

**Witness Name:** GRO-A Mrs D

**Statement No.1:** [WITN0063001]

**Exhibits:** [WITN0063002 – WITN0063011]

**Dated:** 21.09.2020

## ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

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**WITNESS STATEMENT OF** GRO-A Mrs D

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I, GRO-A Mrs D, make the following statement:-

### INTRODUCTION

1. My name is GRO-A Mrs D.
2. I was born in Tauranga in 1953. I am 67 years of age.
3. I have three children, a girl and a boy in New Zealand and one son in Australia who was taken from me at his birth by Matron Gallagher of St Mary's home for Unwed Mothers. I was married twice, the first time at 16. Neither of these marriages lasted and one of them was to a very violent person. Relationships were very difficult for me because I carried a big secret because of what happened to me as a young person.
4. Everything I have achieved I have done on my own. I became a nurse at 16 until I was forced to stop my career. I went back to

study at 55 and got my nursing degree. I have five grandchildren and they are the light of my life. Everything I do is to give back to my children and grandchildren. I have experienced terrible things but I have had to be a survivor. I cannot be a victim. I had to get on with things. I would not wish what happened to me on anyone but sometimes, I wish people could just walk in my shoes a little, so they could know.

5. I identify as NZ European and I am proud to come from Tauranga. My parents ran a business there.
6. I contracted Polio as a child. When I am tired I still sometimes have a slight limp. I suffer from post-polio syndrome. This causes persistent fatigue, muscle weakness, muscle and joint pain and sleep apnoea.
7. I have been a hard worker all of my life and I was brought up this way. In fact when I was younger, my parents would deal with any lingering polio symptoms by telling me to work harder.

## **MY EXPERIENCE OF BEING IN THE CARE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH**

### ***First Child***

8. My dad was Presbyterian and we were brought up in that church until the church complained about my older sister wearing trousers in church. Then we didn't go back. My mother was an Anglican. She trusted the Anglican Church. That is how I was sent to St Mary's Home for Unwed Mothers in 1969.
9. I was 15 years old. I was very fit because I was a keen surfer. We used to bike to the beach at the Mount after school and surf until it got dark. I did not even realise I was pregnant until I had stomach pains when I was around 5 months pregnant. I suffered from endometriosis. One day I had terrible stomach pains and my friend took me to the doctor at the Mount. They thought it was

maybe a urine infection and they did a urine test. They said they'd send me the results.

10. My mother got sent the results and told me I was pregnant. I was so naïve about bodies and their functions that I did not realise what had been done to me by an older boy. He sort of tricked me into it. We knew nothing back then, absolutely nothing about sex or even periods. Even our mothers didn't tell us.
11. For a time my mother was not living with us and my dad was working overseas so my sister looked after us. She was 16 - three years older than me and I was three years older than my brother. If the authorities had known we were alone they might have taken us into care. My dad sent money from overseas. We never missed a day of school or got ill so no-one found out. I am still very close to my sister.
12. It always upset me that my mother sent me to St Mary's. I couldn't understand it because we had a good relationship otherwise. When she was dying I finally asked her and she got very upset. She said when she realised I was pregnant she asked the Anglican Church for advice and the Church had said to send me to Auckland to St Mary's.
13. She went to the Church for help and she trusted them to tell her the right thing to do. When I was in the home she came to visit me every single week for three hours on Saturday afternoons, all the way from Tauranga to Auckland. She would take me out for afternoon tea. I cried when she dropped me back at St Mary's (It must have been awful trip home for her too). I would try to tell her what was happening but she didn't believe me at the time. She trusted them to look after me.
14. While at St Mary's I had a son who was forcibly removed from me immediately after his birth and against my will. I was made to give birth lying on my side so I could not even see the baby. I was left alone to labour for three days in a bare room except for when

Matron Rhoda Gallagher beat me. I mean literally beat me, punched me and slapped me as I was in labour. She said I deserved it because I was promiscuous. I was given food during this time but I do not remember any doctor coming to check on me.

15. My first child was taken away by adoptive parents at 10 days old. My mum saw him in the nursery. I had never been allowed to hold him or even see him. I only saw him through the window of the nursery when the Nurse on duty left the curtain open toward the end of her shift secretly. We all got to know it was about 10pm at night she would do this and that secret was passed down all the girls in the dorm. I wish I knew that nurse's name because it was pretty much the only act of kindness we ever received in that place. I remember we would hoist each other up just to try to get a glimpse of our babies.
16. My sister was visiting me. She was pregnant with her first child and while at St Mary's she went into labour. She gave birth at St Mary's and both of our children were in the Nursery at the same time.
17. A lawyer came to St Mary's after the birth of my son and I was made to sign some papers. I was never told I had any right to decide whether or not my child would be adopted. I did not want my baby to be adopted. I never agreed to this. Matron used to say to us that we had given up all rights when we went into St Mary's. I do not know the name of the lawyer but his name would be on the adoption papers.
18. Thirty years later I was just so sick of the hurt that I went to the organisation Jigsaw to see if they could help me. A woman called Nola Pinny encouraged me to apply for my son's birth certificate. She was very supportive. I didn't think I would get it but a couple of weeks later I had it in my hands. It had the name of the adoptive family on it. We looked in the Auckland phone book. I

remembered being told he would be flying north. There was an odd phone number and we later found out it was a Waiheke number.

19. I phoned the number and an older lady answered. I had been going to give a false reason for calling but I just told the truth. She asked me to call back in half an hour. She was the mother of the adoptive mother who had moved the family to Australia years before. The mother was literally on her way to Waiheke from Australia to move her mother from Waiheke.
20. The mother answered when I rang back. She said she had been waiting for a call from me for 30 years. She told me she had paid \$200 to the Matron at St Mary's to buy my son to replace a baby that was stillborn. She had given my son the same name as the baby who died. She said it was the worst \$200 she had spent. I found out that my son had grown up very troubled. Apparently she had always told him that he would never measure up to her own son. He had had a difficult life and was especially upset about not knowing who his father was.
21. I arranged to meet the adoptive mother as she was coming to through Hamilton where I was living. I wanted to give her some things for my son I had had kept all these years, a pounamu and a poem on a plaque. It was a crowded train station in Hamilton because it was the week of Fieldays but the crowds somehow parted and we saw each other.
22. I told her that I had seen her through the window at St Mary's as my son was being taken away. I asked her if she had thought about me over the previous 30 years. I had never been told anything about how he was doing. The adoptive mother had never tried to find me or help him try to find me, but she said to me that somehow it was my responsibility to fix him.
23. I had always told my other children about my firstborn son, from the beginning of their lives. I phoned my son in Australia. I

wanted to be able to welcome him into our family but he only wanted to know who his father was and whether my family were wealthy. My other son tried to contact him and we offered to pay for his flight to come over. I have tried to keep in touch with him and told him that if he wants to come to NZ he can meet his family.

### **Second child**

24. My son was born in [GRO-B] 1969. I left St Mary's two weeks after my son was taken away from me. I went to [GRO-A] hospital and started nurse training in February 1970 because of an arrangement between Matron Gallagher and Matron Wilson. I had always wanted to be a nurse. I became pregnant in [GRO-A] 1970 and was not considered old enough to live independently. Matron Wilson at [GRO-A] hospital where I was training said I would have to give up the baby if I wanted to continue nursing and be registered.
25. I knew that nursing was the only way to support myself and my children and I had always wanted to be a nurse, so I did not want to give it up. I felt I was being blackmailed into giving up nursing. Lots of the young nurses became pregnant. There was another young woman who had a baby and was allowed to graduate. I remember Matron Wilson held out her nursing badge in front of me and said 'you will never get this.'
26. I went back to St Mary's to have my baby. I was absolutely clear that I did not want to give her up and I would look after her myself.
27. My daughter was born on [GRO-B] 1971. I was told by CYFS that I had 6 weeks to get everything together and show that I could support my baby. I went back to Tauranga and my mum helped buy a bassinet, a pram, clothing. I managed to get a cleaning job at night so I could look after her.
28. About 10 days after my daughter was born I had been taken with two other girls to a lawyer's office in Otahuhu. The paper we

were to sign was folded so we were not able to read it but one of the other girls who was from Australia asked what it was we were signing. Matron Gallagher said it was for continued care, as we were not paying for care at St Mary's. We did not get a copy of the papers even when the girl asked for them. We were not told they were adoption papers but I think that was what they were. There were two of us there who wanted to keep our babies.

29. To get to the lawyer's office, coming from St Mary's (we used the 653 Great South Road entrance) we turned left onto Great South Road and drove North to the fork of Gt South Road. We veered right past the war memorial and statue with the horse and the lawyers were upstairs in a building on the right. I might go back to Otahuhu and walk from the statue to see if the place is still there. The lawyer was an old pakeha gentleman, he wore glasses. He did not discuss anything with us or explain what we were signing. He only spoke to Matron Gallagher
30. I think my daughter left St Mary's after me as I saw her at two weeks old when I left. I was waiting to collect her at 6weeks old but she did not come.
31. I found out later that she was taken to a family in GRO-B 1971. It may have been one of matron Gallagher's friends because she was suspected of giving (or selling) babies to friends of hers. CYFS contacted my mum in GRO-B 1971 to be told that "the placement was not working out" and baby was now in new foster care. Years later the official line from CYFS was that, as the baby's biological father was Maori, the baby was "too dark" for the family as she did not fit in with their existing child.
32. I was asked if I wanted my daughter back which I always had said I did, or is she to be placed again? I went with my Mum and sister to the foster home in GRO-B to pick up my daughter. The foster family were very nice and were appalled at what had

- happened. They were in tears. The husband who had gone to pick the child up was crying his eyes out.
33. My baby daughter was black and blue all over, swollen. She had been badly beaten. She was 11 weeks old. Me and my mother (who is now deceased) and my sister (who is still alive) were all there. We took photographs. The foster family said they had never seen such a thing and we should take this further and they would always be witnesses.
34. The foster family encouraged us to do something and go to the police and complain. After my daughter was returned to my care I tried to find out what had happened. We had taken photos of my baby's injuries and we took the photos to Police in Tauranga. We never got further than the front desk. We told the older male Police officer that I had been at St Mary's and that CYFS had taken my baby and she had been beaten. We showed him the photographs. Police said it was a "family" issue and directed us back to CYFS and St Mary's.
35. My mother called Matron Gallagher who said to her "if I were you I wouldn't complain too much" and that if we did not destroy the photos they would take my baby away again. My mum was scared and destroyed the photos.
36. CYFS did not want to know. They refused to tell me who the adoptive family was. They have continually refused to tell me and refused OIA requests on the grounds that the adoption was revoked so never legalised. This does not make any sense to me.
37. I had been prevented from completing my nursing qualification. I worked in many different jobs over the years to support my family. My sister had two children and she helped me. I lived for a time in a flat at the back of her house. When I went back to Tauranga with my daughter we lived in our family home with my dad and brother. My dad was so shocked as he was told I had gone

nursing and then I came home with a baby. They bonded immediately. It didn't take long before he was taking her off to work with him, with bottles and nappies.

38. I worked in a supermarket and trained as a phlebotomist and lab technician. I went back to study nursing at the age of 55 and gained my Bachelor of Nursing degree and did one year post graduate. I am now working as a qualified staff nurse. Matron Wilson was wrong. When I graduated it was my proudest moment of my lifetime.

## **EXPERIENCES OF ABUSE AT ST MARY'S**

### ***Loss of identity***

39. In a time when I should have received the most support and compassion from the church, the nine months I spent at St Mary's were instead categorised by fear, loneliness and mistrust. The misplaced shame I already felt was reiterated daily by Matron who even beat me during the delivery of my children to reinforce that I should be punished for my actions. She should have been a caring figure.
40. Not only were my children removed from me once I had given birth to them but I was made to labour alone for 72 hours on both occasions. I then had to give birth on my side specifically so I could not catch even a glimpse of my new-born children.
41. We girls were not allowed to use our own names. We were given new Surnames. Then our identity was stripped from us even further by being referred to merely as "Gallagher's Girls": The same surname that was given to all the other girls. Gallagher was Rhoda Gallagher the matron. She is dead now. We were not allowed to tell each other our real names. We did though, as an act of rebellion.
42. Sometimes you met someone else who had been at St Mary's. We describe ourselves as "Gallagher Girls" which sounds sort of

cheerful, like Land Girls or something. It is not that, it is simply a badge of survival and we recognise each other for what we all experienced.

43. If we tried to run away or they found out that we had told each other our real names Matron Gallagher would threaten the girls that if they did not do exactly as they were told, our babies would die – she used to say “the Woodbox behind the chapel is where your babies will end up”.
44. All the nuns behaved the same way towards us. No-one stood up to Matron Gallagher. The only person who did at all was the nurse who left the curtain open for us.
45. There was an Australian girl who was all by herself in New Zealand with no family and I felt sorry for her, so I asked my mother by letter if we could take her with us for afternoon tea. Matron Gallagher told us she could not come. I did not understand how she even knew I had asked my mother but then my mother told me that all my letters arrived with big sections blacked out so obviously all our letters were opened and censored.
46. On my first week at St Mary’s I was so lonely and shocked at the treatment that I cried a lot into my pillow and one of the older girls gave me a Little Red Diary (I mean little - 1 ½” x 1 ½”) and said this will be your friend, write it all down and keep it forever.
47. I kept it in my bra & did keep it forever and wrote all sorts of things in it. I last looked at this diary when I was packing possessions up for storage 13 years ago and was going to throw it out as it meant nothing to anyone else, but I could not, so hid it in with my firstborn’s Birth Certificate.

***Medical mistreatment and sexual abuse***

48. I was sexually abused by two doctors, one younger and one old. The older one was Dr Thomas (Tom) Caffell. I remember his name but it was confirmed to me by one of the other girls I met in

later life, who said she went to see his grave in Purewa cemetery. I remember he was much lauded on their passing. I was upset to think his family thought he was such a saint.

49. There was inappropriate touching of my breasts and vagina under the guise of a weekly medical examination. I am a qualified staff nurse and I can say categorically that the examinations I am talking about were not necessary or correct procedure for regular ante natal examinations. Not all of the girls got the same examination. We built up courage to talk to someone about it. Nothing was done and it carried on.
50. On the rare occasion the two came together nothing happened. With Caffell it was the breast touching and the amount of inappropriate vaginal exams. He used 2 white light blankets for modesty, draping to cover me up completely always, but manoeuvred around under the draping
51. The younger doctor never touched my breasts but the regular vaginal exams continued on my back, legs dropped apart they were weekly I think mine were Thursdays. No bloods were ever taken. He never used the same amount of modesty draping as Caffell which I always think was extreme
52. Neither doctor prepped me with any knowledge of delivery or attended during labour or the birth. Caffell was the Doctor for both stays at St Mary's. Matron was normally in the room (I think in case we spoke of the evil happening at the home). Matron never questioned the regularity of vaginal exams by either doctor, in fact I have no recallable memory of any discussions between Matron and them at the examinations.
53. I recall a girl called Alison who died giving birth to twins. She was left to labour alone for 2 days. She was screaming like a wild animal all that time. She was denied pain relief and the staff refused to call an ambulance or even call a doctor. I am a qualified staff nurse and because there was so much

haemorrhaging during her labour I believe Alison had placenta previa, where the placenta blocks all or part of the cervix and then tears easily during birth. This leads to blood loss, and is fatal very quickly if not dealt with.

54. I believe the pain Alison was in would be indescribable. We tried to get someone to help her but no staff member would. We didn't give up until someone came to see her. One of the girls went to the nursery sister and went to the Matron's cottage on the grounds. Then an ambulance was called.
55. I think she would have been taken to National Women's Hospital. When the ambulance came the girls were threatened by Matron not to tell anyone about this. We never saw her again. We were told she died and the twins too. In her death notice it said Alison and twins. I still have it. I will never get over hearing her and seeing her in so much pain and fear.
56. My little red diary has the NZ Herald clipping of Alison's death in it..... I will try and retrieve it as part of this process
57. When Alison died we had not yet had our babies so we were all terrified. The staff deliberately kept us apart from girls who had given birth. We could have helped each other by talking about what to expect but the staff did not want that. They wanted to keep us in complete ignorance and fear. Once I had had my first baby I was not allowed to speak to the new girls.
58. It is strange to think I was given weekly examinations by a doctor but never had any medical support for birth even though I was only 15.
59. One of the really upsetting things which I have never been able to forget was the cruelty to the children in the orphanage section, where I was working prior to my son's birth. I had worked for a couple of days in the Laundry. Then one of the laundry workers from outside brought us some lollies. Matron found out and we were told we couldn't work there again. I wanted to work in the

- orphanage section anyway because I really loved children and I already knew, at 15, that I wanted to be a nurse.
60. The only care we were allowed to give the children was very basic. Working there was very distressing because the children were never hugged and if any of us girls tried to hug any of the children we were punished and beaten, by Matron. I am still upset at the memory of the little ones reaching their arms out to be picked up and held and cuddled and being forbidden to comfort them. I do not understand how a supposedly Christian institution could be so barbaric to children.
61. I remember there was an outbreak of dysentery in the home. I remember a little Maori boy, I think his name was GRO-B-1 He was about 3 years old. He was forced to sit on a wooden fixed potty for literally days at a time with vomiting and diarrhoea. He just wasn't getting better and could not keep any food down. He also had rickets and was often in pain. He constantly cried for want of affection. The girls were not allowed to comfort him. It haunts me.
62. Along with other girls I was forced to do demeaning and unnecessary work – cleaning outside corridor floors, with liquorice like tread on a wooden ramp in winter. Each groove had to be cleaned with a brush like a toothbrush. Even when I suffered from Hyperemesis (extreme morning sickness) I was on my hands and knees, outside trying to scrub a floor with a toothbrush.
63. The girls were not allowed to wear underwear. We were told that this was because we might harm the baby. I know now that there is no medical justification for this and that it was done to demean us and humiliate us.
64. The girls were verbally abused constantly by the nuns and the matron – told they were worthless, fallen and useless.

## THE EFFECT OF ABUSE ON ME

65. One of effects of the sexual abuse by doctors when I was so young and at my most vulnerable and the fact that men knew what was happening at St Mary's to me and others and did nothing is that I cannot trust men. I have been married twice and neither has worked out. At least one was very abusive. He put me in hospital and I had to leave my home in secret.

66. Despite everything that had happened to me I was able to be a good mother to my daughter. She was a good and beautiful baby and child and I have never understood why the adoptive family came close to killing her. I have never understood why CYFS did not involve the police and instead protected the abusers.

67. For decades I lived with the effects of being shamed and humiliated and abused and violated as a teenager. I suffered a major depressive episode in 2007 while I was living overseas. My brother had to fly me back to New Zealand and I was admitted to the mental wing of [GRO-A] hospital. I was in [GRO-A]

I was given medication that made me collapse but no-one talked to me. I was just locked up for three months in a room.

68. When I was in [GRO-A] Hospital, my close family were advised by my GP not to visit me at all and they didn't, except my sister who lived in [GRO-A]. I was the first ever person in my family to have any mental health issues and they did not know how to deal with it, or maybe they did not want to deal with it. I had always been the strong one who solved everyone else's problems and cared for others.

69. When I was in hospital I was allowed out of room to sit in the lounge briefly and did see the psychiatrist on his visits. I have kept the damning reports he wrote as well although I forgot about them until now. I did lay a complaint about his assumptions and asked for my health records to be corrected as they contained

errors, mistakes and lies. I will find these reports . It was just another slap in the face for not coping.

70. It was not until getting out of GRO-A that I went to a place called Turning Point Trust in Tauranga. It took a sort of holistic approach to mental illness which includes art therapy for example. I had an amazing counsellor/psychologist who introduced me to cognitive behavioural therapy. I went twice a week. It was intense but it helped me a lot to stop blaming myself for what had been done to me by others who should have cared for me. I think funding for that therapy was cut after that. Which is a shame.
71. After that I went to Outward Bound. I found it really challenging but I got a lot out of it. I found myself helping and being relied on for support and a listening ear by all the younger people. I didn't say anything to them but inside I sort of wished I could ask them to walk in my shoes. After Outward Bound I applied to start nursing.

## **REDRESS**

### ***Police***

72. I have described how my mum and I went to Tauranga Police station and they weren't interested despite the evidence we had of a really bad assault on a tiny baby. Being told to go back to St Mary's and the church and then being threatened when we did broke my mum's heart. She had believed in the Church. She had believed in the Police as well. I suppose it made her realise I had been telling the truth all along about the treatment I got at St Mary's.
73. Much later I decided I felt strong enough to try to get some answers and potentially an apology or other redress for the disastrous effect that the treatment of me by the Church had had. It wasn't just what had happened to me but memories of what I had seen done to others that would not leave me. I had read

about three women who had received an apology from the Bishop of Auckland in 2005 for their treatment at St Mary's and the article said the Church was discussing compensation for them.

### **CYFS**

74. On 14 September 2012 I wrote to CYFS asking for names and documentation related to the family my baby daughter was first sent to in 1971. I also wanted to find the second foster family who had been so kind and so upset at the brutality to my baby. I wanted to let the second family know that we were still a family and to thank them. I received a response from Paula Gill. I refer to Exhibit WITN0063002 as a copy of the email. It said:

*As discussed all files that we hold at CYF have been requested today from recall and once these arrive Lynley Brophy will contact you to let you know what information (if any) is in there relating to the foster placement of your daughter.*

*Records relating to what was formally St Marys in Otahuhu are held by the Auckland Anglican Dioceses Office. The contact person there is Jan Scott and the phone number is [GRO-C] You are able to contact her directly. I understand that Jan is very helpful although I have not had direct contact with her myself.*

75. On 16 November 2012 I received a response from Lynley Brophy. I refer to Exhibit WITN0063003 as a copy of the letter. She stated:

*Our records indicate that your daughter, born [GRO-B] 1971 was placed for the purpose of adoption with a couple [GRO-B]71 - [GRO-B]71. This placement was facilitated by St Mary's. This placement was abandoned because of your daughter's darker skin colouring and Maori features. (...) Our records note that your daughter was then placed in temporary foster care [GRO-B]71 - [GRO-B]71. Our records indicate that your daughter was subsequently returned to your care. Neither our adoption nor care & protection records contain any information about your daughter being physically abused during the course of these placements.*

*I have consulted with a Senior Advisor and our Legal Services regarding your requests as outlined above. We are unable to provide you with the names and other information that we hold about your daughter's adoption placement under S9 (2) (a) Official Information Act 1982 in order to protect the privacy of these parties. (...) S10 Adult Adoption Information Act 1985 enables our Service to approach adoptive parents on behalf of a birth parent. However this provision cannot be utilised as your daughter's adoption was not finalised(...).*

76. None of this makes any sense because the only reason they contacted me was because she had been badly beaten. How could there be no record of it?

**Anglican Church**

77. Around the same time In September 2012 I called the Anglican Church to ask who to contact about my experiences at St Mary's. I was directed to Kevin Third, Diocesan Manager.[WITN0063004] I wrote to him in October 2012 outlining my experiences at St Mary's including things I witnessed happen to others. I refer to Exhibit WITN0063005 as a copy of the letter.
78. I met with Mr Third in October 2012 and a meeting was arranged with the Bishop. I remember Mr Third saying "it was a different time". That made me angry because the things that were done to me and my daughter were illegal, then as much as now. I really felt I wanted vengeance for myself and my daughter.
79. I had a meeting with the Bishop of Auckland, Ross Bay, on 14 December 2012, attended also by Diocesan manager Kevin Third and Jane Hanley from Auckland Trust for Women and Children, which had taken over the running of St Mary's. At the meeting I remember Bishop Bay saying "*there would be no continuation of this discussion*" and if there was an apology then "*the apology had to be accepted.*"
80. I received a written apology from the Anglican Church via the Bishop of Auckland Ross Bay on 21 December 2012. I refer to

Exhibit WITN0063006 as a copy of the apology. It acknowledged that I had been treated with cruelty by Matron and the doctors and that my second baby had been placed with people who were not appropriate to care for her resulting in her ill-treatment. The letter concluded

*However, you may now be able to feel that you have done what you are able to draw these matters to the attention of the church authorities so as to be sure that we may learn from them.*

81. Jane Hanley got involved again. She insisted it would help my "healing" for me to visit St Mary's. I am not sure what her qualification to say that was but when I agreed to go it ended up being an absolutely horrific experience. I suffered a panic attack just being there. I think she wanted to show me there wasn't a woodbox with dead babies in it behind the chapel but that was no comfort. I still shudder to think what or who might be under the ground at that place.
82. I sat with this for a year before deciding that an apology was not enough to compensate me and my family for the devastating effect of what was done to me and my children under the Church's auspices. I wrote to Bishop Bay on 14 February 2014 acknowledging the apology and seeking monetary compensation for the criminal acts that were committed on me. I refer to Exhibit WITN0063007 as a copy of the letter. I went into some detail about the inhumane and sadistic treatment I received, including the sexual abuse by two male doctors and the long-lasting effects of all of this on my life in the 44 years that followed. I said:

*From the point I left St Mary's in 1971, and regained the custody of my daughter, my life's course was dictated by the treatment I had suffered. I was unable to properly trust anyone and believed I deserved the violent treatment I received from my partner, to the point that it almost cost me my life. The matrons at St Mary's had*

*instilled in me the idea that I was deserved of the worst treatment and should not permit myself to live a happy life. This was my punishment.*

*The cumulative effective of this grossly negligent treatment resulted in a major depressive episode in 2007 while I was living in Australia. My brother had to fly me back to New Zealand and I was admitted to hospital for intense cognitive behavioural therapy that taught me I had to stop blaming myself for what happened in the past. That it was not my fault.*

*Since our meeting and your letter in 2012 I have had time to consider the apologies and admissions you communicated to me. Although I appreciate the acknowledgement of past actions I do not feel that they constitute a sufficient recognition of the loss I suffered. St Mary's Home altered the course of my life and left me a stranger to one of my children. I know that other women in similar situations have received monetary compensation and I am willing to engage a lawyer if this cannot be settled without legal action. At this stage, for the reasons outlined above I believe that compensation is appropriate.*

83. The Bishop wrote back on 24 February 2014 saying "We are willing to discuss this matter with you. In the first instance it requires the involvement of the Diocesan Manager, Kevin Third. He is on leave at present and returns to the office next week. Once he is back and I have been able to talk with him about this, we will make contact again as soon as possible." I refer to Exhibit WITN0063008 as a copy of the letter

84. A letter dated 29 April 2014 came from Kevin Third, Diocesan manager stating responsibility for any compensation was with ATWC. I refer to Exhibit WITN0063009 as a copy of the letter

*the historical issues around St Mary's home come under the oversight of the Anglican Trust for Women and Children (ATWC). ATWC are responsible for all residual assets and finances of the home."*

*In order to progress this matter it is necessary to involve the board of ATWC. I have brought your correspondence to the attention of the board chair and ATWC will make contact with you regarding next steps.*

85. It appears nothing was done and nearly a year later in February 2015 I wrote to Kevin Brewer, the ATWC board chairperson, seeking financial compensation for the criminal treatment I received “under the guise of the Anglican Church”. I said that I had made phone calls to Anglican Trust for Women and Children, Mr Philip Bielby (CEO) and was told they had no brief from anyone about her case. [WITN0063010]
86. In May 2015 I received a letter from Christina Bryant, partner at Hesketh Henry on behalf of the Anglican Trust for Women and Children, denying any legal liability. I refer to Exhibit WITN0063011 as a copy of the letter. It contains this:

*It is with sadness and regret that the Church acknowledges the pain experienced by women who felt pressured or compelled by circumstances to give up their children for adoption.*

*“You have asked for financial compensation from the Trust for your experiences at St Mary's Home and afterwards. The focus of the Trust is on the current needs of at risk families, and the Trustees have a responsibility to use the Trust's resources best to meet those needs.*

*We are the Trust's legal advisers. We have advised the Trust that it is not liable at law to pay compensation. We recommend you obtain your own legal advice on this issue. If you do not have a lawyer, the Auckland District Law Society (303 5270) can assist you to find someone with the appropriate qualifications and experience.*

*Putting legal liability to one side, the Trust is very willing to continue a process of reconciliation and healing and is willing to discuss options with you or your lawyer to assist that process. The Trust has an excellent counselling service, which can be made available if that is an option you wish to explore.*

- 87. The first paragraph of that letter still makes me angry. I did not “give up” my children for adoption.
- 88. I looked into taking legal action through Cooper Legal which was a firm that did that kind of work. Because I worked full time I was not eligible for legal aid but I could not afford private legal representation on my nurse’s salary.
- 89. Although I have worked all my life I am forced to work full time and although I love my work at 67 it is exhausting. Money is definitely a barrier to me being able to do things I want to do.

**Statement of Truth**

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and was made by me knowing that it may be used as evidence by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into

Abuse in Care: GRO-C

Signed GRO-C \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: 21-09-2020

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