

Witness Name: GRO-A Ms C

Statement No.: [WITN0062001] Exhibits:

[WITN0062002] – [WITN0062013]

Dated: 21.09.2020

ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

WITNESS STATEMENT OF GRO-A Ms C

I, GRO-A Ms C make the following statement: -

INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is GRO-A Ms C. I prefer to go by GRO-A Ms C
2. My date of birth is GRO-A 1959 and I was born in GRO-A. In terms of ethnicity I identify as Pākehā.
3. I have been married to the same man for 39 years and I have Individual Restriction Order (IRO) children and IRO grandsons IRO.
4. I worked as a GRO-A and now work as a GRO-A and GRO-A GRO-A

MY EXPERIENCE OF ABUSE WITHIN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

Introduction to GRO-B-1

5. I first met GRO-B-1 when I was about 11 years old, around 1970. My family were nominally Anglican. My mother attended church and GRO-B-1 suggested to her that I might like to attend Confirmation Classes at the GRO-B Church where he was the Vicar.

6. I'm not sure how old [GRO-B-1] was at the time, but I guess he must have been in his mid-to late 30s. I began attending the Youth Group which was a very good experience for me. I felt accepted by the group and was made to feel very special by [GRO-B-1].
7. I was the youngest child by four years in a family of four and felt quite isolated amidst my older teenage siblings. [GRO-B-1] [GRO-B-1]'s warmth and positive affirmation of me was very important for me at this stage of my life.

The beginning of the abuse

8. [GRO-B-1] spent many months cultivating my attachment to him, and this was accepted by my parents because he was a vicar and my parents trusted him. I had long talks with him both within the Youth Group and alone with him at his home.
9. Right from the beginning [GRO-B-1] had made me welcome in his family [IRO]. His wife [GRO-B-2] also welcomed me, and I was a frequent visitor (at least once a week). I occasionally babysat their four children. They were quite difficult, active kids. I got on all right with [GRO-B-2], but she wasn't warm towards me as [GRO-B-1] was. She seemed stressed at times.
10. I became very involved in the church. I was a member of Vestry – I was invited to be on the Vestry as a teen member, like a youth representative. I was a server, undertook Bible readings in church services, and felt really special and important.

11. It was at his home late one night that **GRO-B-1** first touched me intimately. I would only have been 12 when this happened. His wife, **GRO-B-2**, and the children were asleep, and we were in his lounge. There was only a desk lamp on and music was playing – I remember how dark and cosy it was – and we'd been talking for a while. He leaned over and touched my breast. He then withdrew his hand and said, "I'm glad you trust me". I was very confused about what had happened, but his words were sufficient reassurance for me at the time.
12. **GRO-B-1**'s apparent love for me was a major part of my becoming a Christian. I did not have the maturity and knowledge to differentiate between his kind, loving, attentive, behaviour towards me and his sexual behaviour towards me. His attention towards me was powerful and heady and I resolved my confusion about his sexual overtures to me by basking in the warmth of what I imagined was his genuine love for me and my unquestioning trust in him. I often felt a mixture of longing, excitement and unpleasant churning in my tummy when I was on my way to meet him.
13. As the nature of his sexual behaviours progressed I began to become **IRO** turned on by his touching of me. However, if ever I tried to respond sexually, he would immediately stop touching me. I feel that he did not want a mature, adult sexual love – and believe he specifically wanted sexual contact with a passive child.
14. It was also, I think now, an extra layer of control that he was exerting over me. I responded by learning to be **IRO** totally passive and to mute my own responses.
15. The sexual side of our relationship was never discussed or alluded to by either of us except that once he told me he was only doing these things "to help me be normal". I inferred from that I was in some way abnormal sexually.

16. I know of, and have spoken to, two other women whom I know were abused in the same way by [GRO-B-1], one of them, at about the same time as me, and the other a bit after me, with some overlap.
17. I have a very clear memory of seeing [GRO-B-1] touching [GRO-B-3] sexually when the three of us were together. He had invited us both to accompany him on a trip up country. I was driving so I must have been about 15. [GRO-B-1] sat next to me in the front seat with [GRO-B-3] on his knee. I saw him fondling her with his hand up her skirt. I remember feeling uncomfortable about this, but it did not occur to me to do anything about it. She and I never discussed it. I think it was because both [GRO-B-3] and I had been well prepared (groomed) by [GRO-B-1] that he was able to touch [GRO-B-3] sexually while I was present without either of us commenting or communicating about it.
18. Sometimes during overnight Youth Group events, group members and leaders would sleep [IRO]. I remember this as one of the opportunities he took to touch me sexually. Even at the time I was aware that [GRO-B-1] was sleeping alongside several other girls at different times.
19. The sexual behaviour was so 'normalised' that it did not occur to me that [GRO-B-1]'s behaviour was sexual abuse until I was in my thirties. And it has taken me many years to understand the way he used his position of authority and relational intimacy to build this level of attachment and trust that he could sexually molest young adolescent girls. Spirituality was a powerful means of building connection and intimacy with me at such a young age. He developed and used his control over me (and others) to the degree that he got away with his behaviour for decades at least. It was 20 years before I confronted him in writing.

20. Except for a concern during my School Cert. year that I was spending time with him rather than studying, my parents did not question the amount of time I was spending with GRO-B-1 GRO-B-1. Because he was a vicar they assumed I would be completely safe with him.

The circumstances of the abuse

21. The abuse occurred both at the GRO-B-1' home and at their beach house at GRO-B. At times I was with him alone and at other times with both him and GRO-B-2. He also abused me when surrounded by others while communal sleeping at Youth events.
22. I would sometimes go back to the GRO-B-1' house with them after church on Sundays, and we would have an afternoon lie-down together - with GRO-B-1 between GRO-B-2 and me. Both adults would walk around in just their knickers, and nothing on top. While GRO-B-2 was asleep - or feigning sleep (I've never been sure which), GRO-B-1 would touch me sexually. The children were either asleep or playing - they weren't present.
23. GRO-B-1 once said to me at their home in GRO-B that full intercourse between us was not possible because it was not acceptable between himself and GRO-B-2. He made it sound as if what was going on was acceptable, but I still do not know if GRO-B-2 knew what was going on or if that was just GRO-B-1 pretending that she did. I would have been about 17 at the time he said this.

The nature of the abuse

24. It generally began with spending time together. Sometimes we might be talking after me babysitting or during visits to his home. Sometimes this occurred at the beach in GRO-B. We would be lying in bed together, preparing for rest or sleep. He would begin touching by body in silence and eventually he would touch my breasts and genital area. We usually had our underclothes on.

25. IRO
- IRO - I had to take a passive role. I remember once I became aroused and I had to get out of bed to go to the toilet IRO IRO. He laughed at me when I did this and said, "I knew you'd have to do that". I felt then that he was mocking me - that he knew the power of his actions on me and was just toying with me. But I never dared get angry with him directly because I needed the other, non-sexual side of his warmth, attention and kindness so much.
26. He began to confide in me about adult things: for example, he told me about the sexual relationship between friends of his, and about another minister's wife who was a lesbian. He made disparaging comments about adult women's bodies – especially their breasts – and I learned to assess my own body and sexuality through GRO-B-1's messages about what was O.K. and what wasn't.
27. When I look back, I don't think GRO-B-1 was physically attractive at all himself. He was very misogynistic in the way he spoke about women.
28. My entire relationship with GRO-B-1 was connected in many significant ways to my emerging experiences and concepts of God and Christianity. There were so many pluses in it that I was willing at the time to put up with the niggling doubts and sexual turmoil and discomfort because of the benefits (i.e. the attention, interest in me and what I interpreted as Christian 'love').

29. For example, I had been a quiet [IRO] child, and my long conversations with [GRO-B-1] taught me and helped me to be articulate and to think deeply about spirituality and other important issues. He seemed to respect my perspective. In other contexts of my life, I was treated like a child. I was part of the youth council in [GRO-A] as well, and I think having someone in my world at that time who listened to, affirmed and respected what I had to say made a big difference to me personally.
30. The last time I was with [GRO-B-1] in a sexual-way was when I was about 17. [GRO-B-2] was in hospital at the time and I went round to their house to see if there was anything I could do to help. At that time they still had children living with them [IRO] [IRO]. I don't think the children were old enough to know what was going on, and I don't think they ever witnessed anything.
31. [GRO-B-1] and I ended up in bed. This time, [GRO-B-1] [GRO-B-1] guided my hand onto his erect penis and said forcefully, "See, you have an effect on me too". He sounded angry with me, yet I had no way of finding out what I had done or why he was angry. I was actually very frightened by this behaviour and left. Previously he had controlled any sexual behaviour and not allowed any active participation during his sexual advances. His anger towards me was frightening. I never went back to visit the family on my own after this experience.

THE IMPACT OF THE ABUSE ON ME

32. Firstly, I want to say that I am a resilient, strong woman. I have been married to the same man for 39 years and despite challenges we are still friends. I have IRO wonderful, successful children and IRO thriving grandsons, IRO. I worked as a GRO-A and now work as a GRO-A and GRO-A GRO-A. I do not hold to any one faith however have developed a strong sense of spiritual connectedness within nature and the physical world around me. Making 'space' for myself and my life is a key part of my well-being and ability to live a good and full life.
33. And now I will say that despite many years of therapy, growth and learning, the effects on my life have been long term, persistent and pervasive.
34. I still feel physically sick with a deep sense of embarrassment and shame that I did not realise GRO-B-1's behaviour was sexual abuse until I was in my thirties. His behaviour and grooming were so powerful IRO IRO. IRO. While I understand the grooming and control that paedophiles use to manipulate their victims, I still feel deeply ashamed and embarrassed about this part of my life.
35. My initial awareness began about 30 years ago as I tried to make sense of extremely disturbing dreams of violence towards GRO-B-1 GRO-B-1. The dreams were horrible (one involved me physically chopping off GRO-B-1's head with an axe). I remember the intensity of the distress was associated with my belief that if those dreams could come from me and were inside me then I could no longer be a Christian. At that time this thought was as disturbing as the dreams themselves.

36. Since my early thirties I have been very gradually facing up to the truth of what happened, the meanings and the effects of it. This has not been a small part of my life and I cannot count the costs of what this has involved.
37. I still experience disbelief that **GRO-B-1** used the Christian faith to groom me. I also find it difficult to comprehend that leaders within the Anglican Christian faith community avoided, minimised, deflected, and denied during my attempts towards preventing further opportunities for him to sexually abuse other girls. This has had and continues to have a negative impact on me. This seems evil and has undermined my faith, and my willingness and ability to identify myself as Christian.
38. Since joining the youth group within **GRO-B-1**'s parish, many of my social connections were with Christian people. I married a Christian and my growing awareness about the truth of the abuse has been a huge struggle within this social context.
39. For this reason (and many others) I have felt very alone. Not able to speak openly about the abuse that occurred or seek help from those close to me.
40. I have struggled to grow in learning the skill of how to protect myself within relationships. I care about people and want connection but am vulnerable within close relationships. I had to understand the cost of losing myself and not protecting my own boundaries in my adult life. I had to face my failure to protect myself within the context of **GRO-B-1**'s grooming, sexual abuse, manipulation and controlling behaviours. I am confused by "love", when love can mean accepting and giving to others in the context of not being respected, acknowledged and cared for myself. At times I still experience confusion, anger, pain, and mistrust (of myself and others) alongside the desire for close relationships. I have a few good friends and a loving family however often feel very alone in the world.

41. The attempts that I have made at redress have taken a huge amount of practical, spiritual and emotional energy. The letters and mediation occurred when I was a mother of [IRO] preschool and school age children.
42. I have been reassured that I could not have done more to prevent others young girls from experiencing abuse by [GRO-B-1]. However, I continue to feel distress about the likelihood that he continued in his behaviour and I am deeply sorry that I did not do more to stop him abusing other girls.
43. At 61 years of age I am grateful for the therapists who have stood with me as I attempted to make my way through this confusing maze. At times it is like a jigsaw where very few of the pieces fit together and at other times like a stinking pile of rotting debris.
44. I am hoping that one day it will be finished, whatever that means in my life here on earth. And I hope that the cells of my body will become a part of the physical, natural world, and be at peace.

REDRESS

My Efforts Towards Accountability: 1992

45. On 8 July of 1992 I wrote to [GRO-B-1] to ask why he abused me [WITN0062002]. At that time I was a young mother with [IRO] young children. I had experienced depression and during therapy I realised that [GRO-B-1]'s behaviour towards myself and other young women was sexual abuse of young adolescent girls. I was experiencing and acknowledging levels of anger towards him that were highly distressing to me.
46. Initially these came through dreams where I was being violent towards him (e.g. chopping his head off) but then later, as understanding of his abuse grew more conscious, I experienced a level of anger that I found really distressing.

47. This level of anger did not sit well with my spirituality or view of myself. My goal in contacting him was to eventually find a way to forgive him because I wanted to be free of any negative links to him. I was asking him to explain and I wanted him really to understand what he had done to me, and the harm he had caused. I told him I was shocked at just how angry I was. In the letter I named his behaviour as "abuse".
48. I wrote that I had thought of contact two years earlier but had still felt protective towards his marriage. But I had then come to the realisation that his wife had known about the sexual contact. It did my head in that [GRO-B-2] knew. I could not make sense of this as I do not believe that she could be in the same bed at the same time, and not have known. She didn't take an active part however was present. I would sometimes go to their beach house in [GRO-B] [GRO-B] with him and some of the kids. Thinking about that now, I would never let my husband go to a place where the only place you're going to sleep is on a bunk with her husband or with the children. I know you can normalise things, and it was the seventies, but I knew that this was not ok.
49. In the letter I asked him specific questions that were very important to me, such as: Why did he need sexual contact with very young women/girls? Why did [GRO-B-2] allow it?
50. A week later I received a letter from [IRO], from [GRO-B-1] [GRO-B-1] [WITN0062003]. His written response indicated no insight into his behaviour. He accepted I felt "hurt" and had a right to be "angry" but stressed how long ago this had been. He then went on to detail his own "journey" his own distress and then went into great detail about his wife's illness.

51. In the four-page letter he spent one paragraph at the end answering my questions. In his letter to me he wrote of having “40 years of blameless relationships” but I knew having witnessed him sexually molesting [GRO-B-3] that he had abused more girls than just me.
52. He said his wife had not known about the abuse but had gradually realised “all was not right” and confronted him “with what he was about”. They had stayed together and he himself had decided when he was “safe” to return to parish work. This suggests he had stopped doing parish work and I would still like to know if he had been removed from that work because the church found out about his paedophilia.
53. One worrying thing was that in 1992 he wrote “there is nothing like that in my life now nor has there been for more than a decade.” Given that he groomed and abused me between 1970 and 1976 this suggests he may have carried on abusing young girls for years after I stopped personal contact with him. I had witnessed him abusing another young woman at that time – it wasn't only me.
54. I think he may have abused others as well because we would go away on weekends and sleep [IRO], and he would cycle around sleeping beside other girls in this context. Given the manner and context of his offending, how brazen it was, even when lying beside his wife or with another young person, I worried about the high likelihood of his offending. I don't know how many people he offended against.
55. In the letter he described moving to [IRO] and becoming ill and very distressed as he tried to come to terms with his behaviour. He described his sexual abuse of me as arising from a spiritual lack and from being stressed, rather than a sexual attraction to children.

56. He described the end of the abuse as me making a “clean break” which he agreed was “a good idea” as if we had been in an adult relationship and told me he prayed for me regularly. To be honest I found and continue to find that condescending and repugnant as I do not want his prayers when he was unable to confront or address his own behaviours. He clearly appeared to be extremely self-absorbed and in a state of denial and minimisation of my challenges to his behaviour.
57. He said he believed God had forgiven him and that what he had done had helped his ministry: “I think I’m more forgiving. I’ve been allowed to help people in pain - especially this kind of pain.” This suggests he may have been counselling people who had either abused people or been abused. Naturally, this comment was extremely disturbing to me and did not reduce my concern about his potential to continue harming others.
58. Despite the fact that his wife’s physical illness in 1992 had nothing to do with what he had done to me, he went into great length about how ill she was and how he had to rethink how he served the church because of that. I felt like he and the church just wanted to shut me down, keep me quiet, and make me go away because GRO-B-2 was sick. But I kept thinking, that’s not my fault she is sick, why am I being told all this? Is he facing the facts about the sexual abuse? Is this taking responsibility for his behaviours and is there any attempt at restitution?
59. When he eventually, at the end of the letter, started to address my questions he was still implying some fault with his wife and a lack of sharing in their marriage as well as “stress” being behind the abuse. He said he got comfort from our ‘contact’ but did not address that I had been a child and his behaviour had been illegal.

60. I wrote to **GRO-B-1** on 3 August 1992 asking who his current supervisor was. I can't find that letter now, but I assume he realised I was not going to just let this go as I received a letter from **GRO-B-1** from 18 August 1992. **[WITN0062004]**. He said that he had gone to his Bishop, the Bishop of Waikato Bishop Roger Herft about this. It now appears that **GRO-B-1** **GRO-B-1** confessed to sexual behaviour with a number of girls.
61. On 10 September 1992 I was contacted by a clinical psychologist, Ruth Arcus, who had been instructed by Bishop Roger Herft to assess **GRO-B-1** **[WITN0062005]**. She said she was writing to me and others identified by **GRO-B-1** to ask if I would write to her and describe the abuse by **GRO-B-1** on me and on any other victims to assist her in preparing her report and recommendations. I may have met with her in person, but I can't remember exactly when.
62. Ruth Arcus wrote to me in November telling me she had recommended in-depth counselling for **GRO-B-1** **[WITN0062006]**. I received a summary of sessions **GRO-B-1** **GRO-B-1** had with the psychologist between 18 August and 10 September 1992. I do not remember whether I received this at the time or later. From a chronology that was prepared by **GRO-B-1** I think it had been sent to Bishop Roger Herft. I do not recall how or when I received the chronology.

What I Tried to Achieve in 1993

63. I wrote to Bishop Herft on 11 February 1993 because I had not heard from anyone as to whether [GRO-B-1] had begun counselling to deal with his abuse of me and others [WITN0062007]. I was surprised that no-one had followed up with me seeing as I had initiated the process.
64. It also seemed odd that they would keep paying [GRO-B-1] his salary/stipend and refer him to a clinical psychologist for what was criminal behaviour but not ask whether I wanted any help with dealing with the aftermath of his criminality. All of the efforts of the church went towards [GRO-B-1]'s well-being.
65. Bishop Herft wrote to me in March 1993 saying he had not known of my identity until I wrote to him [WITN0062008]. He said the church had a grievance procedure for cases of "sexual harassment" although he did not send me a copy of the policy or procedure. I found it odd that [GRO-B-1] had told the church he had abused a number of adolescent girls, but the church apparently had not attempted to follow up with any of the victims, even to check on their wellbeing. The psychologist got our names and contact details from [GRO-B-1] because she wrote to us so the church could have asked him for those names too.
66. I knew he was first in Waikato and now in Auckland and I had contact with the Bishops of both Dioceses, who assured me back then he was on "restricted duties" whatever that means – and seemed to be asking me to "trust" them. Since to me, this simply repeats the initial pattern of [GRO-B-1]'s abuse, I did not find this comforting – in fact it felt like a parallel process. I also thought if they have him on restricted duties they must know what he has been doing so what are they doing to investigate his behaviour?

67. I replied quickly to Bishop Herft, including as follows:

[WITN0062009]

My understanding of sexual abuse is that it thrives in an environment of secrecy and silence. This secrecy protects the abuser and keeps the victim silent. Reverend [GRO-B-1] has committed a serious criminal offence against myself and two other women that I know of. It is important that he take responsibility for his actions. I would like to see this matter dealt with within the Church adequately in an open and respectful manner. To do this I would like to make several suggestions:

1. *That the recommendations made by Ruth Arcus be adhered to.*
2. *That there be limitations placed on Reverend [GRO-B-1]'s ministry that are appropriate to the offence at least until this whole issue is resolved.*
3. *That communication to me be direct and that you keep me informed as to what is being done and what progress is being made.*
4. *It is important to me that you respect the fact that I have been one of the victims of Reverend [GRO-B-1]'s abusive behaviour and that I am acting in a responsible way in wanting to see this issue resolved and dealt with appropriately.*
5. *That the ultimate aim be reconciliation and healing for both Reverend [GRO-B-1] and those whom he has abused.*

68. I said that I would go through the criminal justice system if the abuse was not dealt with appropriately through the church's own systems. I also noted that the phrase sexual harassment as used by Bishop Herft was not the correct phrase to cover sexual abuse of children.

69. In March 1993 I also wrote to the Bishop of Auckland asking whether [GRO-B-1] had commenced counselling

[WITN0062010].

70. Since I had been told that **GRO-B-1** was required to attend counselling, I asked for independent verification from the counsellor that he was attending counselling, was no longer in denial, was cooperating in the process, and was making progress. I have kept good records and have a timeline and I am sure I never received this verification.

Mediation

71. I was sent the church's grievance procedure by Bishop Herft on 2 April 1993 after asking for it. He accepted these were serious offences and suggested mediation. **[WITN0062011]**
72. A woman called Nerys Parry was appointed by the Anglican Church, as the designated person to deal with my complaint. We eventually had a face to face mediation which resulted in a written document called a record of agreement **[WITN0062012]**. She was fine, but in retrospect - she was not an independent mediator as she was appointed by the church. I was not given a choice over this decision.
73. Over time I realised that this mediation process had little power to ensure that **GRO-B-1** was prevented from reoffending. I wanted to ensure that he would NEVER work in circumstances where he would have access to young girls. While they agreed to this at some level they did not respect my intentions or actions to the extent that they did not continue to inform me.
74. Initially, **GRO-B-1** was removed from being in parish work, but there was not further communication with me about the limits of his ministry. I knew he was attending counselling, but I just think he should never, ever, have been allowed to be in parish work again. I thought that was one of the outcomes that was agreed from the mediation. If you've got somebody who is a paedophile, why would you put him in a parish?

75. When considering my attempts at redress I am aware that I had to use a lot of energy and push very hard to make the progress that I did. And despite my efforts I have no assurance that the Anglican Church took steps into the future to ensure that he had no work opportunities to reoffend. It should not have been my job to keep other kids safe but that was what I was trying to do. We came out with that written agreed outcome, but I have no assurance that they followed it at all. I know [GRO-B-1] had counselling, but that's all.
76. To me it seemed and continues to seem like the response of a misogynistic "old boys club" designed to protect [GRO-B-1]. How do you ever trust these people who minimise, avoid and protect one of their own where there is clear evidence of illegal molestation of young girls? I am a compassionate person and did not want [GRO-B-2] harmed in the midst of her ill-health, however using her as a protective shield was frustrating and undermining of trust in the system or their approach to such serious misconduct by a parish priest.
77. I put a great deal of thought and effort into pursuing the matter but in the end, I did not feel reassured in any way. I felt as if I was fobbed off within a system set up by the Anglican Church and that the church was harbouring [GRO-B-1], even though they knew what he had done.
78. I had been reliably informed that paedophilia is a compulsive behaviour, so I knew that it was extremely likely that [GRO-B-1] [GRO-B-1] had abused or was still abusing other children. I was not prepared to accept his word about it and I wanted a guarantee that it has stopped. I did not at the time seek revenge on [GRO-B-1] [GRO-B-1], but I did want to find a remedy against abuse of this nature happening again.

79. Before the mediation occurred, Tom Brown, Assistant Bishop of Wellington, referred in a letter to [GRO-B-1] as the alleged offender. This was the first time anyone from the church had used language that reflected what [GRO-B-1] was and sounded like they meant it. I feel like everyone else was trying to fob it off. He also said he knew I was free to go the police.

[WITN0062013]

Police

80. I realised it may be necessary for me to go to the police in order to resolve this. Initially the thought did not occur to me, but the lack of the Anglican Church's appropriate response alarmed me sufficiently to cause me to consider it. So, I went to the police due to my experience of the church system's lack of integrity around this issue. Unfortunately, I felt like it was just hitting another door.
81. They just put his name in a database in case other complaints against him came in and told me it was his word against mine. So, I had to let it go. But it did satisfy my feeling that I had done all I could. I put in a lot of effort, at a time in my life when my energy was not high due to attending therapy to process and resolve my own experience of being sexually abused by an Anglican Priest paedophile while doing my best to care for [IRO] children and maintain my own life and marriage.
82. I feel quite horrified when I reflect on the lack of responsibility or communication by the Anglican Church leadership and system that knew without doubt that one of their workers was a sexual offender however did little to reassure me that he was being prevented from re-offending.

83. While it is awful to face the impact of a “man of the cloth” sexually offending towards myself and to face the reality of witnessing it with another young girl, and to spend years trying to make sense of this behaviour, and the effects that it has had on my own life, family and relationships ... I cannot begin to describe or express to you how disturbing it is to know that as a paedophile there is a strong likelihood that he may seek out opportunities to repeat this behaviour.
84. I did the best that I could to prevent this from happening and truly have to face what seems true ... I was not taken seriously and there is a high chance that I have failed in this regard. In making the decision to prepare this statement for the Royal Commission my motivation was the hope that no others will ever have to fight as hard or be as disillusioned as I have been in my attempts to protect others from becoming victims of paedophilia.

Project Restore

85. I initially met with Project Restore in March 2019. It did not go well. Project Restore is a specialist restorative justice service provider which works with vulnerable victims of sexual or domestic violence. They did not communicate in a clear, timely or responsive enough way. From the beginning, communication and consideration were not taken into account.
86. For example, it was not communicated to me that multiple members of Project Restore would be in the initial meeting. I arrived expecting to meet with one member of their team only to learn that the assumption was that I would meet with three members of their team including one male member and a new member of the team. That was really disturbing at the time, as my assumption was that they would have given me this information beforehand as part of the preparation and asked me for permission in this regard.

87. Then, as the process progressed, a new name was mentioned in an email, in relation to sharing my information with her. There was no clear explanation of who she was, what role she would be playing and what she needed my information for. When I raised these questions, no answers were able to be provided although there was a clear need for someone to explain what was happening. This felt concerning as Project Restore had been asking for sensitive information to be shared with this person without being able to explain what would be happening. More information through each step of the restorative justice process may have allowed for me to remain in the driver-seat, rather than just a participant in a confusing process.
88. I stated in an email in March 2020 that I had been experiencing a lack of trust in the process. In response, Project Restore mentioned another male person from the Anglican church, without sharing who he was, what role he would actually be playing, what information had been shared with him. This was another source of trepidation for me and once again put me in the passenger seat of a moving process.
89. Through email I repeatedly asked for more information, clarification and consideration. I had tried to take a brave step by exploring this process, given the experience I had with mediation in the church previously. It felt like there had been a lack of consideration and that the onus was on me to point out the considerations that need to be taken when working with survivors.
90. For these reasons I chose to press pause on the restorative justice process.

WHAT I WANTED AND WANT IN TERMS OF REDRESS

91. I wanted to do all I could to prevent other young girls experiencing sexual abuse by **GRO-B-1**. Additionally, as a Christian, I understood and was attempting to practice the principles of repentance, forgiveness, restitution and reconciliation. I was hoping to do my part within a framework where everyone was committed to the same principles. I was shocked by **GRO-B-1** **GRO-B-1**'s past behaviour but as time went on I became more shocked as I realised he was still ignoring these basic principles of the Christian faith.
92. It wasn't just **GRO-B-1** that wasn't adhering to these principles, the church wasn't either. One person is one person, but when you have a system that allows this to happen, that's a bigger sickness. It appears the Anglican Church was protecting and supporting him in this process which deeply hurt and disappointed me. I wanted an assurance that this was not the case, that the church did not support and would not support any member of the priesthood who abuses children. I wanted to experience them taking very seriously the historical abuse and the potential for future abuse by him. For me as an adult, this is the biggest issue. You're going to have individuals who do this, but for them to be protected within an institution, that's terrible.

Statement of Truth

I am so grateful that I have kept documentation in relation to my attempts at redress. This abuse began 50 years ago and my attempts at redress began approximately 28 years ago. 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.

Signed

GRO-C

Dated:

21/09/2020