16      I'd take the plates back. He got lovely food: bread and  
17      butter in little dishes, a little jam for breakfast,  
18      toast in dishes, potatoes. He'd sit down and I'd just  
19      have to lift the lid off the food and I would think, oh  
20      my god, look at the food. But no, we didn't get food  
21      like that.

22      Q. What about the nuns themselves? Did you see what their  
23      food was like?

24      A. Their food was about the same as the priest's. They had  
25      a big dining room with a big long table and they'd all

1 sit there, and in the middle was all little dishes of  
2 butter and jams and toast and little jugs of milk. They  
3 sort of got that same sort of food.

4 Q. Throughout your time there -- and I think you were there  
5 for about nine or ten years --

6 A. I was there for ten years, yes.

7 Q. -- did you receive any visitors?

8 A. No, nobody.

9 Q. Did anybody people come to visit?

10 A. Yes, there were a family of boys there, about three  
11 boys, and their father used to come and take them out  
12 and there was a couple of other people there whose  
13 father would come and take them out just for a day or  
14 something.

15 Q. What about, for example, welfare people? Do you know if  
16 anybody who represented the welfare people came to visit  
17 or inspect?

18 A. The only other people that came were -- two men used to  
19 come out of a weekend and I think they were from the  
20 Lions, one of those type of groups would come. They'd  
21 just come out and they would bring out big green vats  
22 full of ice creams for us and we got the ice creams.  
23 But if you had your period, you weren't allowed to have  
24 them because it's no good for you, you can't have cold  
25 things, so we didn't get them. But those men then used

1           to take the boys down to creek to teach them swimming  
2           and they would take the boys down there and they would  
3           sexually abuse some of the boys down the creek.

4       Q.   Is that something you learned afterwards?

5       A.   Yes.

6       Q.   And who told you about that?

7       A.   Oh, some of the boys would tell the working girls what  
8           happened and then everybody seemed to know what was  
9           going on at the creek. You couldn't see the creek, it  
10          was a way away from the buildings.

11      Q.   When you talk about the working girls, that would  
12          include you?

13      A.   Yes.

14      Q.   The older girls?

15      A.   Yes.

16      Q.   Was your brother one of the boys who was taken to the  
17          creek so far as you can tell us?

18      A.   Yes.

19      Q.   Do you know -- he is, I don't think, able to come to  
20          speak to the inquiry.

21      A.   No, he's in a nursing home, he's had a stroke. He  
22          can't -- he's bed bound now.

23      Q.   Has he spoken to you about what may have happened?

24      A.   Yes, he's spoken to me about being abused, sexually  
25          abused, at the creek and by one of the priests who used



1           to take him out to the little areas where they would go  
2           to Mass, like little sidings where, I suppose -- I don't  
3           know what you would call them here. They'd be like  
4           farms which were a bit way out so that people couldn't  
5           come to church but the priest would go and give them  
6           church and take an altar boy with him and he always took

7

8           Q. Has [REDACTED] told you what sort of age he was when this  
9           practice began?

10          A. No, he didn't say what age.

11          Q. Coming back to the question I think I asked you then,  
12          have you any sense at all of anybody from the welfare  
13          department coming to inspect the orphanage?

14          A. I think there was a man that used to come out called  
15          Mr Holback(?) and he was in charge of us. The  
16          Australian girls that were there, they could get them  
17          a job at about the age of 18 -- that's the working  
18          girls -- they would get them a job if they wanted to go.

19                 But he came and I told him that he had better find  
20          me a job because I can't stay here any longer, I've been  
21          here 10 years. He said, "No, no, you're  
22          a child migrant, you're here until you're 21." I said,  
23          "No, that's too old, I'll be dead then, I need to go",  
24          and they got me a job.

25          Q. I'll come to look at that in a moment with you,

1 Michaela.

2 Before that, you've already told us about nuns  
3 hitting children and, in particular, the use of a cane  
4 and I think the handle of a bell. Were there anything  
5 other ways in which nuns hit children?

6 A. They'd just slap them across the face and use the cane.  
7 They always used the cane.

8 Q. How often did this sort of thing happen?

9 A. Oh, just for a minor thing, you know, if you were caught  
10 in a little group of three, they'd think you were  
11 talking -- this is out in the yard -- and you'd get  
12 called in and they would just hit you with the bamboo  
13 because you were not allowed to talk.

14 Q. Did the nuns offer any sort of emotional support to the  
15 children?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Did anybody?

18 A. No. I don't remember them being nice to us.

19 Q. What was the environment like then, would you say?

20 A. It was like -- I don't know so much about the boys, but  
21 us girls, we were petrified of them, and if you didn't  
22 go -- when you'd go to church, which was most days you  
23 had to go, and if you didn't line up for communion,  
24 they'd call you back and say, "Why didn't you go, what  
25 sins have you committed?" and so we would just line up

1           and get communion because we knew that they would ask us  
2           why we didn't do it. No, we were scared of them,  
3           absolutely petrified of them.

4       Q. How would you describe your own personality at that  
5       time?

6       A. I was like a timid little mouse because I thought if  
7       I step out of line, I'll get belted with the cane.  
8       There were some girls there who would talk back to them  
9       and they would get flogged. But I never did, no way.

10      Q. As you got older, towards 17 and 18, did your attitude  
11      change towards the nuns?

12      A. No, not really, no, because once you were a working  
13      girl -- well, you could speak up a little bit more, you  
14      could speak up, but no, we still were afraid of them  
15      because they were the power, really. There was only the  
16      nuns and the kids and we were on 3,000 acres of land.  
17      There was nothing you could do. Some of them used to  
18      run away, but they always came back. The police would  
19      bring them back.

20      Q. You have told us, I think, you were there for about  
21      10 years. Does that mean -- you left at the age of 18,  
22      is that right?

23      A. Yes, I left at 18.

24      Q. Would that be some time in 1964?

25      A. 1965. I left in 1965.

1 Q. So far as the orphanage itself was concerned with regard  
2 to the numbers of children, had that remained relatively  
3 constant throughout your period?

4 A. Yes, I think there were about the same amount of  
5 children there.

6 Q. So still young children coming in then?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. So far as child migrants were concerned, were you  
9 conscious of children coming from other countries being  
10 migrated to Australia?

11 A. Yes, there were some children there from other  
12 countries. There were children there from Malta.

13 Q. What about children from Scotland? Were you conscious  
14 of any other children from Scotland?

15 A. No. I remember there was another English girl there,  
16 [REDACTED]. There were a few other English girls there,  
17 yes, there were.

18 Q. Do I take it from what you've said that, as you've  
19 already explained, really, by far the greatest majority  
20 of children at the orphanage were Australian throughout  
21 your whole period there?

22 A. Yes.

23 MR MacAULAY: I'm about to move on to life after  
24 St Joseph's.

25 LADY SMITH: Should we take the lunch break now? I think

1           that would make sense.

2           Michaela, we'll take the lunch break just now and

3           I will sit again at 2 o'clock --

4       A.   Thank you.

5       LADY SMITH:  -- if that's all right with you and you have

6           time to get something to eat and relax.

7       (12.57 pm)

8                               (The lunch adjournment)

9       (2.00 pm)

10      LADY SMITH:  Michaela, are you ready for us to carry on?

11      A.   Yes, I am.

12      LADY SMITH:  Thank you.

13               Mr MacAulay.

14      MR MacAULAY:  You've told the inquiry, Michaela, how the

15           fact that you didn't have glasses blighted your

16           education at St Joseph's.  Did you ever get glasses

17           before you left St Joseph's?

18      A.   Yes, I did.

19      Q.   When did that happen?

20      A.   The Mother Superior called me down to the convent to

21           read a letter she had got from [REDACTED] because he was

22           away at the boarding school and because he was very

23           smart, so she gave me the letter to read and I just held

24           it up like that (indicating).  She said, "Put the letter

25           down", and I just kept going like that (indicating).

1           She said, "What's wrong with you?" and I said, "I can't  
2           see it properly." So she sent me for glasses and by  
3           then I was nearly 18.

4           Q. Just so we can get this in the evidence, when you say  
5           "like that", you're holding your hands within an inch or  
6           two of your face?

7           A. Yes, holding the letter close to my eyes. I couldn't  
8           see it.

9           Q. Did you speak to the Mother Superior at all about why  
10          you hadn't had glasses before that?

11          A. No. As children, as we were growing up, you didn't have  
12          any contact with the Mother Superior. She was in the  
13          convent and she didn't come to the children and we never  
14          saw her.

15          Q. Did she say to you, "Why didn't you have glasses"? Did  
16          she talk about it?

17          A. No, she just said, "You should be like your brother,  
18          look at this letter he's written, he's very clever."  
19          I said, "Oh well" -- I didn't have glasses, I couldn't  
20          see properly, so she sent me into Rockhampton and I got  
21          glasses.

22          Q. Did you get the glasses then before you actually left?

23          A. Yes.

24          Q. Coming back to that, you did tell us this morning how it  
25          came to be that you essentially insisted on leaving

1           in that although you were being told you had to stay  
2           until you were 21, you said you would not do that;  
3           is that right?

4           A. Yes.

5           Q. And what response did that have?

6           A. Well, it went to the Mother Superior and she said she'd  
7           see what she could do and then they got met a job out in  
8           the west of Queensland.

9           Q. When you say "they", who are the "they"?

10          A. The nuns and the state, I suppose, the state government,  
11          because we were classed then as state wards, so they  
12          found me a job.

13          Q. Can you tell us a little bit about that job and the  
14          experience itself?

15          A. The job was in a town called Richmond, a tiny little  
16          town, and it's surrounded by sheep stations, which are,  
17          I suppose, thousands of acres of sheep. So the lady had  
18          four sons and she also used to take in boarders from  
19          those sheep stations. They'd drop the children off to  
20          her on a Friday -- sorry, on a Monday, they would have  
21          school all week, and then their parents would come and  
22          pick them up on Friday and they'd go back to the  
23          stations. So she boarded children from those acres of  
24          sheep stations. So she boarded them and she also had  
25          a child kindergarten where her husband would go round in

1           a little bus and pick up the children round town and  
2           bring them out there for a half day, just playing  
3           together and having like a little kindergarten.

4       Q. Was your job helping with looking after the children?

5       A. Yes, helped to look after the children, her own children  
6           and the house.

7       Q. Did you stay in the house?

8       A. Yes, I stayed in the house.

9       Q. And how did you find that experience, staying with that  
10           family?

11      A. They were a lovely family, yes, they were very good.

12      Q. You moved on from there, though. I think you tell us in  
13           your statement that your ambition at that time was to  
14           become a nurse; is that correct?

15      A. Yes.

16      Q. Did you take some steps to fulfil that ambition?

17      A. I said to the lady, after I was there about 12 months,  
18           "Look, I don't want to stay here anymore, there's got to  
19           be more to life than being here", and she said, "What  
20           do you want to do?" I said, "I think I'll be a nurse",  
21           and she said, "You wouldn't be able to be a nurse  
22           because you haven't been educated." I thought, that's  
23           what I want to do, and she said, "We'll write to some  
24           hospitals." So she helped me write a letter to all  
25           these hospitals and one of them took me on as a trainee



1 nurse. So she arranged for me to get on the train and  
2 off I went to this little town in the north of  
3 Queensland and started nursing up there.

4 Q. But did you end up in fact becoming an enrolled nurse?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Did you then spend some time in the nursing profession?

7 A. Yes. I stayed in the nursing profession in -- I stayed  
8 up there for a couple of years. Then I moved to another  
9 town and then I eventually moved down to Brisbane.

10 I was still nursing. Then I moved back up north, I was  
11 still nursing. Then I sort of went to Sydney. By that  
12 stage I was in my 20s and went to Sydney and I just  
13 stayed nursing. Then I moved to the Sunshine Coast of  
14 Queensland and got a job in the hospital there, a little  
15 private hospital. I was there for a little while and  
16 I thought, I think I'll be a vet nurse, so I studied and  
17 became a veterinary nurse, and while I was doing that,  
18 I worked for the vet and then I thought, I'll open  
19 myself a little pet shop and I did that too.

20 Q. So from what you've said, your career both in nursing  
21 and indeed in business, if I can call it that, has been  
22 reasonably successful?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And you have a partner, is that right?

25 A. I have a husband, yes.

1 Q. Can I ask you a little bit about your brother [REDACTED].  
2 We've already talked about him. You've told us that  
3 he was a clever boy and indeed he went on to the  
4 secondary school, which was a boarding arrangement, is  
5 that correct --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. -- because it was so far away?

8 A. It was a fair way away, yes.

9 Q. What happened to [REDACTED] then after he had finished his  
10 schooling?

11 A. When he finished the high school, by that stage he would  
12 have been 18, and he won a scholarship to go to teacher  
13 training college, so he went and became a teacher.

14 Q. But did things not work out for him?

15 A. No. After that, he wasn't teaching very long and he  
16 sort of -- life just didn't deal him out very good  
17 cards.

18 He left teaching and he just went from place to  
19 place, lived on the streets eventually, had no work, and  
20 got into the drink. He was sort of drinking and smoking  
21 and had nowhere to live. He lived in a hotel here and  
22 there and just lived in the parks and on the benches on  
23 the street benches.

24 Q. You've already told us what you understand his  
25 experiences to have been when he was at St Joseph's --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. -- and in particular in connection with the sexual  
3 abuse.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. The way you put it is that:

6 "For [REDACTED] everything fell apart."

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Do you associate in any way how his life fell apart with  
9 the way he might have been treated at St Joseph's?

10 A. I always felt that that was what was the cause of him  
11 just -- his life falling apart, yes.

12 Q. I think you told us earlier that he's now in a care  
13 home; is that right?

14 A. Yes, he's in a nursing home.

15 Q. And is that close to where you are?

16 A. Yes. He had a stroke when he was in Melbourne and  
17 I sort of got in touch with them and said, no, he can't  
18 stay there, bring him up. So he got flown up to the  
19 Sunshine Coast by the air ambulance and then I had  
20 arranged for him to go into a nursing home down in  
21 Noosa.

22 Q. Do you look after his affairs?

23 A. I do now, yes.

24 Q. I think it is the case that [REDACTED] provided to the  
25 Migrants Trust a redress statement; is that correct?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. I can tell you, the inquiry has that statement. I think  
3 he may have also provided a statement to the Australian  
4 Royal Commission.

5 A. Yes, I have, for [REDACTED] yes.

6 Q. Were you yourself in contact with the Australian Royal  
7 Commission?

8 A. Only through paperwork.

9 Q. But you sent some paperwork in to them?

10 A. Yes. There's a lawyer from the commission working with  
11 me for [REDACTED].

12 Q. I think it is the case that the Australian Royal  
13 Commission had a case study into St Joseph's in Neerkol?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. I think it was case study 26.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And they made findings in relation to, in particular,  
18 sexual abuse; is that right?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Again, the inquiry can look at that.

21 Can I then go back to your family set-up. I asked  
22 you about this at the beginning of your evidence. You  
23 never met your mother again after you left Aberdeen?

24 A. No.

25 Q. And indeed, apart from the lady who took you out,

1           you have really no recollection of your mother?

2           A. None at all.

3           Q. But did you make some enquiries after you'd left  
4           St Joseph's to find out about your family?

5           A. Yes, I started making enquiries when I went into  
6           nursing. It was a small hospital and most of the people  
7           there, they had families close by. A couple of the  
8           girls said, why aren't you going home for your days off,  
9           and I said, oh, I'm just -- my parents are working and  
10          it's too much trouble to have me there.

11          Finally, one girl said, "I don't think you've got  
12          anybody to go to, so you can come home to us", so I went  
13          to their parents.

14          But it was ... sorry, I've forgotten what you asked  
15          me.

16          Q. I was asking you about seeking to make contact with your  
17          own family.

18          A. Yes. So when I was nursing, then I started writing  
19          letters to Nazareth House and to the Red Cross and the  
20          Salvation Army, and nobody could help me. I always got  
21          the same reply, that I was illegitimate.

22          Q. So far as Nazareth House was concerned, did you get any  
23          records at all from Nazareth House?

24          A. No.

25          Q. Did you also involve the Child Migrants Trust in your

1 search?

2 A. Yes. That was at the end of 1980s. A girlfriend in  
3 Sydney knew I'd been looking. I'd moved to Sydney by  
4 then. She found a little article in the back of  
5 a magazine about the Child Migrants Trust and she said,  
6 "They might be able to help you." She sent it up to me  
7 and I rang them up.

8 Q. And did they help you?

9 A. Yes, they did.

10 Q. I think in paragraph 104 of your statement, you set out  
11 what you were able to discover in relation to your  
12 mother and your father. And in particular, as you've  
13 told us, your mother had a relationship with your father  
14 and you and [REDACTED] were the result of that relationship.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And you also discovered that she then married another  
17 man in 1951; is that right?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And that was just after you'd been placed in  
20 Nazareth House?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. But before that, I think she had been married to the man  
23 whose surname you had when you were in Nazareth House;  
24 is that right?

25 A. [REDACTED], yes.

1 Q. And I think he had been killed in the war?

2 A. Yes, he had.

3 Q. Did you discover that in relation to her second marriage  
4 that she had had three children?

5 A. She has three children to her husband, the second  
6 marriage, yes.

7 Q. And have you had contact with them?

8 A. Yes. Through the Child Migrants Trust. They found  
9 three children from that marriage. The eldest chap, he  
10 didn't want to know me at all. The second was a brother  
11 who I'm actually going to see tomorrow. Then there was  
12 a daughter. She doesn't want to have anything to do  
13 with me now because I had a child and I put her up for  
14 adoption about 18 months after I left the orphanage, and  
15 she said that I'd done the exact same thing as our  
16 mother did, so that was that.

17 Q. You've also investigated your father's side of the  
18 family.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And what have you discovered there?

21 A. My father, [REDACTED] he was already divorced  
22 when he met my mother, and he had two children from his  
23 marriage, a son who lives in Israel and a daughter who  
24 is in New York.

25 Q. And are you in contact with them?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. So do I take it that, looking at it overall, you've made  
3 contact with some members of your family, both on your  
4 mother's side and your father's side?

5 A. That's right, yes.

6 Q. Have you found that beneficial?

7 A. Oh yes, yes.

8 Q. The other thing you tell us, I think, is that you were  
9 selected by the Child Migrants Trust to come to the  
10 United Kingdom when the Prime Minister of the day,  
11 Gordon Brown, delivered the apology to the  
12 child migrants.

13 A. Yes, I came over for the apology.

14 Q. Were you present when that happened?

15 A. Yes, I was.

16 Q. What was your reaction to that?

17 A. Well, it was like, well, it's the Prime Minister and  
18 he's come out here and he's asking us all where we went  
19 and how we were treated. I felt at that time he didn't  
20 class himself as the Prime Minister of Britain, he was  
21 there asking us how our lives were, he's just like  
22 a genuine man, any other man that would be talking to  
23 you. He seemed like he'd had the Prime Minister halo  
24 removed and he was more interested in us at that time.

25 Q. Did you talk to him?



1 A. Yes, I did.

2 Q. You've told us about what you see the impact of being at  
3 St Joseph's as being on your brother [REDACTED] What about  
4 yourself?

5 A. I just -- the impact was I had to get on with my life  
6 even though I had no -- very little education because if  
7 I did fall down there's no one to pick me up so I had to  
8 get on with what I wanted to do and what I thought was  
9 best for myself.

10 I did go back there, they had a reunion and I went  
11 back, but it wasn't for the nuns, it was for all of us  
12 that had been there and we did have a good time.

13 But when I think of the nuns -- and I think  
14 sometimes that they were really rotten to us and they  
15 should have had a bit more empathy for the fact that  
16 none of the children there, including us, had parents.  
17 They should have had more empathy for us being there but  
18 they were just -- to me, a lot of them were just angry,  
19 angry people.

20 Q. So far as you're aware, are there other children who  
21 went there who, to your knowledge, have suffered in  
22 their lives?

23 A. Yes. Yes, I have -- there's the girl, out of the six of  
24 us that were together, the youngest girl, she left and  
25 she just feels that she needs to be in an area where

1 she's told what to do all the time, like we were there.

2 So when she left the orphanage, she became a nun and  
3 sort of lived with the nuns. Then she left that and she  
4 joined the army, where -- again, a sort of regimented  
5 lifestyle. Then she sort of got into a gambling habit  
6 and gambled a lot because she said she had nowhere to go  
7 and no one to help her.

8 Anyway, since then she's given away the gambling and  
9 she lives, not in a commune, but she lives in an area  
10 where there's a lot of people that go to church and so  
11 she relies on them a lot. So her life has -- she likes  
12 to be in a regimented type of a life and doesn't want to  
13 get out on her own. She suffers from a lot of  
14 depression.

15 Q. She was one of the six of your group?

16 A. The younger girl, yes.

17 Q. And there was yourself and [REDACTED]

18 The other three, do you know what happened to the  
19 other three?

20 A. Yes. That girl's brother, he's still up in Rockhampton,  
21 up that way. He's fine. I think [REDACTED] went up there  
22 and spent Christmas with him this year.

23 The two older ones, I don't know where they are now.

24 Q. In that section of your statement, putting forward your  
25 final thoughts, you say:

1           "The worst thing [you] feel about having been in  
2           care is the lack of education."

3       A. Yes. I think to me, the lack of education, if I'd been  
4           educated, I think I could have been anything I really  
5           wanted to be, if I was educated. Whereas even when  
6           I went into nursing I really struggled with exams and  
7           I think a lot of that was because I was just not  
8           educated.

9       Q. The other thing you say is you really didn't have a  
10          choice, in the sense of being given the choice, of  
11          whether or not you went to Australia.

12      A. No. They asked us did we want to go and I said yes.

13      Q. But you were 8 at the time.

14      A. Yes, [REDACTED], yes.

15      Q. But you are happy in Australia, I think you tell us.

16      A. Yes. You know, I'm very happy with my life now, yes.

17      Q. And you do have an Australian passport?

18      A. Yes, I have an Australian passport.

19      Q. But you do consider yourself to be Scottish?

20      A. Oh yes.

21      Q. In paragraph 118 what you tell us then is that:

22           "[You] hope that this public inquiry will help  
23           people recognise that it wasn't just English children  
24           who went to Australia, there were many Scottish children  
25           as well."

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And you want to make that point?

3 A. Oh definitely, yes.

4 Q. I think what you tell us is that:

5 "[You] also know that Scottish children were sent to  
6 Rhodesia and Canada and in relation to all these  
7 children, [you] want them to be heard."

8 A. Oh definitely, yes. Yes, before it's too late, because  
9 they're getting older, like we are, I guess.

10 MR MacAULAY: Well, Michaela, thank you very much indeed for  
11 coming here to Scotland to give your evidence.

12 My Lady, the questions that I've been asked to ask  
13 I think I've asked as I have gone along.

14 LADY SMITH: Are there any outstanding applications for  
15 questions? No.

16 Michaela, that does complete all the questions  
17 we have for you today. You've been such a help, both in  
18 engaging with us to provide a clear written statement  
19 and coming here today to talk about your experiences.  
20 I'm so grateful to you. It's helped my education, if  
21 I can use that word that's in the forefront of your  
22 mind, and I really mean that. I'm very grateful to you.

23 A. Thank you.

24 LADY SMITH: I'm now able to let you go and I hope the rest  
25 of your time in Scotland is enjoyable.

1 A. Okay, thank you.

2 (The witness withdrew)

3 LADY SMITH: Mr MacAulay.

4 MR MacAULAY: I think we do have time for a read-in this  
5 afternoon, so that can perhaps be the next thing on the  
6 agenda.

7 LADY SMITH: Let's move on and do that.

8 Witness statement of "JOHN" (read)

9 MS MACLEOD: My Lady, this is a statement from an applicant  
10 who wishes to remain anonymous and to use the pseudonym  
11 "John". His statement can be found at WIT-1-000000316:

12 "My name is John. I was born in 1940. My contact  
13 details are known to the inquiry.

14 "I think I was born in Greenwich, England, but  
15 I don't remember a thing about my childhood. I know  
16 I was put into a convent as a young child and that I was  
17 sent to Australia as a child migrant in 1952, but I was  
18 never aware that I had any family whatsoever until 1966,  
19 when I was contacted by my uncle.

20 "When I got to the age of about 16 or 17, I tried to  
21 forget everything that had happened to me as a child.  
22 I felt that I'd had to start my life over when I came to  
23 Australia, so I pushed it out of my memory.

24 "I have since found out my mother's name and all  
25 I know of my father is that he was a New Zealander.

1 None of the family I later spoke to would say much about  
2 him at all. My mother and father were not married and  
3 I learnt that my mother died when I was 2 years old.  
4 I know nothing about whether I had any brothers or  
5 sisters.

6 "When my mother died, one of my aunts was going to  
7 look after me, but she had just had a baby that died.  
8 The Catholic priest told her that it would be better if  
9 I went into a home for little while and then go back to  
10 my aunt, that never happened. I was put in a convent  
11 and just went from one convent to the next.

12 "I understand that records relating to me show that  
13 I was put into Nazareth House in Carlisle at first.  
14 Then, on [REDACTED] 1950, I was transferred to  
15 Nazareth House at Lasswade near Edinburgh."

16 That document is at NAZ.001.007.8941:

17 "I can't remember a thing being in either of these  
18 convents or even what they looked like. I can't  
19 remember any education whatsoever when I was in Britain  
20 and I can't remember seeing any visitors. I remember  
21 nothing at all of that time in my life.

22 "Apparently, my uncle went looking for me at the  
23 convent after the war, when I would have been 5 or  
24 6 years old. When he got there, the people told him  
25 I had already gone to Australia, although that wouldn't

1 have been the case. I don't know who would have told  
2 them that.

3 "The only thing I remember about how kids were  
4 selected to go to Australia was a chap came to the  
5 convent one day and asked who wanted to go. I don't  
6 know where he was from or who he was. To me at that age  
7 he was just a man.

8 "We were all in one room as he spoke to us and  
9 I think I was probably the first to put my hand up.  
10 I don't know why I was the first, I'd never heard of  
11 Australia before. I don't remember getting anything  
12 like a health check or what then happened, but the next  
13 thing I know I was on the boat and going to Australia.

14 "According to records that the Scottish Child Abuse  
15 Inquiry have, I left Nazareth House on [REDACTED] 1952.  
16 I believe that is correct."

17 That record is at NAZ.001.007.8947:

18 "I went by train to Tilbury Docks in London, but I'm  
19 not sure if anybody went with me. I imagine there would  
20 have been someone but I don't recall. I had one little  
21 bag with me and very little in it.

22 "I remember when we got on the boat, the SS Ormonde,  
23 at Tilbury there were heaps of people waving their  
24 families off. There were 39 boys like me all being  
25 migrated but there was nobody there to say goodbye to

1       us. I wasn't aware at the time whether there were any  
2       other children from Scotland other than a boy who had  
3       been in the same convent I had been in. The others were  
4       from all around and a lot of them were from London.

5       "After a fashion there were two gentlemen looking  
6       after us 39 boys on the boat but we ran amok. We  
7       stopped at every port and apparently they had arranged  
8       for us to go to a walk around where are we were.

9       "I am aware the inquiry have a copy of the ship's  
10      manifest which shows that we arrived in Fremantle,  
11      Western Australia, on [REDACTED] 1952. That sounds about  
12      right."

13      That document is at NAA.001.001.1189 and it's the  
14      passenger list for the Ormonde with John listed as one  
15      of the passengers at page 1215:

16      "Some of the boys in my group got off at Fremantle  
17      and the rest of us were going on to Tasmania.  
18      I remember when those boys got off and we were told  
19      we were going on to Tasmania that I said I wasn't going  
20      there, I was going to Australia. I didn't have a clue  
21      at that time that Tasmania was part of Australia.

22      "Once those passengers that were staying in  
23      Western Australia disembarked at Fremantle, the ship  
24      carried on to Melbourne. When we arrived, a lot of the  
25      other boys went straight on to Tasmania but the other



1 boy from the convent and I had to stay in Melbourne and  
2 be quarantined for a few days.

3 "We all had our clothes taken off us and we had to  
4 go through some special liquid to be fumigated. We were  
5 given some clothes to wear and then we went through a  
6 lot of medical tests. Apparently, there had been a lot  
7 of cattle at the home we had been at in Scotland and  
8 they were worried that we might be carrying  
9 foot-and-mouth disease.

10 "John Bosco Boys' Town was run by the  
11 Salesian Brothers, a Catholic organisation, and had only  
12 been open since 1945. It was out in the countryside  
13 near Hobart, where there was a lot of bush and it was  
14 very basic. There was a lot of farmland.

15 "We were the first boarders at Boys' Town, although  
16 they used to also bring local boys into school there.  
17 The boys ranged in age from about 9 or 10 and apparently  
18 I was the oldest one.

19 "The staff were all brothers and priests and I don't  
20 think there was a great lot of them for the amount of  
21 boys that were there. Those whose names I remember are  
22 Fathers LHH, LHE, LHG and Father LHF, who  
23 was American. Father LHH was in charge when I first  
24 came and then Father LHE took over.

25 "After four days in Melbourne, the other boy and

1 I got on the boat called The Taroona, which used to sail  
2 between Melbourne and Burnie in Tasmania.

3 "After we arrived in Burnie, we got the train to  
4 Glenorchy, and one of the brothers from Boys' Town  
5 picked us up from the station there. At time the train  
6 journey was about 6 or 7 hours long and the two of us  
7 were on our own the whole time. That was a really long  
8 day with very little to eat, if we had anything.

9 "I don't remember much about my first day at  
10 Boys' Town other than when we arrived all the clothes we  
11 had been given in Melbourne were taken off us and  
12 we were given a pair of shorts and a T-shirt and thrown  
13 a pair of shoes. We were told to put those shoes on  
14 whether they fitted us or not.

15 "We would get up at 6 o'clock in the morning and  
16 have a wash, go to church, come back and have breakfast.  
17 After breakfast, we'd go to school. Then at lunch we'd  
18 have something to eat and a bit of a play in the  
19 playground before going back into class.

20 "Sometimes after class in the afternoon we would go  
21 back into church. There was quite a bit of religious  
22 instruction. After that, we'd have dinner before going  
23 out into the playground again. After that, we would  
24 have a shower every night and then, around 7.30 or  
25 8 o'clock, we went to bed.

1           "Every now and again during the night one of the  
2 brothers would come up and ask whoever was asleep to put  
3 their hand up. If you put your hand up, they'd come  
4 around and belt you. You learned pretty quick to only  
5 raise your hand once.

6           "The food was pretty poor, sometimes it was very  
7 poor, but we didn't know any better. That was just what  
8 we were used to eating. We used to get a tremendous  
9 amount of mince three or four times a week or sausage.  
10 There was never a roast or anything like that. We got  
11 whatever was the cheapest thing they could buy. If a  
12 boy didn't like what he was given or couldn't eat it,  
13 that was it. You would just have to take it or leave it  
14 and go hungry.

15          "Winter or summer we wore shorts all the time we  
16 just had to wear whatever shoes we were given. It  
17 didn't matter whether they fitted or not and my shoes  
18 were always far too small.

19          "We used to play a lot of cricket and soccer in the  
20 playground and in the rest of the grounds. I liked  
21 sport and enjoyed that.

22          "Some of the local businesses used to come to  
23 Boys' Town on what was called Regatta Day. They would  
24 take us kids down to the show and, being kids, it was  
25 something we looked forward to. We didn't have any

1 money to spend, we would just go and look, and they  
2 might buy us an ice cream or a drink but that was it.

3 "The school was part of the building but I don't  
4 think the priests and the brothers were actually  
5 teachers. I couldn't read or write when I came to  
6 Boys' Town and although it wasn't my choice, I wasn't  
7 allowed to go to the school. Quite a few of the other  
8 boys were in the same position as me.

9 "I spent too much time on the farm and in the  
10 orchard instead of in the classrooms and when I left  
11 school, I couldn't even spell my own name.

12 "There was no dental care whatsoever. I did have  
13 a couple of nights in hospital after my nose was broken  
14 when I was accidentally hit with the ball while we were  
15 playing cricket. Other than that, I don't recall much  
16 about healthcare.

17 "Father <sup>LHG</sup> worked on the farm and I got on  
18 very well with him. I spent most of my time on the farm  
19 instead of going to school but I never got paid for it.

20 "There was no birthday celebrations and very little  
21 was done at Christmas in my first year at Boys' Town.  
22 Things changed in the second year a little bit in that  
23 they used to billet us out to different families in the  
24 community for the holidays.

25 "I went to people by the name of Breen, who I got on

1 well with. The second time I went for Christmas  
2 I really enjoyed it, but a couple of days after  
3 Christmas Mrs Breen died suddenly. I went back to  
4 Boys' Town and they tried to send me out to other people  
5 but I bluntly refused. I had lost my mother and father  
6 and now I was just getting to know somebody and I had  
7 lost them too. I was determined I wasn't going to  
8 another family no matter what anybody said.

9 "I never went again. At Christmas I just stopped  
10 at the school, working on the farm, milking the cows and  
11 looking after the pigs. Sometimes I was the only boy  
12 there with two or three of the priests.

13 "I wasn't aware of any inspectors or anybody  
14 official coming to Boys' Town while I was there.  
15 I certainly never saw anyone nor did I speak to anybody.

16 "I got on with most of the other boys and for the  
17 most part we all stuck together, but there wasn't really  
18 anybody that a boy could talk to if they had any  
19 emotional problems.

20 "Not long after we arrived in Tasmania, one of the  
21 priests asked us if we would write to England and find  
22 out if we had any family. I still remember if as if it  
23 was yesterday that I told him, 'I live in Australia,  
24 I don't know anyone in England and I have no intention  
25 of writing to find out.' I don't know why I felt like

1           that, but I didn't know anybody in England and I wasn't  
2           going back there under any circumstances.

3                 "We had no possessions we could call our own and we  
4           never got any money for anything. They did have what  
5           they called a lolly shop which would open once  
6           a fortnight. We could go up and they would give us so  
7           many lollies but never any money.

8                 "I think quite a few boys had problems with  
9           bed-wetting, although I did not. The brothers used to  
10          deal with it by rubbing the boys' noses in it.

11                "The brothers were very strict and punishments were  
12          by the strap, which was leather, or the cane. They  
13          never used anything else but you wouldn't want much  
14          more. I often saw boys being hit by all the different  
15          brothers.

16                "I was hit only twice, although I should maybe have  
17          got it more often because I was pretty blunt as a kid.  
18          Once I deserved it and another time I consider I didn't.  
19          That particular time I got blamed for something I didn't  
20          do and Father <sup>LHG</sup> [REDACTED] came from behind and whacked me  
21          hard.

22                "I will never know how Father <sup>LHH</sup> [REDACTED] didn't kill  
23          one lad a few weeks after we got to Boys' Town. The lad  
24          was a French boy who came over at the same time as us  
25          and whose mother didn't even know he had been sent over.



1 This lad always had on a nice thick coat and  
2 Father <sup>LHH</sup> told him several times to take it off.  
3 Eventually, in front of everybody, Father <sup>LHH</sup> beat  
4 this lad so badly with his open hand, all over his body,  
5 that I was sure he was going to kill him. I don't know  
6 how this boy's mother found out but she did and the boy  
7 was sent back.

8 "Brother <sup>LHF</sup> was a real brute of a man. He used  
9 to do body building and he picked me up by one hand one  
10 day and threw me up against a concrete wall. He had no  
11 reason for doing it, he was just that type of bloke. He  
12 liked to show his authority and even the other brothers  
13 and priests were frightened of him.

14 "I wasn't the only one. I reckon that if the 39  
15 boys who came over from Britain were asked almost all  
16 would say they got the same treatment from  
17 Brother <sup>LHF</sup> " --

18 LADY SMITH: Ms MacLeod, I'm going to take a short break  
19 now, just 10 or 15 minutes.

20 (2.36 pm)

21 (A short break)

22 (2.51 pm)

23 MS MACLEOD: With her Ladyship's leave, that completes the  
24 evidence for today. We have reached a natural break and  
25 I'll resume this read-in on Thursday morning at

1           10 o'clock.

2           (2.52 pm)

3                   (The inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am

4                           on Thursday, 5 March 2020)

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25



## I N D E X

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

"WATTO" (sworn) (via video link) .....	1
Questions from MS MacLEOD .....	2
"MICHAELA" (affirmed) .....	56
Questions from MR MacAULAY .....	56
Witness statement of "JOHN" (read) .....	113

1

2

3

4

5