

Witness Name: GRO-A Mr DG

Statement No.: WITN0503001

Dated: 18/05/2021

## ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

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WITNESS STATEMENT OF GRO-A Mr DG

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I, GRO-A Mr DG, state:

### INTRODUCTION

1. That is my name, I was born on GRO-A 1962. My mother's last name was GRO-B. I was given the name GRO-A. This was later changed to GRO-A Mr DG. My father was GRO-B.
2. I am a New Zealander of European descent. I am self-employed and reside alone in Christchurch. I don't have any children.
3. I have previously suffered PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and still have flashbacks relating to the sexual abuse I was subjected to as a child in state and faith-based care.
4. In 2002 and in 2003 I made statements to police about the sexual abuse I survived as a child in care at Marylands Special School in Christchurch in the 1970's.

5. At the time of making these statements to the police I was provided the opportunity to view historic photographs of Marylands School, the St John of God Brothers, and the students. I identified the brothers and students I knew from my time at Marylands School. I was also able to identify and name various features in the photographs of the Marylands School complex in Nash Rd, Halswell, Christchurch.
6. I subsequently gave evidence for the prosecution in the criminal trial of Bernard McGrath which related to historic sexual abuse at Marylands School in the 1970's. It was a difficult process for me. The lawyer questioning me made me feel disbelieved.

### *Early childhood*

7. I grew up in [GRO-A] near Dunedin. I had an older sister [GRO-B-1] and two younger brothers [GRO-B-2] and [GRO-B-3]. Before living in [GRO-A] we had been living at [GRO-A]. My father worked on a forklift. My mother used to work at [GRO-B] in Dunedin.
8. My father is still alive, but I hardly ever see him. He lives in Dunedin. My mother died about 18 years ago in Dunedin.
9. My parents split up when I was a child. My mother could not handle my younger brother [GRO-B-2] and I and so the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) stepped in and placed us into foster care. My sister went to live with my grandparents, but I do not know where [GRO-B-3] went. [GRO-B-2] went to Campbell Park (a boys' home). I have a good relationship with [GRO-B-2], and we still talk regularly.

### *Foster care*

10. When my parents first split up, I went to the [GRO-B] family (a foster home) on [GRO-B] Street in [GRO-B].

11. I was there for a while but cannot remember how long. I was young, but I cannot recall my exact age. I went to a few foster homes before Marylands School, but I cannot remember the details.
12. I was abused when I was with the **GRO-B** family. The abuse was sexual. I was indecently touched by the father of the family. His name was **GRO-B-4**, maybe **GRO-B-4** **GRO-B-4** sexually abused me three – five times a week for the duration of the time I was with the family. He indecently touched me and made me do the same to him.
13. Due to the passing of time I now struggle to remember the exact order of things, but I know that I was also sexually abused in other homes before I went to Marylands. I recall being at a foster home in **GRO-B** in Dunedin but cannot recall the exact detail.
14. I remember being told to shut up at the foster homes. I did not see my parents very much while I was in foster care. I stayed in touch with them occasionally but did not see them or my siblings. It was extremely hard being taken from my family and separated from my brothers and sisters.

#### *Faith-Based care*

15. I was placed in a “special class for backwards pupils” at **GRO-A** School in 1970, my “behavioural problems” led me to being transferred to another “special class” at **GRO-A** School towards the end of that year.
16. I was at **GRO-A** school when I was referred to Marylands by the Department of Social Welfare’s psychological services. The date I was admitted to Marylands School in Nash Road, Halswell, Christchurch was the **GRO-A Mr DG**, and the date I was discharged was the **GRO-A Mr DG**

17. I was nine years old when I was sent to Marylands School, I had learning difficulties and required special teaching. Marylands School was a boarding school for boys run by the brothers of the St John of God Order.
18. I do not know why the Department of Social Welfare sent me to Marylands School. I remember that I travelled from Dunedin to Christchurch by plane. I can remember when I arrived there, I thought that the buildings were really long. The entrance was off the long driveway at the front. The buildings were old and were two-storeys high. There was a church, a pool, a car park in the front and on the other side of the building there was a big accessible area. There was also a St John of God hospital on the complex.
19. The first brother I met was Brother Rodger Moloney (Brother Moloney). He was bald with glasses. I can picture him in my mind. He was the principal and had an office. He did not stay with the boys. He stayed in the brothers' monastery.
20. There were dormitories for the boys. I was in the middle one.
21. I was aged from nine years to 17 years during my time at the school. There were about 60 boys at the school while I was there. During my time I stayed in various dormitories. There were four in total, colour-coded Red, Green, Purple and Brown. Each dorm was run by a brother and catered for different age groups. A brother would live in his own bedroom attached to the dorm.
22. The dorms consisted of 3 rooms in each. These had single beds in them. Each boy had his own bed and a set of drawers. The dorms themselves were each similar and were open plan. There was a television room adjoining each dorm.
23. Brother Sebastian Lock (Brother Sebastian) was the sports teacher. He coached soccer. He oversaw the first dormitory that I was in. He was good to me.

24. The school owned a bach at Waiuku Beach and the boys were taken there in a van for short stays.
25. In the school holidays I went home to Dunedin and stayed at my mother's house or stayed with different foster families.

## **THE ABUSE**

26. While at Marylands School I was sexually abused by two brothers, Brother Moloney who was the Marylands Prior and Brother Bernard McGrath (Brother McGrath) who was a teacher. Brother McGrath was also in charge of the Red dormitory.
27. Later during my time at Marylands Brother McGrath was my dorm master. He was also a teacher at the school. His room was just along the corridor past the complex laundry.

### *Sexual abuse by Brother Bernard McGrath*

28. The first incidence of abuse involved Brother McGrath. Initially the abuse involved him touching my genitals. Brother McGrath would give me lollies after doing this. The abuse with Brother McGrath then increased in regularity and occurred virtually every day. It gradually increased in severity. It went from him touching my genitals and making me touch his to us performing oral sex on each other.
29. For a while he would also perform anal intercourse on me and make me do the same thing to him. This occurred at various places around the school, in his bedroom, in a spare room, the dining room, church, bird aviary, school canteen, toilets near the gym, the gym, kitchen, laundry, film room, the laundry, the swimming pool grounds, in the school van. He was determined that we both had to ejaculate every time.



30. Brother McGrath would tell me not to tell anyone and that if I did then I would not be allowed to go home, and he would punish me. He also mentioned that he would send me to a boys' home.
31. On several occasions I threatened to tell people about what was going on between me and Brother McGrath. As a result, he would lock me in a spare room for a couple of hours. Often, he would beat me with a broom and strap me all over my body and then lock me in the room. He would make further threats if I did not stop crying. On other occasions he would punch me in the face.

*Sexual abuse by Brother Rodger Moloney*

32. Brother Moloney also sexually abused me daily. This abuse occurred all around the school. He would fondle me, and he held my hair and pushed my head down to perform oral sex on him; he would ejaculate into my mouth and make me swallow the ejaculation. Brother Moloney also performed oral sex on me. The first time oral sex happened was in a spare room beside his office.
33. The abuse intensified over time with Brother Moloney eventually performing anal intercourse on me. Oral and anal sex were eventually a daily occurrence. My bottom would often be sore because of the abuse and on multiple occasions I recall it being purple in colour.
34. Brother Moloney never used a condom. He was always dressed in his black trousers, black jersey and white shirt. During the evening about twice a week, Brother Moloney would take me to his bedroom. This usually occurred early evening after dinner, on other occasions when the boys had gone to bed.
35. He would make me perform oral and anal sex on him in his bed. I would not spend all night in his room and would return to mine.

36. I got hit on the back of the legs. I got shut in the cupboard/wardrobe. It was dark, and I was scared and crying. Brother Moloney said that if I ever told anyone I would never see my parents again. He and McGrath said this many times. They told me "They won't believe you, whatever you tell them, they'll believe us before they believe you - you're only a kid".
37. I cannot recall how many times this happened. It happened a lot over the years I was at Marylands. I felt like I was the most abused boy at Marylands. I felt like I was a target to be abused. I felt like I was the most vulnerable boy at the school. I was the weakest link.

*Sexual abuse by both Brothers at the same time*

38. During my time at the school on occasion both Brothers Moloney and McGrath sexually abused me at the same time. This happened on several occasions in the main school office and a spare room next to the office. They would make me lay on the floor, one would perform oral sex on me while I gave the other oral sex. They took turns at having anal intercourse with me.
39. I was given privileges that the other boys would not get. I was able to help in the kitchen and in the Brothers' dining room. If they had ice-cream, then I would get some. I also received lollies and soft drinks from them.
40. Brother McGrath would give another pupil, GRO-B-5, lollies and soft drinks. I recall seeing Brother McGrath sexually abusing GRO-B-5. This was in the bird aviary and in Brother McGrath's bedroom.
41. We were told that we were not allowed to tell anyone about this. Brothers McGrath and Moloney normalised this type of sexual activity to me, and I became involved in similar sexual activity with other boys at the school. The brothers would make us boys perform sexual acts on each other. This included sexual fondling and oral sex.

42. At the time I thought that this must be exactly what boarding school was like, because it was so common and normal at Marylands. Looking back on it now, I realise that this isn't normal behaviour.
43. I remember the names of the other students I was sexually involved with at Marylands. Brothers McGrath and Moloney were aware this was happening and did not discourage it.
44. I can recall a specific incident during which Brother McGrath instructed me to have anal intercourse with GRO-B-5 and while I did this Brother McGrath played with my penis.
45. In the months before I left the school both Brother McGrath and Brother Moloney threatened me that if I told anyone about the abuse, they would track me down and give me a hiding. Their threats were also made against my family. When I left school, I was too scared to tell anyone.

#### *Reporting the abuse*

46. While I was at school, I told Brother Sebastian about what Brothers McGrath and Moloney were doing to me. He was the sports master. He talked to me about this, and he said, "it wasn't nice," however, nothing was done about it. Soon after Brothers McGrath and Moloney found out that I had talked to Brother Sebastian and they both beat me and made further threats.
47. During my time at the school, I never received any medical treatment for any pain or injuries related to the sexual abuse.



48. This type of abuse became a part of my daily routine. Sexual indecencies between the boys were common and this behaviour occurred even when the defendants were not present. It seemed 'normal' and I was often involved in this type of behaviour.
49. Brother McGrath was transferred away from the school at some stage. I don't know where he went. I was relieved when he was gone.
50. I had trouble learning. I do not think I was ever particularly good at schoolwork. At Marylands, I wanted to learn but I was just abused. There was reading and writing. There were classrooms. The teachers included Mrs Baker, GRO-A Ms DP Brother McGrath and another brother. I feel like I did not learn anything from these teachers.
51. I can remember telling a DSW social worker who visited me at Marylands about what Brother McGrath and Brother Moloney were doing to me. But they did nothing about it.
52. I told this female social worker the truth. I was about 12 years old at the time. I showed the social worker the marks and bruises on my legs. I told her that I was being physically and sexually abused and that other Marylands boys were being abused too. I do not recall the social worker's name. I was visited by the social worker twice during the entire time that I was at Marylands School.
53. I remember getting a massive hiding for telling social welfare about the abuse. Moloney grabbed my head and hit it against a wall. Social welfare must have told Moloney about the complaint. I still have a lump on my head from that incident, and nothing was done. I continued to get abused, as did other boys.

## IMPACT OF ABUSE

54. Marylands ruined my life. I was always so scared at the school, I slept poorly, and was always afraid that I was going to be abused in my bed. I often told my grandparents and mother on school holidays that I did not want to go back.
55. I did not know who I could trust. When I tried to tell people, no one ever listened to me. Instead, I would end up getting detentions and beatings – being locked in cupboards for hours as punishment for trying to tell people or threats that I was going to be sent to a boy's home.
56. The ongoing sexual and physical abuse I was subjected to as a child at Marylands School has wrecked my life. I was diagnosed as having PTSD. I am still having flashbacks. I used to be on medication to help with this, but I am no longer on it. When I was on the medication, the flashbacks happened less frequently and less severely but it never stopped them completely. The flashbacks will not go away. I am scared that they are going to be with me for life. When I am at work, I sometimes must stop what I am doing until the flashbacks go away. It is a nuisance.
57. When I left Marylands School I had nothing. I was on the unemployment benefit. I was living in a boarding house in Dunedin with a lot of other people.
58. My criminal convictions date between 1980 and 2003 in Dunedin and include dishonesty and indecency offences. In GRO-B, I was convicted for indecently assaulting a female aged 12 - 16 years. I got into a lot of trouble, and that, I will always regret.

59. The indecency conviction relates to me sexual offending against a girl in a park. I was 18 years old at the time. The girl was about 13 years old. It was a serious charge, but I was spared a prison sentence. I have also had two drink driving convictions.
60. I attribute my own criminal offending to the abuse I was subjected to at Marylands School. Although I have a few criminal convictions I have never been to prison. I consider myself lucky not to have been sent to prison. I am ashamed of the offences I have committed.
61. I don't trust any government department and never will because I was allowed to be abused as a child by the people responsible for my care. If I get official looking letters sent to me, I just rip them up. I do not want anything from the Government. I do not vote and do not listen to politicians.
62. I have always wished that Marylands and St John of God would burn down. I have always hoped that the offending Brothers of St John of God would go to hell for what they did to me and the other boys at Marylands School.
63. Since being at Marylands I have always felt anger about how I was treated. I will never forget Marylands until the day I die. I have driven past the site a few times on Nash Road, Halswell when heading to south Christchurch and it triggers the bad memories.
64. If I had been sent to a proper school instead of Marylands, I would have had a better life. I would not have gotten into trouble with the law. I blame the Department of Social Welfare for sending me there.

65. It upsets me to see on the news what happened historically to other people in care in New Zealand.
66. The abuse has shaped my life. I believe the impact the abuse has had on me is irreversible.

## **REDRESS**

67. In 2002 I became aware of complaints being made about the treatment of boys at Marylands. It was then that I contacted Brother Peter Burke (Brother Burke) of St John of God.
68. On 6 August 2002, Brother Burke came to see me in Dunedin. He talked with me about what had happened to me at Marylands School. My counsellor Brian attended the meeting as my support person. Brian was the first person I disclosed my abuse to. I told Brother Burke about my experiences as a child at Marylands. I was advised to make a complaint to the police.
69. Two days later, on 8 August 2002, Brian and I made a complaint to Detective Sargent B J Free, in Dunedin. I later made a second statement to DS Free, and finally met with the detectives in Christchurch who were investigating the case in March 2003. Again, my counsellor, Brian attended the interview with me.
70. In 2003, St John of God paid a 'pastoral gesture' to me for the abuse I suffered at Marylands. It went into a trust for me that my lawyer helped me set up and has remained there since. I received \$300,000, paid in three instalments. Additional to the \$300,000, Saint John of God paid \$17,601 towards my legal bills and psychologist.

71. As a result of my discussions with Brother Burke, I then made an official complaint with the New Zealand Police. I know that many other Marylands survivors also made complaints about the sexual and physical abuse they had suffered there. I had not spoken with anyone else from Marylands, but I do know that others too went on to later give evidence against Bernard McGrath and Rodger Moloney.
72. In 2002 and 2003 I made statements to police about the sexual abuse I survived as a child in care at Marylands Special School in Christchurch in the 1970's.
73. I subsequently gave evidence for the prosecution in the criminal trial of Bernard McGrath which related to historic sexual abuse at Marylands School in the 1970's. It was a tiring process for me. The lawyer questioning me made me feel disbelieved.
74. In making a complaint to the police it was my intention to have those responsible exposed and for them to be held accountable in a court of law.
75. I recently made a claim through the Ministry of Social Development on the advice of my lawyers.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

76. The Government needs to make sure children are sent to the right place. No abuse. No violence. A place where children are safe. The government should check on the children in its care. They should talk with the children about what is happening in those places. The people doing these checks should be independent. These people must be the right people for the job and must be trusted by the children in care they are serving.



77. All my life I was told to “shut up” whenever I tried to talk to anyone about the abuse I suffered. Children need to be heard when they are trying to tell an adult about these issues.

**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.

Signed: GRO-C

Dated: 18/5/2021