

## **A Submission to The Royal Commission into institutional responses to child Sexual Abuse**

**Paul Edmund Coore. Date of Birth: 6/11/56**

I really appreciate the opportunity to tell my story about the sexual abuse I was the victim of during my childhood and teenage years. I am presenting information as I best remember it, and cannot give specific dates as the time is too distant. I think I know names but am not 100% sure so have not included them here.

I never told anyone of this abuse at the time it occurred. And have not been to any authority since.

I am opening up and exposing these experiences and my reactions to contribute to awareness raising of how pervasive abuse was and detail how it impacts on the lives of individuals. I am not looking for any outcome from my submission other than contributing in a small way to improved protection for children who are in the care of adults in the future.

I am also including my copy of my file from the time I was a Ward of the State , which I obtained in the early 90's. This file will add to the knowledge the commission has of how institutional care was managed in the 60's and 70's and provide context of the life I was living at the time in which the sexual abuse took place. I think it would be fair of the commission to redact the names of people except for my own if that document is to be put on the public record-which I hope it will be. I think giving up this file is also a symbolic way of helping me let go of the past. Thanks for the opportunity.

The first incident I remember was when I was a resident of "Raith" Children's home in Campbelltown from 1966-1968. During this time I was a cub scout at a local troop. During one overnight camp, an older man slept in the tent with us. He asked me to take my pyjamas off and get into his sleeping bag. I remember lying next to him and feeling his penis against my arm. I asked him if it was his leg-and he said no. I remember him saying I should get back into my sleeping bag-and do not remember him touching me in any way. I don't know what year this was but think it must have been 1968, when I was 11.

The second incident I remember occurred when I was first placed in Castle Hill House Boy's Home in 1969. I was 12. One of the older boys made me masturbate him in the toilets of the shower block during my first days there. He told me that I should do it because my older brother had when he was there the year before-and he would tell on him if I did not. He masturbated me also. I had not reached puberty and recall that it hurt to have it done to me. I am not sure how many time this occurred. The boy was removed from the home sometime in those first months I think. I recall we were told he and another boy was moved to another home because of something they did.

The third incident I remember occurred during 1971 or 72, while I was on a scout jamboree, and still a resident of Castle Hill House. I was a member of a Baulkham Hills Scout troop and we went on a train to a Jamboree camp. On the way back on the train my scout leaders let another scout leader from a different troop take me with him to another carriage. I do not recall their conversation but remember going with the scout leader through another carriage to one which had a space for luggage or parcels. Here the scout leader masturbated me and performed oral sex on me-and had me masturbate him. I do not recall whether he walked me back to my carriage or not. Soon after this incident I stopped going to Scouts. I don't recall his name or the names of the scout leaders but think I read in the papers years later that this Scout master was charged several counts of abuse. I think I know the name of the Scout troop he was from but I am not sure.

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The final incident I remember occurred while at Castle Hill House. My father visited me and while walking with me towards Baulkham Hills pool he showed me a pair of swim shorts he had brought me. He asked me to get changed into them in front of him while we were walking across a field which was on the side of the deaf school, which we could cut across when going to the pool. I said I did not want to but did so as he got angry. I only can recall them being yellow shorts, and really tight and him patting my bottom before he left me and I headed to the pool. I remember when at the pool I lay down on the hot cement, cried and wet myself. I cannot recall the year but think it may have been 71 or 72.

So what is the long term impact of these events on me?

To be honest I cannot isolate these events 100% from the overall impact of a youth spent as a Ward of the State, and so will present some points I see as relevant to the abuse and let the commission decide if they are.

After the abuse by the scout leader I felt immense guilt because I found the oral sex pleasurable-event though I was in a state of shock at the time it happened. For months I started masturbating too frequently- to the point where my penis was red raw at times because I could not stop it. I was called names in the home for doing this until one of the older boys pointed out everyone did it sometimes.

I did engage in some mutual masturbation and fondling with a couple of boys at Castle Hill House and it took me a long time after to realise what may have been experimenting to them was something more to me.

When I went to live with foster parents I was to start what was 5<sup>th</sup> form at High School in 1973. I was forced to go to a boys school, St Patricks Strathfield. I protested that I wanted to go to a co-ed school only-but was not allowed. I rebelled at St Patricks and left by end of first term.

It took me years to come to understand and accept my sexuality and feel comfortable as a gay man. In my late teen years and throughout much of my twenties I was self-destructive: drank to excess, took drugs, had countless sexual partners, alienated some friends, left good job opportunities, had two almost complete breakdowns ,and emotionally scarred at least one lovely woman who attempted to have a relationship with me.

Even now I still sometimes question whether or not I would be gay if these things did not happen.

My relationship with my father was broken before the incident I recalled. He died a homeless alcoholic, living in a Salvation Army hostel.

I am commitment phobic, and at 56 have never been in a long term relationship.

I have trust issues with anyone who takes in instant liking to me.

I have a resentment of some authority figures I come across-both men and women.

I attempted suicide in 1987-and spent nearly a year (it could have been longer) having therapy afterwards. Even then I did not tell the psychiatrist anything about the sexual abuse incidents- at least I don't remember doing so.

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Members of the royal commission will no doubt find other points when reading through my Ward of the State file.

So there you have it. I think that my story provides an example of how destructive an impact any incident of sexual abuse can have.

In closing I would like to say that many aspects of being a ward of the state were positive experiences for me. As I have gotten older I have managed to keep my life together because of the love and support of the many friends I have made. I am ultimately a very lucky man. I recognise thought that I will be having some more therapy after doing this.

I hope my story encourages others to come forward.

Cheers

Paul Coore

P.s I would be happy to answer any questions you may have