

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MHW

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is MHW. My date of birth is [REDACTED], 1938. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in England but my mother was Irish. They couldn't have babies out of wedlock in Ireland so she went to England and I was born there. I found out afterwards that she passed me on to someone else. She handed me over to the midwife and I was then handed over for adoption. I was then sent to an orphanage in Scotland, Nazareth House in Aberdeen.
3. I was initially in an orphanage somewhere in Sussex or somewhere for two years then transferred to Nazareth House. I didn't know anything about it. I only know I was a [REDACTED]

Life in care - Scotland

Nazareth House, Aberdeen

General

4. Nazareth House was a huge building. There were quite a few boys there, over a hundred. We would go outside into the hallway and sit on the concrete seats and were checked by the nuns, then we would go back inside. We used to go to school at three years old. We had a kindergarten. Then when we were older we went to a

state school. We walked there in all weathers, snow and all. It was a kilometre or two away. I can't remember the name of it.

5. Nazareth House was three storeys high. On the first floor there was a big hallway and a dining room. On the second storey were dormitories and on the third there were more beds.
6. Over eighty children slept in the dormitory. The beds had kapok mattresses which were tiny things. We were always cold so we were given old style army blankets. They were quite warm. It was all boys in the dormitory. There were boys on one half of the floor and girls on the other half. There were all ages of children there. The same nuns ran both sides.
7. When the air raid sirens started we had to hide under two army bunkers until the second siren rang, giving the all clear. Apparently Nazareth House was hit during the war. I wasn't there. I remember going to England, I think, because the place was getting rebuilt after being bombed. I then went back from there to Scotland. Wherever it was I wasn't there very long. I don't know where it was offhand but I know it was in England. We took two trains. One to London then one back to Aberdeen. It was the same going to the boats.

Mornings

8. We had to get up early in the morning. We did our jobs, then we had breakfast and then back to our jobs if we hadn't finished. The nuns would want to know why you hadn't finished and you'd get the strap from Sister MHX in the hall again afterwards with her rosary beads. And while the kids were out playing you had to do it again.

Mealtimes

9. If you didn't eat breakfast you got no lunch. I saw many of the kids being forced to eat the food. They tried to force them with a spoon. They would shove it down. The next thing the kid would bring it all up again. If you didn't want it you were forced to

eat it. It didn't happen to me. It was the fat nun that did it, Sister **MHX**. She spent most of the time with the older boys. She did it to show her authority.

10. The meals weren't bad. If you turned the plate upside down the food wouldn't fall out. It was cold stew and cold porridge. I didn't complain about the food so much, just how we were treated there.
11. We got sandwiches from Nazareth House for lunch when we were at school. The nuns brought them in the little bus they had. They made sure you ate them.

Bedtime

12. They were short of nuns, either that or they didn't know how to look after kids. If you wet your bed, the next morning you were terrified. They rubbed your nose in it, then we had to wash our own sheets in the morning. You would walk on them with the shower running. There were a few who wet the bed and that included me. I received that treatment from the nuns.
13. They brought the doctor in and he said it was nerves. I can't remember his name. He was a local doctor. He didn't speak to us individually. We had to all be together and the nun was there. We couldn't say what we wanted to when the nun was there. Sister **LSG** told us what the doctor said. You still wet the bed. You still had to wash the sheets out and hang them up. If the sheets weren't dry you slept on the mattress. That didn't bother you so much. It was how we were treated.

Washing and bathing/Hygiene

14. We washed our face and hands in troughs. The showers were open plan and the floor had tiles. You would have a shower about three times a week.

Leisure time

15. We got back from school at three o'clock and did little jobs in the garden or swept the yard. Things like that to keep us occupied. There was leisure time but what could

you do except walk around and talk to your mates? If it rained you were in the hall. There were no toys. We didn't know what toys were. I used to suck my fingers. If they saw you, the nuns would hit you on the knuckles with a cane or the strap.

16. As I said, the girls were on one side of the orphanage and the boys on the other. We saw them in the playground and in the oval, which was the sports area where they had games.
17. Nazareth House had the oval and a little farm. There was a bloke there who looked after the farm. There were four or five cows. Part of his job was to milk them. He looked after the pigs and the farm there. I can't remember his name. I didn't do anything on the farm. We put up with a lot there, but still, many people had to put up with worse.

Trips and holidays

18. We didn't go on any trips in Nazareth House. I don't remember being taken on a picnic or anything like that. I can't recall ever going any holidays either.

Schooling

19. When we went to school we wore a pair of shorts, a thin shirt, a little jumper, shoes and socks. We had to hold each other's hand and walk down the road to school. I remember the school was cold. It was an overcrowded state school so schooling wasn't much but you had to be there. There were over a hundred kids there, not just from the orphanage, but kids from the outside attended too. I met a few friends there.

Healthcare

20. We didn't receive any other medical attention apart from when the doctor came to speak to us about wetting the bed. The government dentist would come once a year. He came in a van, for a week or two and he'd check all the kids teeth. I can't remember being seen but he was there. I never had a problem with my teeth or my health while I was there.

Religious instruction

21. I was baptised in Nazareth House so when I came out to Australia it was put down that I was a catholic. We had to go to church in the orphanage three times a week. We also had morning prayers, mass in the middle of the day at school and prayers at night. We would say an Our father, three Hail Mary's and a glory be to the father. The nun would walk into the dorm and tell you to say your night prayers.
22. If you were seen talking to someone in the church the nuns would come up to the back of you and tell you to get outside and you got the strap. That happened to me many a time.

Work

23. I was about eight when I started working. There were two of us that did the stairways. There were three lots of stairs and it was tiring. All the kids used the stairs and if kids walk on it when it's polished there were always footprints on it. The nun didn't like it. It had to be spotless, so that you could see through it, and you had to keep doing it. We used a big four gallon drum full of polish. It was called 'Relax' polish. The stairs were timber wood.
24. If you didn't do them properly Sister MHX, who was a big lady, would give you the strap across your legs with her rosary beads. If there was a mark on the stairs you got a whack straight across the back of your legs from her. She was older and she was cruel. I'm sure her name was MHX. This happened several times. You never forget things like that. Otherwise Nazareth House was alright, except for the big, heavy nun. She was middle aged and she was in charge of pretty much everything. There were two that looked after us and another for meals in the dining room. The other nun was nice. Her name was Sister LSG.

Christmas and Birthdays

25. There was nothing different about Christmas. It was treated as a normal day. We went to church in the morning but then we just did our normal jobs. There wasn't a

tree and we didn't receive any presents. We didn't celebrate our birthday so we didn't have a party. I didn't know when my birthday was until I came to Australia.

Visitors

26. We didn't receive any visits from a social worker. I didn't have contact with my mother while I was in Nazareth House. All that time I thought she was dead, but she wasn't dead. About fifteen years ago I went over to the UK and saw my mum. She sat at the end of the table and didn't say a word. She didn't want me. [REDACTED], my wife, asked her a lot of questions and she just sat there.

Emotional care/support

27. There was nobody to speak to at Nazareth House. Sister LSG [REDACTED], who was a big tall nun, was very good to us but you couldn't speak to her.

Nature and frequency of abuse

28. Thinking back on it now, what happened to us would be seen as abuse. Especially when we got a strap across your back when we were working. I had the same job all the time, polishing the stairways. Once you had a job you had to keep it.
29. We regularly all stood up in the hall and had to put our hands above our heads. If your hands were coming down you would be hit with a cane. We did this for about half an hour. This happened when the nuns wanted to know what kid had done something wrong and no-one owned up to it. We would all have to go into the hall. It was very uncomfortable. Sister MHX [REDACTED], the big heavy one done it the most. She was cruel. All she said was, "Get your hands up". When she came in everyone was terrified.
30. The job was too big for Sister MHX [REDACTED] or she was just too old to look after kids. There were too many kids. There were only about six nuns altogether, but there were the boys, a girls section and a little kids section.

Reporting of abuse

31. I did not report what happened to me at Nazareth House to anyone.

Migration*Selection/information*

32. When I was eight years old we were all taken into the hall at Nazareth House and the superior nun asked, "Who wants to go to Australia?". We didn't even know where that was. We all put our hands up. I remember I put my hand up and I remember feeling sorry for two kids, [REDACTED] and his twin brother [REDACTED]. They were standing beside me in the hall. We all put our hands up and [REDACTED] and I were picked but his brother couldn't go. A few weeks afterwards we were told we were going to Australia. Eight of us came over here I think.
33. The whole hall put their hands up when we were asked who wanted to go to Australia. We all put it up to get out of the place. We got some clothes, we then received some injections from the doctor. We got the train to London and then Southampton.

Leaving Scotland

34. I met friends when we came out to Australia. We went on the boat called the Ormonde. It had apparently been a troop carrier. Seven boys went from Nazareth House, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Albert McGregor, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and myself. Two girls came too. The girls called me up years ago. [REDACTED] was one of them. They told me that the same fat nun came to Geraldton to teach, where they were. They said she was kicked out after a year for belting the kids as she did in Scotland and was sent back.
35. There were two boats, the Asturia and the Ormonde. Both were full of migrants. We went with a woman, a caretaker. I don't know her name. She might have been from the welfare. We were kept in the back of the boat. We didn't know where everybody

else was. We didn't have any paperwork. I don't remember signing anything. We were just glad to get out of Nazareth House.

36. They gave me reading glasses but I threw them overboard and I never used them again. The journey took six weeks. We went to the dining room and we ate in a group but didn't mix with the others. The kids from Nazareth House were together but no other kids until we got off the boat. The caretaker was there. She had all the paperwork.

Life in care – receiving country

37. We walked down the plank when we got to Australia and all the other kids were there. We hadn't seen them the whole journey. First of all the caretaker put us in the number four shed. There were lots of tables and there were lots of kids. We had a big party and after that we got on four buses to Clontarf.

Clontarf Boy's Home, Perth, Australia

General

38. There were about four hundred to five hundred children in the shed. At Clontarf we got divided into who was going where as in staying at Clontarf or going to Castledare, Bindoon and Tarden. I stayed at Clontarf. ██████████ went to Tarden.

First day at institution

39. I was eight when I arrived in Australia. It took about twenty minutes to get to Clontarf. It was a massive big building. It was an orphanage first, then when the war started the army took it over. They handed it back to the Christian Brothers after the war.
40. It was massive but you had your mates there. There were six Brothers in Clontarf to look after over two hundred boys. There were also four Hungarian nuns. Brother ██████████ AKG was in charge. He then moved on and we got another Brother.

41. We were taken round to the quadrangle and everyone was divided in age to different places. I stayed in Clontarf. As soon as we got there the kids jumped into the river. We arrived in December and it was really hot.
42. It was completely different to Nazareth House. There were four or five dormitories all with different names. There was St Pat's, St Mary's and Sacred Heart. The 'wetty beds' were in a different dormitory. I was in St Pat's and the Sacred Heart. There were four rows of beds with thirty to forty kids in a dorm.
43. As I said, I went when I was eight and left when I was sixteen. There were all different ages of boys there. There were working boys there too. They were Australian and were put there by the government. When jobs came up they would go to them.

Mornings

44. At Clontarf we got up at seven o'clock. The brothers walked down the middle of the dormitory and got you up. There was Brother **MHY**, Brother Isaac and Brother **AKG**. He was in charge and he was alright. You got up, got a wash, got changed and went to church. After church you made your bed and then you went down for your breakfast. If it was a feast day we went to church twice. The church was in Clontarf.
45. Breakfast was porridge. It looked like glue but we had to eat it. We were also given milk to drink. When another boss came, Brother Acrid, we got toast and a cup of tea. I was about nine then. If you didn't eat the food you were given, you were not given anything else. All of us ate in a big dining room.
46. After breakfast we had our "charges" to do, this is what we called our jobs. My charge was to sweep the veranda and the hall.

Mealtimes

47. At lunch time we had stew and potatoes in the dining room and it was served cold. One kid would serve a table of twelve. There were so many there that by the time you got it, it was like glue. But you had to eat it or you would go without. For afternoon tea after school, we were given an apple.
48. In the evening we got two bits of bread with either jam or treacle and a cup of tea. The treacle was used to mix in with the pig feed and we got it too. It was called molasses. Some didn't like the taste of it but I didn't mind it. There were four gallon tins of jam. We would get cheap jam, like plum jam, from a place in West Perth.
49. Even in the dining room, if you didn't eat it, it was poured down your neck nearly. Discipline was heavy at Clontarf. The food was forced down children's necks. It didn't happen to me. I hid it in my pocket, or in a handkerchief. Brother **MDI** started that force feeding caper first, but it didn't work for him then **MHY** did it. Brother **MHY** was the truck driver.

Bedtime

50. After tea and homework you would go to church, say the rosary then straight to bed for about nine thirty. The brothers would come to the dorms to check you were asleep. The brothers had two rooms off the dorms, one on each side. There was Brother **MHY**, Brother **MDI**, Brother **MHZ**, Brother Achary and Brother McGorn, who was one of the first ones there and he was good. It changed whenever they got transferred. Sometimes they would get transferred to Castledare. My Brothers were **MHY** and **MHZ**. Then in St Mary's dormitory, it was the same arrangement there.
51. I never got in trouble for talking in bed but other kids did. I felt nervous a lot, in fact most of the boys there were nervous. You think they'll forget but they won't forget. If you didn't sleep you were buggered the next day. All you could think of was what they were going to do to you. There was no forgiveness. The 'wetly beds' were in a separate dorm, down the bottom end.

Washing and bathing/Hygiene

52. There were showers there which were open plan. There were about twelve of them. Sometimes the showers would be freezing and sometimes they were really hot. We didn't know what they would be like. The brothers controlled the taps. You got dressed into the school uniform which was grey and maroon. The school was inside Clontarf. We were taught by the brothers.

Trips and holidays

53. We went to a place called Angel farm in Manjimup for our holidays. I also went to another farm in Koolan. I didn't go all the time as I was maybe [REDACTED]. So I went to two places. They were harvesting then. We would give them a hand but I didn't mind that. I was thirteen or fourteen at the time and I stayed for about four weeks in each place. We were taken there on the back of a truck with seats on the side. If it went round a corner you would tip out. We didn't have to work there. I enjoyed it. I went to Koolan with other boys, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They knew the owner of the farm. They had been there a couple of years before. It was quite good really. This was at Christmas time. It was called the Christmas holidays and we all looked forward to it, to get away from the place.
54. Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] were from Victoria Park and they used to come and pick me up the third Sunday of every month. They had two kids. I'd spend the day with them then get dropped off at night. Their son is still alive, he is in his early sixties however their other child died. They were very good to me. I went there for years and years.

Schooling

55. School wasn't good. The Brothers taught us but I don't blame them. The school was overcrowded. When I reached grade six or seven I went to work. I was hopeless at school. We were in different houses. These were red, gold, green and blue. I was in blue. That was my colour for school.

56. We were taught everything in school like maths and the times tables. There were seventy odd in my class. I couldn't be bothered learning anything. They didn't teach us properly. They picked those who they thought could learn. I liked working on the farm more than school. At the piggery or milking the cows. I worked there anytime I could. The teachers sent me there and I liked it better. It was peaceful and I would talk to the pigs.
57. I'd milk the cows, feed the pigs and go to market with the Brother **MHZ** on the truck every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning. We would go to the market and get all the veggies they didn't want and spuds from the spud board. You got to do this when you became a certain age. I got a job there when I was older because Brother **MHZ** couldn't drive anymore. He was too old. So they gave me full time employment. I got a drivers licence and I worked there for a while, doing the pigs and the truck run. You had to be sixteen to be able to do this. I was staying at the big house at the bottom by that time. I stayed there before I was married.
58. We finished school at three thirty. You would get your piece, a snack. It was an apple or biscuits. These were all given to Clontarf. After supper you had to go back to school and study for an hour and a half. The brothers supervised that. One brother used to walk between the classrooms. You had to wash up first. The next morning you had to get your homework out and if you hadn't done it you got a clip round the ear. Brother **MDJ** did it. As I said, I was no good at school. If there were any jobs to be done outside I would put my hand up right away. I learned a lot on farms when I left Clontarf. I learned plumbing and welding.
59. If I didn't do my homework, I would get a clip round the earhole. This happened about twice a week at least and then they'd put me outside somewhere. I'd be told, "Go and do this", and "Go and do that". It was cheaper in the long run not doing the homework. It was a bit of discipline. If they let it go nobody would have done it. I saw others in my class get punished too. There were some brainy ones but I wasn't one of them and you couldn't cheat.

Healthcare

60. There was a local doctor called Doctor Harold that we saw if he was required. They would ring him and he came across. I hurt my finger when I was about ten. Another kid was using a lawnmower and he was pushing it backwards. I stuck my finger in and it took a bit of my finger off. I didn't go to hospital. The nuns gave me a knife and I had to try to cut the little piece of the top of my finger. I couldn't cut it off. So they got a pair of tweezers. I was yelling, so it didn't come off. It eventually got better itself. I was given a band aid but I didn't receive any proper medical attention.
61. There was a dentist in a caravan. You would see him twice a year. He would stop for two weeks then off he would go again.

Religious instruction

62. Father Gorman took mass. He was an old priest who was good but very slow. Mass used to take an hour. There was also Father Dopiazza and Father George. Neither could speak a word of English. Father Gorman cared for the kids. If the brothers belted the kids they would go and tell Father Gorman and he would tell the brothers off. There was also a guy who looked after the garden. His name was **MIJ**. He was seventeen to eighteen years old. He was one of the working boys. He was Australian and he had been sent by the government. We didn't know why. He had the boys carrying these really big, heavy buckets of water and he would belt them if they knocked one over. When Father Gorman saw that he would tell him off.

Work

63. You had your charges to do in the morning as I said. Mine was sweeping the veranda and the hall. We knocked the dairy down to build the piggery and we had to chip all the bricks to make them clean. After school we would work on the piggery, mix the cement and things like that. The kids built it. There were about two hundred pigs, about thirty to thirty five cows and about eight horses. The kids used to ride them at weekends. If you fell off a horse, you fell off.

Christmas and Birthdays

64. I wouldn't have known if it was my birthday at Clontarf. It was treated as just a normal day. At Christmas we got a toy. We would get a torch with no batteries in it, or something like that. We didn't have a Christmas dinner, just an ordinary dinner. We were given pumpkin, spuds, cabbage and sausages. The brothers had a big turkey. We had turkeys there and they got the boys to kill a couple themselves. The Brothers ate in a separate room. They had a waiter, it was a kid that came in and gave them their food. They had roast turkey and everything. They had that at Easter too. We were given a few boiled lollies. We enjoyed the lollies.

Visitors

65. The child welfare came every now and again, very rarely. They spoke to the brothers, not the kids, because the kids would tell them a few yarns. But they would never believe it. When we left Clontarf we saw the welfare officers Miss Sanderson or Mr Young. Their office was in St George's Terrace in Perth. They had an office upstairs. They were in charge of us until we were twenty one.

Personal Possessions

66. You had a locker out in the hall but they were never locked. Mine was number [REDACTED], that was my number. If you had personal possessions they didn't last very long. Someone else would take them out of your locker.

Nature and frequency of abuse

67. The kids would be told to go to the front of the dining room and get six of the best. The Brothers wanted to show an example. If you cried, you would be sent to the corner until you stopped. You would have to stay there facing the wall for an hour. It happened to me once when I was in grade six. Brother ^{MHY} [REDACTED] did it.
68. The Brothers would come upstairs and they'd call your name out, you would never answer. You would kid on you were sleeping. If you sat up they would ask why you

- were awake and take you to their room to give you a talking to. Brother **MHZ** did that.
69. I was referred to as "Hey you", or "Mr **MHW**". If you didn't call them Brother you would get a clip round the earhole. It happened to lots of boys, it happened to everybody. Some kids got it worse. In big places like that the older boys would push the smaller ones out to take the blame for things and they would get a hiding even though they didn't do it.
70. The memories of the abuse never goes away. You hope it's still not happening. If it's still happening then they want shooting. I went through it and it stuck with me. How could they do it to a baby?
71. When you were meant to hand your homework in Brother **MDI** would ask where it was and clip you on the back of the head if you hadn't done it. The Brothers understood. They could tell what person wasn't going to make it. The one's that could do it, they would get away with it.
72. The older boys in Clontarf were also abusive. I was raped five times by an older boy called **MIA**. I'll never forget that name. You couldn't tell the brothers what had happened to you when they asked, "Why are you bleeding?", "Why are you sore?" or "What are you crying for?". I was told not to say anything or they'd belt you.
73. It happened when I was cleaning out the band room. It was my job in the morning and it was **MIA**'s job in the afternoon. He isn't related. At lunch time **MIA** would abuse me, then I'd get belted by the Brother for not coming to lunch. He would ask me where I'd been but I couldn't tell him. But **MIA** would walk straight in and he would get his lunch. I was about eleven or twelve when it happened. I didn't tell the Brothers. He said he would belt us and he was a big bloke. I didn't know then if it happened to other boys.
74. I found out years later when I had a meeting with **MIA** at a friend **MIA**'s place, that **MIA** sexually abused both of us. He was twice as old as us. He was seventeen or eighteen. He was a working boy there, sent by the

government. There were so many boys there, before we got there, who were a lot older than us. I was in the band and [REDACTED] was in the band. MIA [REDACTED] was in charge of us cleaning out the band room.

75. We brought it up at this meeting. [REDACTED] started crying and I started crying. He said, "He did it to you didn't he?". This was a long time after I left Clontarf.
76. That is all that happened but it was the worst. Otherwise I got on quite well and did what I was told or you would get a clip round the ear.

Reporting of abuse

77. I reported the sexual abuse to the police in the 1990's however MIA [REDACTED] is dead now.

Life after the institutions

78. We were at Clontarf until we were sixteen, then they got you a job. I went to a dairy farm and I was given the job of milking the cows, which I hated. I did this job seven days a week. The welfare would get you a job anywhere that you didn't want to go. So they stuck me back on a dairy farm again. I got two pounds and five shillings a week. I worked seven days a week, but in a way I was out of the place.
79. Farmers went to Miss Sanderson, the welfare officer, looking for labourers, so she would get the boys from Clontarf. It was cheap labour. I was given no preparation. I got a suitcase from the welfare department and caught a bus. Miss Sanderson told Clontarf there was a job in Manjimup and Brother MDI [REDACTED] told me. He didn't tell me what it was.
80. I'd work seven days a week which involved me getting up at four o'clock in the morning. It was really cold. I slept on the veranda outside the back of the house.
81. After about twelve months they put me off that farm. I don't know why but they put me out. They packed my bags and put me out in between Manjimup and the next

town, with my suitcase. I was sitting on the side of the road. I was sixteen or seventeen. I didn't know what to do. A big bus came along and took me to Perth. I got to Perth and a police officer came and said, "Oh, I know where you'll be from, Clontarf." I said yes and he asked me where I was going now. I told him I didn't know so he took me to Clontarf. The next day Brother MDI belted me for leaving a job. I didn't leave it, I was put off. He was in charge of Clontarf then.

82. I went the next morning to see Miss Sanderson to get a job. I then went to Corrigin to Ken Harmon's. It was a farm run by a father and son. They were different people all together. I left there and went to Motherwell and Tarden. I worked on different farms there. I worked on farms for a few years before I was married.
83. I got married when I was thirty in 1967. I met [REDACTED] at Mount Henry Hospital. We got talking by phone and she asked me out. I was working at Clontarf on their farm when I met her. We were together for two to three years before we married. When we got married we lived at Clontarf, I was still working on the farm. They asked me to drive the truck when I went back. There were still some of the Brothers there. Brother MHZ was too old to drive it, so he got transferred, off the road. I'd drive to Fremantle, to Milles and Wares and get broken biscuits. And I'd go to spud board. We would get five bags of spuds and veggies. Two bags of spuds were for Castledare and three for Clontarf. If you had to buy something you would get it there.
84. Some of the Brothers were still there. Not many of them though, but MHZ was still there. There was one Brother there that I didn't like very much, otherwise it was alright there. I got up at five in the morning and I had two kids working with me. This was before I met [REDACTED].
85. I married [REDACTED] in 1967, my son [REDACTED] was born in 1969. My daughter [REDACTED] was born in 1973 and my youngest daughter [REDACTED] was born in 1985. We moved to [REDACTED] and I've been there ever since. I worked at Castledare then, doing farm work. They had pigs and cows but when a certain Brother came along they got rid of the pigs. He said it was to help me, but I liked it. So I did the gardening and the plumbing. I was sixty five when I retired.

86. My kids live quite near me and help me. [REDACTED] brings his push bike over sometimes, or his big truck. [REDACTED] isn't far and [REDACTED] is up north.

Treatment/support

87. I have spoken to a counsellor through the Child Migrant Trust. [REDACTED] and I had a bit of counselling early on in our marriage. I told [REDACTED] about what happened to me and eventually I told the kids. I couldn't keep it from them. I kept this grudge under me, then when I told the kids, I think I relieved myself of a lot of stress. The kids understood then.

Records and family tracing

88. I asked the Child Migrant Trust to help me trace my mother and they found her and set up the meeting. About fifteen to sixteen years ago I went over to England with [REDACTED]. My mother was at the table with two of her sons, my step-brothers. She didn't speak. [REDACTED] tried to speak to them but they didn't say much at all. She sat there stone cold. I was trying to find out who my father was but I didn't find out. I think they were worried I went after something in her will. I didn't bother.

Other matters relating to migration

89. I have an Australian passport and I get a commonwealth pension. I applied for redress in 2009. I received \$25000 from the Christian Brothers and \$45000 from the government.

Impact

90. When you left Nazareth House, you were hoping things weren't going to be the same. Clontarf was better than Nazareth House. It was still overcrowded but not as harsh. I think I was treated fairly at Clontarf. I didn't do any good at school, I worked, but I preferred that.

- 91. I reckon it's had an impact because the way I brought the kids up, I was really hard on them. The way I spoke to them, it was the same way as how I was brought up. I eventually realised that that was wrong. I didn't realise it at first. When you were brought up by the nuns and the Brothers you were not treated well, so that's how I brought up my kids. I learned that was the wrong thing to do.
- 92. I would say that my life in care has had a little effect on my mental health. I would say that it still affects me now because of how I was treated there. They wanted to show their authority. Otherwise, life must go on as usual.
- 93. When you are on your own you think about it. I don't watch TV much. If it's cold I go to bed. I get up in the morning and go for a walk. What I do to keep myself occupied is I get sand filters and cut them in half and put flowers in them. Nearly all my back yard is covered in flowers. I have seventy odd pots filled with all sorts of flowers. The last ones I put in are petunias.
- 94. If I'd had a better education that would have helped me and if the places hadn't been so overcrowded. They were getting money from the government for the amount of kids that were in these places.

Final thoughts

- 95. When Pippa from Tuart Place contacted me, I wanted to speak to you. It's a lot easier now. I feel good. It helps me to talk about these things. It feels a lot easier now to talk about it and I feel good. It helps to speak to people.
- 96. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed MHW

Dated 10 - 3 - 2019