



**QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**


Statement of Witness

<i>Name of Witness</i>	Ian Courtney PEERS
<i>Date of Birth</i>	28 June 1948
<i>Address and contact details</i>	Known to Commission of Inquiry
<i>Occupation</i>	Retired
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Detective Sergeant Fabian Colless
<i>Date taken</i>	22 January 2013

I, Ian Courtney PEERS state;

1. My full and correct name is Ian Courtney PEERS and I am 64 years of age having been born on the 28 June 1948. I am currently retired.
2. On the 21 January 2013, I was interviewed by Detective Sergeant Colless and Detective John Mison, investigators from the Office of the Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, and provided the details contained within this statement.
3. In 1989 I was performing the duties as the Executive Director, Youth Support, Department of Family Services. Sometime later in 1990 my role as the Executive Director was abolished and I was moved to act as the Director of Court Services.
4. My responsibility, as the Executive Director, at that time covered all four Youth Detention Centres which included John Oxley Youth Centre, Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre, Cleveland Youth Centre (Townsville), Westbrook and another facility called 'The Outlook' at Boonah. I also had a general responsibility for other youth and justice matters. I remember the managers of the detention centres at that time were Peter Coyne (JOYC), Tim Evans (Cleveland), Janice Doyle (Sir Leslie Wilson) and Judy Armstrong (Westbrook).

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5. As the Executive Director I had a supervisory role over all of the centres mentioned above and I was also a member of the Senior Management Executive Team at that time and so I participated in that role in relation to broader management issues of the Department. This team met on a regular basis with the team members contributing to the matters on the agenda.
6. While I was the Executive Director I was directly responsible to George Nix who was the Deputy Director. Nix was directly responsible to the then Director General Allan Pettigrew. The Director General was directly responsible to the Minister, Department of Family Services. The managers of the Youth Detention Centres were directly responsible to me including Peter Coyne.
7. Some of the other senior executive within the department at that time that I recall were Myolene Carrick, Barry Mcphee and Colin Thatcher and Ruth Matchett.
8. At some point in time in 1990, I changed position from the Executive Director, Family Services to the Director of Court Services within the same department.
9. I recall that while I was the Executive Director each Youth Detention Centre had its own issues. There were always issues with all of the centres. I remember that when I was first appointed to the job (Executive Director) one of my early roles was to close down Sir Leslie Wilson in its existing role. I recall that it was to be downsized to a remand function.
10. I recall that JOYC back at that time was particularly troublesome. I think that part of the problems that arose was when some staff from Sir Leslie Wilson transferred to JOYC and began to have conflict with JOYC management and staff who were running JOYC with a different philosophy from Sir Leslie Wilson.

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11. I believe that there were a number of confrontations between the Manager Peter Coyne and some members of staff at JOYC. I remember that these were about incidents which seemed reasonable to me when they were described to me by the manager and the deputy manager. I also recall the previous manager; Terry McDermott was also concerned with some of the Sir Leslie Wilson staff working at JOYC.
12. One of the incidents I recall was when Peter Coyne advised me that he turned up one night at the centre to find a staff member in his pyjamas and slippers, (ready for bed) while on shift. The staff member was advised to stay awake as part of his duties. Peter Coyne left, then later returned to find the same staff member was back in his pyjamas and when confronted again, become angry and told Peter Coyne it wasn't his job to come in the centre at night. There were many other incidents but I remember that this one stood out in my mind.
13. I was aware of an incident that involved a female child resident and allegations of sexual encounter with some boys; I think the girl was called Annette Harding. I remember that Peter Coyne had advised me of the incident and that I recall attending the centre (JOYC) and having a meeting with Peter Coyne in his office and the deputy manager (Jenny Foote or Anne Dutney). I recall having that incident explained to me in some detail and remember talking with Coyne and the deputy manager about what action should be taken at that time. I remember that police had been contacted at that time. It was also a meeting to ensure that all the proper processes that had to be done were in fact done.
14. I remember that Peter Coyne had contacted me and briefed me on what had occurred in relation to this incident. I certainly would have expected to have been advised and briefed by Peter Coyne or any other centre manager in relation to a major incident at a centre and this is what Peter Coyne had done.

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15. I can't recall if I briefed up to the Deputy Director George Nix but I believe I would have. I am unable to say if this matter was briefed to the Minister. It would have been the responsibility for Nix to report to the Director General of the Department.
16. I was shown a photocopy of a document by Detective Colless, titled 'Report on the Educational Program – 24 May 1988' dated 27 May 1988 by Peter Coyne. I don't recall whether I had seen this document. It is possible that I advised Peter to directly advise Mr George Nix.
17. In relation to the allegation that this matter was covered up, I don't find it surprising that allegations would have been made by staff at JOYC. I remember that some staff at JOYC took a very negative view of the manager Peter Coyne and the management team generally and were looking for reasons to blame Peter Coyne.
18. In relation to the allegations of a cover up for this matter it doesn't make sense due to the sheer numbers of people involved such as the police who were contacted and other staff who had involvement in this matter. I would say that it would have been a pretty dumb cover-up. I cannot agree with this allegation and state that there was no cover-up. I can say that everything we could think to do was done.
19. Back in 1988 there was no standardised process or procedures for managers to follow so it was up to the manager to investigate and manage incidents as they arose. I think there was a significant issue in that there was not a set manual for the manager and staff to follow back then. I would have expected that the manager back then would have consulted with the members of his or her professional team.
20. I was not aware of any other allegations of sexual abuse by staff on children at JOYC while I was the Executive Director.

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21. I recall that there were also a riot at the JOYC which I recall was serious and frightening. I recall that this incident made the papers and television. I am also aware of a handcuffing incident that involved Peter Coyne while he was the Manager at JOYC.
22. I remember that I was called to give evidence at the Forde Inquiry and recall that I was asked questions regarding this handcuffing incident. I do not recall ever being asked about any sexual abuse allegations during this inquiry.
23. I was shown a photocopy of a document titled 'Report on meeting of youth workers and others held at John Oxley Youth Centre on Wednesday, 9 November 1988'.
24. I have some recollection of this meeting in that I facilitated this meeting. I remember my predominate feeling that it was a very unruly and difficult meeting. I remember that during the meeting there seemed to be a lot of personal animosity rather than substantive issues that could be addressed.
25. I do not remember the person by the name of Michael Roch, nor do I recall ever berating this person after the meeting. I would deny that I ever berated him in that it is not my style to berate people. I do not recall that Mr Pettigrew ever attended this meeting.
26. I was aware of an Inquiry that was conducted at the John Oxley Youth Centre while I was the Executive Director and responsible for this centre.
27. I recall a meeting of the Executive Management Team when it was decided that because of the number of complaints that had been popping up about JOYC it was decided that something needed to be done to get to the bottom of these complaints. Some of these complaints may have been union complaints but I can't recall. The Inquiry (Heiner) was later set up as a result of this meeting. I had hardly anything to do with this Inquiry at all. I don't think I met Mr Heiner nor did I attend the Inquiry.

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28. The Executive Management Team consisted of the Director General, the Deputy Director Generals and the Executive Officers of the Department of Family Services of the persons I have already mentioned early in this statement. I do not recall the Minister attending this meeting.
29. I don't recall there were any specific issues discussed. It was generally identified as management issues to my recollection. I think at that time the unions had become involved but I cannot recall which unions. I do not recall any issues of sexual abuse being raised in regards to this inquiry. If the issue or allegations of sexual abuse were raised during this meeting then it would have been referred to the police, not to Mr Heiner. I believe the members of the Executive Management Team would consider that this was a very serious matter and recommend it immediately be referred to police.
30. It was my recollection that the Heiner Inquiry's purpose was to address the management issues of Peter Coyne at JOYC.
31. I did not have any conversations or have any conversations conveyed to me in regards to the comments or opinions of the then Minister, Beryce Nelson in relation to this matter.
32. I did not play any part in the Heiner Inquiry nor did I have any control or day to day briefings about this Inquiry. I made a decision that it was best not to insert myself into this Inquiry. I was aware that hearings were being conducted by Mr Heiner at JOYC.
33. I further recall having conversations with Peter Coyne, while the Inquiry was going on at JOYC.

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34. I recall that I had a number of conversations with Peter. I remember that he was concerned with the process of the Inquiry and that he was being denied natural justice. He believed that he was the subject of allegations made against him and he was not aware what the allegations actually were and that these allegations would be given some undue status. Because he didn't know what they were he was therefore unable to defend himself. I also recall that Peter Coyne had attended the Inquiry and had given evidence before Mr Heiner. I believe that Anne Dutney (Deputy Manager) also gave evidence.
35. I was not aware of any allegations of sexual abuse raised during the Heiner Inquiry.
36. I was shown a photocopy of a document titled 'Meeting with Queensland State Service Union' dated 14 September 1989. I am able to identify a notation on that top of this document as my writing, name and dated 18/9/1989. It states, Peter, Alan will decide who he wants to conduct the investigation and advise. Ian 18/9/89.
37. I was shown a number of documents including a document dated 30 October 1989 signed by myself and titled 'Documents relevant to the work of the Magistrate Investigating at JOYC'.
38. I was shown documents relating to an allegation by JOYC worker Marianna Pearce. I have no recollection of this incident.
39. I was also shown a document dated 18 December 1989 by Peter Coyne and documents dated 18 January 1990 by Peter Coyne. These documents generally relate to Peter Coyne trying to gain access to documents held by Mr Heiner and/or the department.
40. I was also shown a 4 page document titled 'John Oxley Youth Centre Inquiry', not dated, but my name appears on the last page. This document appears to be directed to Ruth (Matchett) as it bears the name 'RUTH' on the first page of the document. I

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believe that this was a document prepared by myself for the new Director General, Ruth Matchett.

41. I remember this document; however I am surprised at the level of detail of the contents. I remember it was my attempt to find a way through the issues at JOYC. It is possible at that time I may have been acting in George Nix's position.

42. I was shown a 4 page document with contains a cover page with 'Administrative File' and then three pages which contained the same document. This document I can identify as a handwritten memo written by me and signed by me, dated 24/1/90.

43. I recall then when I had further conversations and dealings with Peter Coyne in 1990, after the Heiner Inquiry, I remember, I was in the position of go-between for Peter Coyne and Ruth Matchett.

44. I was shown two 2 page documents dated 2 March 1990 and 9 February 1990 in relation to conversations with Peter Coyne. Both of these documents bear my name and signature.



I.C. PEERS

Declaration

This written statement by me dated 22 January 2013 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 8 is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

 Signature

Signed at Brisbane this 22 day of January 20 13

Witnessed:

 Signature
Name Feb. Colless Rank Det / Sgt Reg. No. 9632

Signature of Witness: _____ Signature of Officer: _____