

**IN THE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO
HISTORIAL ABUSE IN STATE CARE**

UNDER

The Inquiries Act 2013

AND

IN THE MATTER OF

To inquire into and report upon responses by institutions to instances and allegations of Historical Abuse in State Care between 1950 and 2000.

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF ANNASOPHIA CALMAN

Dated: October 2019

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BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF ANNASOPHIA CALMAN

1. My birth name is Margaret Ross however I am now known as Annasophia Calman.
2. I was born on 18 September 1957 in Raetahi in the Central North Island. I am now 62 years old.
3. I have 6 brothers and sisters.

Early life

4. I had a very unhappy childhood. There was a lot of abuse and a lot of hatred in my family.
5. A notification was first made to Child Welfare in May 1961 however I did not come into care until September 1967. During these six years I was physically and sexually abused and neglected. Child Welfare did not do anything to help.
6. I have almost no Child Welfare records during this six-year period and nearly all the information about the abuse, neglect and inaction from Child Welfare came from a brother's records.
7. My parents ("Mr Ross" and "Mrs Ross") were hardly ever at home as they were always out drinking. When my parents returned from the pub they would fight and take this out on myself and my brothers and sisters. On one occasion I was thrown against the fire hearth by Mr Ross.
8. As well as physical abuse and neglect, I was sexually abused by Mr Ross. He also sexually abused my brother. I believe this sexual abuse happened because my brother and I were not his biological children. I was also raped by an uncle while growing up.
9. I would turn up to school with bruises and had to steal food out of rubbish bins in order to have lunch for school. People from the school, as well as neighbours and other people in the community, would ring Child Welfare and complain about my brothers and sisters and me being unclean, making messes and our family sleeping in the car.

Coming into care

10. On 21 September 1967, six years after my family first came to the notice of Child Welfare, complaint action was finally taken. Mr Ross appeared in court on a complaint that my brothers and sisters and I were living in a detrimental environment.

11. We all remained in the family home and the abuse and neglect continued. We were constantly hungry and did not have proper clothes – we were deprived materially and suffering mental cruelty. Our house had up to 10 other beneficiaries living in it at a time and my mother and father would go on “drinking sprees”.
12. On 4 September 1969 a social worker from Child Welfare visited the home and shortly after that Mr Ross placed my brothers and sisters and me with various friends.
13. On 23 September 1969, another complaint was made against Mr Ross on the basis that we children were not under proper control. On 25 September 1969 I became a State Ward.

Nazareth House

14. On 1 October 1969, two sisters, a brother and I were placed at Nazareth House in Christchurch. I remained at Nazareth House for several years and suffered abuse.

Abuse at Nazareth House

15. I was made to stand in front of the class and place my hands on the back of my neck. The nuns would then whack my knuckles with a ruler. I was also told to lift my skirt and another nun whacked me on the thigh. I was abused like this by the nuns on many occasions.
16. On one occasion, when the nuns had finished whacking me, I ran out of the classroom. I ignored their calls to come back and kept running until I got to a shed next to the convent. I stayed there for a long time until the police found me. The police saw my red, swollen hands and asked me about them. The nuns denied hitting me and said that I had been in a fight with one of the other girls.
17. Every day I would be made to scrub the toilets and stairs and help feed the old people. If I did not do these chores properly, I would be whacked on the knuckles and the backside.
18. There was also a lot of bullying by the older girls and one day I shouted at a girl who told me she didn't like dark people.
19. One night I woke up to a nun rubbing her hands up and down my body. I sat up, shouted at her and chased after her. Another nun came to see what all the noise was about and when I told her what had happened, the nun slapped me in the face for lying.

Environment at Nazareth House

20. Because of all the abuse I was suffering, one night another girl and I escaped through the fire exit, climbed over the gate and ran away from Nazareth House. I never saw that girl again, but I got caught by the police and taken to the police station. I was shaking with fear and anger.
21. I told the police that I had been whacked and touched by the nuns. I was returned to Nazareth House.
22. My education was not progressed at Nazareth House and I could barely read or write at my next placement with Mr and Mrs L.

Placement with Mr and Mrs L

23. On 31 January 1972 I was placed with Mr and Mrs L. My first impressions of them were that they seemed like very nice people. However, soon after arriving they started to go out drinking and leaving me at home to mind their children. I was not yet 15 years old when this started happening.

Abuse while placed with Mr and Mrs L

24. On one occasion I was at home in bed with a sore stomach and Mrs L's brother-in-law came home, forced himself into my bed and raped me. I was raped twice by him. After I was raped the second time, I told Mr and Mrs L and got whacked by Mrs L for lying.
25. I was also beaten by Mr and Mrs L on a couple of other occasions. Mr L would use the jug cord and would beat me in front of the children. I had red marks on my back and told the social worker that they had been caused by Mr L. Mrs L would yank my hair in front of her children. On one occasion Mrs L yanked so hard that I lost a handful of hair and had a large lump on my scalp. By this point I expected to be abused.
26. I was so scared of getting more beatings that I ran away the next day and stayed with a Mrs W. The social worker came to pick me up and while she was taking me back to Mr and Mrs L, she asked what the story was about the beatings. I burst out that Mr and Mrs L had always hit me and that I did not want to stay there anymore. I told my social worker that Mr L had given me a hiding with the jug cord and Mrs L had pulled my hair and given me a lump on my head. The social worker warned me that I must tell the truth as she was taking me back to Mr and Mrs L and I would have to repeat these things in front of them. I told the social worker I was happy to do that.
27. At first, Mrs L denied giving me a hiding and said that I had told her the bruise on my back came from a fight with my sister. I agreed with this but then showed the social worker a large bruise on my upper right leg

and said that this had been done by Mr L on Monday with the jug cord. At that point Mrs L admitted that Mr L had lost patience with me and had given me a few whacks with the jug cord. The social worker told Mrs L that Child Welfare would not tolerate State Wards being hit like this and asked her what was to be done. At this point I burst into tears again and said that I did not want to stay there.

28. After this incident I was removed from the care of Mr and Mrs L and placed with Mr and Mrs S, before being placed with Mr and Mrs E.

Mr and Mrs E

29. On 24 August 1973 I was placed with a middle-aged couple Mr and Mrs E. I remained in this placement for a year and a half, until January 1975.

Abuse while placed with Mr and Mrs E

30. Shortly after I was placed here, Mr E began raping me. After the first time I was raped I went down to the cowshed and had a shaking fit, and that night I scrubbed myself in the bath until I started bleeding. Mr E raped me four times in total.
31. I tried to tell my social worker what was happening, but she would not listen to me. At some point Mrs E found out about what was happening, contacted Social Welfare and said that I was no longer welcome in the home.

Environment while placed with Mr and Mrs E

32. Mr and Mrs E often walked around the house naked and I would see them having sex.
33. I became pregnant to another man while at this placement and on 29 June 1974 I gave birth to a baby boy. One morning I woke up and my son had been taken. My records report that I was agreeable to adopting my son out, however I was very unhappy about the prospect of adoption and the adoption process.

Placement back with Mr and Mrs Ross

34. After leaving the care of Mr and Mrs E in January 1975 I was placed back with Mr Ross. I was still a State Ward at this time.

Abuse by Mr Ross

35. Mr Ross had not changed, continuing to drink and “knocking” me about. Because of this I ran away from home and ended up staying in a park for a night.

36. I got myself a job, met a man, but “hit rock bottom” and so I returned home with my boyfriend at the time, and eventual husband, Mr P. Mr Ross was not happy with my choice of boyfriend and began hitting me again.

Placement with Mrs P senior

37. On 16 January 1975 I was placed with Mrs P senior. I gave birth to my first daughter at the age of 17. Mr P was the father.

Abuse while placed with Mrs P senior

38. During the time I was placed with Mrs P senior I was severely beaten by Mr P. I went to Social Welfare with two black eyes and a lump on my cheekbone and spoke to a social worker. All the social worker did was talk about the care I should expect from Mr P and checked that I had been to the doctor.

Discharge from Social Welfare

39. I was discharged from the care of the Director-General of Social Welfare on 27 September 1976.
40. I lived with Mr P for the next couple of decades and had three more children with him. The relationship was abusive, in fact it was so bad that I would deliberately get myself put in prison in order to get away from him.
41. I eventually left Mr P and have been with my current partner, Mr Calman, for 20 years. The relationship is not abusive and is a happy one.

Effects of the abuse

42. I still suffer from the effects of the abuse. I have blackouts and there are times where I want to “shut down”. I have been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, have suffered from nightmares and flashbacks and have found intimacy extremely difficult. For example, when my husband would try to have sexual intercourse with me, I would cover myself with a pillow. I have also attempted to commit suicide.
43. I am medicated for depression and have been having counselling about the abuse I have suffered. I have also written a short book about my experiences, extracts of which I have used for my statement today.
44. I have changed my name to Annasophia because I do not like the negative associations and memories of abuse that are inextricably linked with the name Margaret.

45. The abuse I suffered while in State care has blackened my entire life.

Redress

46. I approached Cooper Legal to take a claim against The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) for the abuse I suffered while in State care.

47. My claim documents were sent to MSD on 4 August 2015. I am yet to receive a response from MSD.

Dated: October 2019

Annasophia Calman

ROSS FAMILY

48
1/4 place and
make to be best

9.6.67.

Received a ring from Mr Stirling Headmaster Awapuni School at
9.15. very agitated.

[REDACTED] He informed me that people
were kinder to dumb animals than what the parents are to their children,
and he wanted us to go down immediately to see the Rosses. He feels
very strongly that it is time some definite work was done with this
family.

P.W. Bellaney
P.W. Bellaney (Mrs)
C.W.C. 9/6/67

Scwo.
SBwo. } Inf.
was mostly

Mr best inf.

ROSS FAMILY ✓
FAMILY

Irrelevant third party information, Irrelevant activities, Medical, s 29(1)(a) PA; s 9(2)(a) OIA

27.8.68: While speaking to Nurse Taylor in Hawera she mentioned some concern about these two families. The children are now attending the Meremere School and Mr Eaton had told her that they always seem to be starving. He and his wife had in fact given some of the children breakfast on occasion and other meals.



9.9.68. Mrs Junge rang from Health Dept. ^{G.H. Tanguay} She has a letter from Mrs Taylor, Public Health Nurse, Hawera, stating that she is most concerned about these children and their inadequate food and clothing. She is also concerned about the mental cruelty with some of the children. I told Mrs Junge that Mr Tanguay would be visiting the home tomorrow and suggested that he try and contact Mrs Taylor in Hawera. Mrs Junge will send us a copy of the letter.

L.E. McNeil

10.9.68. I rang Nurse Taylor who said that the Headmaster of Meremere School knows all about the situation and if Mr Tanguay calls to see him he will be able to give him the story. She will endeavour to contact Mr Tanguay at the school about 11:30 a.m. or mid-day.

L.E. McNeil

19.8.69: The headmaster of Hawera Main School rang to let me know that these children are being given extremely poor lunches. Today they had just the remains of a home made loaf of bread which they apparently had for tea last night, and this was all they had. The children who go to the Intermediate didn't bring their lunch today and Mrs had taken pies for them to the Intermediate School but was too lazy to go just down the road a bit and take lunch for the Ross children - the school has therefore bought lunches for them. The headmaster thought we should know about this as we are apparently visiting the family.

L.E. McNeil

20.8.69: Heard that this family was creating a problem at school through having just crusts of Maori bread; no butter or anything else. Mr Duggan had visited Ross and done some really straight talking. He told him he could either get work or get out of Normanby. Ross blustered a bit, but he got work for some contractor at Kapuni.

I told Mrs that the time for words had past and that further troubles of this sort would be referred to the Court. She said she has little influence on Mr Ross, which I believe. Mr Duggan is to see Mr Ross again and try to persuade him to accept budgeting advice.

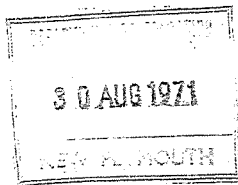
The housekeeping was very poor and the place smelt.

Irrelevant activities, Irrelevant third party information, s 29(1)(a) PA: s 9(2)(a) CIA

M.R. Wallace

28.8.69. I saw Constable Duggan. Mr Ross, although working, is spending his free time drinking his wages. Another complaint about food shortage came from the school the day after my visit. Mr Ross visited Constable Duggan and abused him roundly for his interference.

5.9.69. Mr. Wallace introduced discussion on this family at social services meeting. Mrs. Dennis has been involved because of emotional instability of two of the girls.
M.R. Wallace
Z. S. Hallett



16 August 1971

D.C.W.O.
CHRISTCHURCH.

ROSS :

b. : I.p.

Margaret Elizabeth ROSS :

b.18.9.57 : I.p.

ROSS :

b : I.p.

ROSS :

b. : I.p.

Sub: Long term
prospects

1. These children have now been in Catholic institutions for almost two years. During this time Mrs Ross has visited Christchurch twice but little is known of her intentions regarding her children's future or her ability to provide a home for them.

2. The girls at Nazareth House write to their mother and remain loyal to her even though they rarely receive a reply. They speak of her a great deal but the Sisters at Nazareth House suspect that this is to keep up with the other children.

3. All of the Ross children have made slow progress at school and are several classes behind their age group.

Margaret is placid and well behaved but has made extremely slow progress at

4. Considering that the girls are showing signs of becoming institutionalized, the question arises of what is the long term plan for this family? If family unity was the reason these children were placed in institutions, how best can this be preserved

5. There is also the consideration that the places occupied by these children in Nazareth House and St Joseph's could more profitably be filled by other candidates.

6. I would recommend that New Plymouth's comments be asked regarding the future of this family.

7. Copy for D.C.W.O. New Plymouth and the Superintendent's information.

H.P. Garland

s 29(1)(a) PA; s 9(2)(a) OIA, Irrelevant third party information

H. P. Garland (Mrs)
D.C.W.O. S.W.T.

D.C.W.O.
NEW PLYMOUTH.

The Superintendent (Inf.)

1. also the Sisters at Nazareth have indicated that the other children have reached the peak of their progress in

that institution and they do not see any useful purpose is served by the children remaining there.

2. It seems advisable that if movement is to take place this should be done at the end of this school year. Therefore I should be pleased if you could advise me your future plans for this family group.

Bruin
(J. de Bruin)
for D.C.W.O.

*Miss. McNeil,
Mr. Wallace,*

*Please let us have a joint discussion
about this family.*

F. P. Hallett

30/3/21

MARGARET ROSS

10.11.72 (Cont'd):

We went around and picked up a rather sulky Margaret from the daughter's place and at first I thought she would refuse to come with us. However, she meekly got into the car and we took her back to Mrs [redacted] to pick up her things.

We talked to Margaret on the way to [redacted] and asked her what the story was about the beatings. Margaret burst out that the [redacted] have always hit her and she did not want to stay there any more. She said that Mr L [redacted] had given her a hiding with the jug cord and Mrs L [redacted] had pulled her hair and she had a lump on her head. I warned Margaret that she must tell me the truth as I was taking her back to Mrs L [redacted] and she would have to repeat these things in front of her. Margaret was quite willing to do this.

We then went round and saw Mrs L [redacted]. She at first denied that Margaret had been given a hiding and reminded her that she had told them that the bruise on her back came from a fight with Jan. She agreed with this but then showed me a large bruise on her upper right leg and said that this had been done by Mr L [redacted] on Monday with the jug cord. It was certainly a very nasty bruise and had not faded a great deal and Mrs L [redacted] very shamefacedly admitted that her husband had lost patience with Margaret and had given her a few whacks with the jug cord. She said that Mr L [redacted] had been on leave for a couple of weeks and he was just at the end of his tether with Margaret. I told Mrs L [redacted] that we would not tolerate our Wards being hit like this and I asked her what was to be done. Margaret burst into tears again and said that she did not want to stay there and Mrs L [redacted] very reluctantly then said that she felt they had done all they could for Margaret so I sent Margaret up to her room to pack her things. I asked Mrs L [redacted] to supervise the packing and make sure that everything belonged to Margaret. Mrs L [redacted] was most apologetic and said that they had hoped to at least finish the year but Margaret is so difficult and cheeky and so very easily led at school that she feels that they cannot cope. Apparently the running away idea was put into Margaret's head by a girl at school who, when she heard that Margaret had had a hiding, had told Margaret that she did not have to put up with that sort of thing and she should run away. We brought Margaret into the Family Home. T.F.M.

MARGARET ROSS

19.6.74: Margaret rang from Opunake most upset because had turned up at the Maternity hospital, demanded to see her and said that he was going to keep the baby. Margaret said he had apparently gone to [redacted] and finding them away had gone to neighbours called Julian and they had taken him in to Opunake. Margaret said she doesn't want to see [redacted] or have anything to do with him. I spoke to the Sister who said that Margaret is well but rather upset at present and she doesn't think that she will have the baby for about another week. I told Sister that [redacted] should not be allowed to see Margaret again and she will make sure that he doesn't. He apparently said that he was coming into the office to see Mr Hickey.

L.E. McNeil.

*Mr Holt rang and said he was Hickey & was told to keep away
He has been told that he may be required by
to pay maintenance*

1.7.74: Sister, Maternity Home, Opunake rang. Margaret had a son at Hawera on Saturday 29 June 1974 - weighed 7 lbs 4 ozs.

Margaret and the baby are very well.

Unfortunately Hawera refused to keep the baby so Margaret and her son returned together to Opunake in the ambulance.

As Margaret is very well and had no stitches, they will discharge her as soon as possible.

Mr Holt: Would you please see the baby at Opunake and let me know how Maori it looks.

If you see Margaret will you please tell her that I will be arranging for her to sign her consent in New Plymouth.

L.E. McNeil.

*Noted
J.M.*

Mrs Holt

- 1. Please check on discharge date and return to [redacted] - See file 126.*
 - 2. Please prepare a Progress Report.*
 - 3. Please consult with Mrs McNeil re adoption consent etc.*
- See file 126.
8/7/74
12704
all signed - baby placed with
Mrs Holt*

DMJT:DMW

NOTE FOR FILE

Margaret ROSS

- 4.6.75
1. Came in without glasses. She had two badly bruised eyes and the cheek-bone had a lump on it. This had been inflicted by her defacto.
 2. Margaret was spoken to about the care she should expect from as she appeared to take this beating as inevitable.
 3. I checked that she had been to a doctor and confirmed Doctor Jackson was treating her.

Dmj Tattersall

(Mrs D.M.J. Tattersall)

S.W.

6.6.75

BH:NJ

NOTE FOR FILE

Margaret ROSS

1. My only suggestion for Margaret is that when her baby is born and we know how she cares for it we discharge her. As far as I can see, she is a waste of our time. She had changed addresses at different times, and I gather is back at 48 Liverpool Street and living de facto with

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR : Inf.

Ⓟ
B. HOLLIS
S.W.
13.1.76