

# 3.2 Smaller group care

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## Chapter 3 Allegations of sexual abuse

### History

The department developed cottage-style accommodation for children from the early 1960s, as a result of changes in philosophy towards large congregate-care facilities. Departmental annual reports of the period repeatedly expressed the idea of greater individual attention for each child.<sup>1</sup> The department prioritised permanent adoption or foster care, but acknowledged that this was not always possible due to a lack of available or appropriate placements.<sup>2</sup> It believed children living in cottage-style accommodation would be less conspicuous as 'State' children. Further, each child was more likely to develop his or her potential in an environment that resembled a family home. It was thought older children or those with emotional problems would benefit from cottage accommodation. The department also found that the cost of maintaining smaller homes was considerably less than larger institutions.<sup>3</sup>

The cottage home scheme promoted individualised care and living arrangements that fostered a sense of children as members of the community. Children lived in groups of fewer than 10, enrolled in schools, attended local churches and joined in other practices simulating life in a typical family home.<sup>4,5</sup> Each cottage provided bedrooms rather than dormitories and, instead of a superintendent, a house 'parent' ran the cottage.

By 1972, the theory that children benefited from living in small group settings was departmental policy.<sup>6</sup> The department's administration of residential facilities throughout the State was divided into five regions to give the department closer contact with the community and encourage family reunification.<sup>7</sup> The department also converted large homes and training centres into smaller

living units, starting in 1971 with the establishment of units in the secure care training centres, McNally and Vaughan House.<sup>8</sup>

Many children who were moving from the large institutions to the cottages were accustomed to a regimented style of care. Likewise, many staff who took charge of the cottages had been transferred from institutions and brought with them methods associated with institutional care. As one former departmental officer noted:

*They were people who had come in from all walks of life and struggled with a lot of the principles ... we were trying to implement. Some were rejecting it strongly ... the punishment philosophy was still an undercurrent well into the 70s.*

The passing of the *Community Welfare Act 1972* and establishment of the Residential Child Care Advisory Committee (RCCAC) in 1974 subjected non-government homes to more detailed licensing and funding agreements than had existed previously. Expected standards of care were outlined and the department funded the homes' social worker salaries and other operating costs. The RCCAC encouraged non-government agencies to replace congregate care institutions with smaller group homes to further more individual care and assessment of children.

During the 1970s and 1980s the government closed many of its own residential care facilities and relied increasingly on the non-government sector. By 1981, non-government agencies (church welfare agencies and independent community organisations) were managing 15 cottage homes, eight youth homes and two emergency accommodation schemes.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> State Children's Council (SCC) annual report 1964, p. 4; 1967, p. 4; Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board (CWPRB) annual report 1969, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> For example, see comment to this effect in CWPRB annual report 1969, p.19.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, 1960, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Community Welfare (DCW) annual report 1972.

<sup>7</sup> Central Metropolitan, Northern Metropolitan, Southern Metropolitan, Northern Country and Southern Country regions.

<sup>8</sup> DCW annual report 1972, p. 20.

<sup>9</sup> DCW annual report 1981, p. 50.

The development of hostels predated cottage homes by two decades and came as a result of the need for accommodation for State children who were working. The department had seen the hostel model in the early 1940s after travelling interstate to 'gain the latest information on child welfare practice and administration'.<sup>10</sup> By 1944 it had become evident that State children who were on probation and who were working could not find appropriate accommodation; some were forced to move to country farms, while others worked as live-in domestic servants. A departmental officer wrote in 1944 that:

*If hostels were available, more and more children would be placed in them as there is very little future in either domestic work or farm labouring. Boys could be apprenticed and girls also, or else take up selected factory work.*<sup>11</sup>

Youth shelters developed in the 1970s as a response to community concerns about youth homelessness.<sup>12</sup> Voluntary agencies and individuals developed Adelaide's first shelters.<sup>13</sup> By 1979 a range of shelters was operating with financial assistance from the department. While some were 'closely supervised hostels for difficult-to-place youths', others offered a 'more flexible free-living environment with minimal controls'. Some shelters were developed and run by social welfare agencies and others by 'collectives of adults and young people in care who together came to a consensus of management style'.<sup>14</sup>

While the department did not establish or run shelters, it licensed them, established standards of practice and provided operational funding, as it did for other forms of non-government residential care. The department's

Residential Child Care Advisory Committee (RCCAC) developed a youth homes policy to ensure the department was involved with each new shelter from its inception.<sup>15</sup> Shelters were required to make formal submissions to the director-general, outlining the nature of the venture and providing evidence of the need for the service.<sup>16</sup> To be eligible for funding, shelters were required to be 'accountable to a policy-making body' which would control staffing, finance and management. Staff were expected 'to have qualifications or to be undergoing training in either social work, group work or residential care'.<sup>17</sup> Shelters were required to have clear admission procedures and individual programs for children placed in their care, which would be subject to regular reviews. The RCCAC monitored shelters to make sure young people were 'not exploited' and were given opportunities to resolve family conflicts.<sup>18</sup> The committee also stated that, 'Corporal punishment is not to be used. Alternative methods of modifying behaviour should be sought.'<sup>19</sup> Records show the department's control over shelters, and the children admitted to them, was less than comprehensive.<sup>20</sup>

### Summary of smaller group care allegations

Forty-nine adults gave evidence to the Inquiry that they were sexually abused as children while living in smaller group care. From available records, the Inquiry was able to determine that 44 were children in State care at the time of the alleged abuse.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, 1943, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> SRSa GRG 29/6/1944/239, Boarding-out officer to CWPRB secretary, 28 June 1944, 'Establishment of a hostel for working boys'.

<sup>12</sup> SRSa GRS 4164/1/48, file 20/13/4, memorandum Minister of Community Welfare to the Premier, for Cabinet, 27 Sep. 1978.

<sup>13</sup> SRSa GRS 714/1/P, correspondence of the RCCAC, Oct.–Dec. 1976, G. Knill, consultant non-statutory children's homes, to deputy director-general re RCCAC budget 1977, 18 Oct. 1975.

<sup>14</sup> SRSa GRS 714/1, June–July 1979, RCCAC secretary, seminar on housing for low-income groups, 'Youth housing, present and new funding programmes', DCW, 25 July 1979.

<sup>15</sup> SRSa GRS 714/1/P, correspondence RCCAC, Jan.–Sep. 1976, branch head circular 441, 11 June 1976.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, Jan.–June 1977, RCCAC liaison officer, Youth homes and women's shelters, to interim youth homes committee, 22 Feb. 1977.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, Nov.–Dec. 1977, RCCAC secretary, various letters to youth shelters, 18 Nov. 1977.

<sup>18</sup> SRSa GRS 714/1/P, correspondence RCCAC, Apr.–Aug. 1980, RCCAC secretary to director-general re 'Youth homelessness', 8 May 1980.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, RCCAC re 'The use of corporal punishment in children's homes and youth shelters', 8 May 1980.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, DCW deputy director-general to director-general, 'Youth refuges program', 2 Mar. 1979.

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### Government cottage homes

The Inquiry received evidence from 21 people who alleged they were sexually abused when they were children living in a government cottage home. They were all in State care at the time. The PICs named the alleged perpetrators as staff members, visitors, other residents, foster carers, outsiders and a family member. The sexual abuse included allegations of indecent assault and rape.

#### Clark Cottage, 1963–79

##### History

Clark Cottage at Clarence Park opened in 1963, the third of several properties bought by the department in the early 1960s for cottage-style living. It accommodated up to 10 children at a time until it closed in 1979.<sup>21</sup> The site was then used as the Southern Region Admission Unit.

##### Allegations of sexual abuse

One PIC told the Inquiry she was sexually abused while placed at Clark Cottage.

##### *Abuse by staff and another resident*

An Aboriginal PIC who was placed in State care in the late 1960s when she was about eight told the Inquiry she was sexually abused at Seaforth Home, Clark Cottage, in foster care and in the family home.

The PIC was eight when admitted to Clark Cottage in the early 1970s, a placement that lasted three years. She was placed at the cottage because it already housed an indigenous child and the department believed the PIC would benefit from 'contact [with] other Aborigines'. The PIC did not know she was indigenous until she mentioned to another resident that she wanted a bath: 'I thought my skin was just dirty and I thought if I had a bath and soaked in White King I'd be white like all the other kids'. One of the staff then explained her background.

The PIC said a male worker sexually abused her by fondling her breasts and genitals throughout her three

years at the cottage. She said the abuse always happened in the same place—in a room away from the main cottage—and that she believed the same man abused 'a few of us girls' at the cottage.

She said an older female resident also sexually abused her: 'She used to undo my top and make me take my knickers off'. The PIC said she became a chronic absconder over the three years, partly because of the abuse. Departmental records show she absconded from the cottage when she was eight, which precipitated a temporary transfer to secure care. There is also a note on the file indicating that, aged 11, she refused to return to the cottage from school. A note on her file reads: 'Even in a friendly discussion (the PIC) would not say what was worrying her or why she repeatedly ran away'.

#### Merrilama Cottage, 1960–79

##### History

Merrilama Cottage at Glenelg was the first suburban cottage home developed by the department for housing children. It accommodated up to 10 children, with an average of six at one time, cared for by a cottage mother and two assistants. The children attended local schools, were given pocket money weekly, and were permitted to visit friends, entertain in the home and correspond with relatives.

##### Allegations of sexual abuse

One PIC alleged that she was sexually abused while placed at Merrilama Cottage.

##### *Abuse by other residents*

The PIC was placed in State care in the early 1970s at the age of three, after a court committed her for neglect. She was placed in institutional and foster care and spent a brief period with her family. After her parents experienced difficulties caring for her and foster care was deemed unsuitable, she was placed at a cottage home when she was about six. She then spent about four months in Merrilama Cottage before being transferred to several foster homes and then lived for about 12 months at

<sup>21</sup> CWPRB annual report 1963, p. 13.

Farr House. The PIC alleged she was sexually abused at Merrilama Cottage, one of the foster placements and at Farr House.

She told the Inquiry there were only two boys, both teenagers, living at Merrilama when she was there. Soon after she arrived, the older boy, whose name she could not recall, began sexually assaulting her by simulating sexual intercourse with her against her will. She said the abuse happened in the cottage grounds about twice a week for a month. She found this distressing but did not report it to staff. She remembered that the abuse stopped suddenly, although, she said, the boy persisted in threatening her with physical violence.

### Hay Cottage, 1968–79

#### History

Hay Cottage opened at Lockleys in 1968 and closed as a cottage in 1979. The Elizabeth Grace Community Unit, a Vaughan House unit, was then transferred to the site and renamed the Hay Community Unit.<sup>22</sup>

#### Allegations of sexual abuse

Four people who were in State care as children gave evidence to the Inquiry about sexual abuse while at Hay Cottage. Their allegations included rape, indecent assault and unlawful sexual intercourse and the alleged perpetrators at the cottage were residents. Two PICs alleged they were abused while out on holiday placements.

#### *Abuse by multiple perpetrators*

In the late 1960s a five-year-old girl was placed in State care until the age of 18 when a court found she was neglected and under unfit guardianship. The PIC told the Inquiry her stepfather drank and was violent and he had sexually abused her before she was placed in State care. A couple of months after the court order was made she was placed in Hay Cottage, where she remained for four years; her residency was interspersed with a series of short holiday placements. At nine, the PIC was transferred

to her family's care, where she alleged she was sexually abused. According to her SWIC, she was granted release from State care on petition when she was 14.

The PIC's general recollection of the cottage was positive. She said the cottage parents 'instilled morals in me that I never forgot'. She attended the local primary school as well as church. The cottage housed about 10 children; boys slept on the ground floor and the girls shared rooms on the second floor. She said sexual activity among the residents was not uncommon.

She named two male residents as alleged perpetrators. She said that after one female resident left Hay Cottage 'they turned their attentions on to me'. The Inquiry confirmed that the female resident left the cottage about the time the PIC estimated she was abused. Records also confirmed the two alleged male perpetrators were cottage residents during this period and were some years older than the PIC.

The PIC recalled the boys' abuse built up over time; at first 'they come to our bedrooms at night time ... and then it just become more and more and more until it was sexual'. Eventually, she said, the boys forced her to perform oral sex and to engage in sexual intercourse: 'I hated it and it hurt'. She did not disclose the abuse because of the boys' threats that 'we'll make life very uncomfortable'. The PIC said she once 'screamed out ... "This is enough, leave me alone", but was told, "You tell anyone and you're dead".'

She alleged another boy at the cottage, three years her senior, abused her, trying to force her to perform oral sex by 'pulling down his pants and trying to force my head there'. She 'ran really fast and he couldn't grab hold of me'. The PIC said he also threatened her. She said she told another boy, who confronted the alleged perpetrator, but that resulted in a fight. Soon after, the alleged perpetrator moved out of the cottage. The Inquiry confirmed that a person with the same name as that supplied by the PIC left the cottage during the period. The PIC said she had been too scared to disclose the abuse to staff.

<sup>22</sup> SRSA, GRS 714/1, Correspondence of the RCCAC, June–July 1979, Letter from chairman of SA Steering Committee for Educational Projects for Children in Residential Care, to director-general, Education Department, 15 June 1979.

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During her placement at Hay Cottage the PIC was sent out on short holidays to various families. At one home, she said, the family's son, aged about 14, made repeated sexual advances to her, including 'suggestions and running in when I was in having a shower or a bath'. When she was nine, she said, the son forced her to perform oral sex on him and tried to penetrate her. She did not remember whether he succeeded because 'I remember fighting it, and he was ... pushing my head into the water'. She did not tell the foster parents but said she became more disruptive, which was her way of 'trying to tell them. I was too scared to tell them'. On her return to Hay Cottage, the PIC did not tell anyone what had happened. She said her behaviour at the cottage deteriorated but she was not asked why. Aged nine, she was returned to live with her mother.

### *Abuse by other residents*

A PIC had been placed in State care in the early 1960s when he was aged 2½ after a court found him neglected and under unfit guardianship. Departmental records indicate his placement was based on parental illness and alcohol abuse, despite the parents' objections. He lived in three different government institutions and in various foster care placements before being admitted to Hay Cottage when he was 10. The PIC spent about three years at the cottage and was then transferred to foster care.

He told the Inquiry he remembered being 'basically happy' at the cottage. He attended a local school and went on short holiday placements, which he enjoyed.

He said an older boy at the cottage sexually abused him when he was about 12: 'I was held down by [the alleged perpetrator] and he masturbated me'. The Inquiry received documents confirming that a boy with the name supplied by the PIC lived at the cottage at the same time as the PIC. The PIC said the abuse happened on more than one occasion; the alleged perpetrator would wait until he was asleep and then approach his bed. He said the same boy abused other residents and on one occasion forced him to participate in abuse of a female resident; he and the other

boy went upstairs to the girls' bedrooms and enlisted the help of two girl residents to rape a third girl: 'They just forced me to lay on top of [the girl] and have sex'. The PIC said he penetrated the girl. He was unable to provide the full names of all involved but the Inquiry ascertained from available information that people he identified as an accomplice and the victim were in State care and resident at Hay Cottage when the PIC lived there.

### *Abuse by outsiders*

A PIC was placed in State care in the mid 1960s when he was four; his SWIC records that he was committed as neglected and under unfit guardianship. The boy was placed at two different government homes, then had a series of foster placements. He was placed at a third government institution before being placed at Hay Cottage when he was eight. He lived at the cottage for five years. There were, to his recollection, about seven children in residence when he arrived. He described the cottage in positive terms and recalled several holiday placements and holiday camps.

The PIC said that his father took him camping when he was about 13 and living at Hay Cottage. There were other children at the camp and one of them anally raped him during the night, he said, but he did not tell anyone about this because 'he said if I said anything he'd kill me'.

A PIC was four in the mid 1960s when she was placed in State care because of neglect. Departmental records show there had been allegations of 'indecentcies' in relation to the girl and her siblings, perpetrated by the man she thought was her father. The PIC alleged she was sexually abused in foster care, the family home, Hay Cottage and Davenport House. Her SWIC shows she was placed at Hay Cottage in the early 1970s when she was 11 and stayed for about three years. She said her cottage mother 'was firm but, you know, she was a good cottage mother to me'. Her cottage parents were 'good people'.

The PIC told the Inquiry that while she was living at the cottage her father watched her playing sport and sexually

abused her in the car. He made her touch him, lifted up her sports skirt and put his fingers inside her, and there was oral sex. She said, 'Then he would give me money and say it was our secret'; and he told her not to tell the cottage mother or she would be sent back to Seaforth Home. She alleged her father also sexually abused her when he took her to his home. She never told the cottage mother what her father was doing to her: 'I have never told her, because I feel ashamed, sir'.

She does recall that the cottage mother gave her 'a tablet' that would 'keep her nice'. She now believes this was a contraceptive pill, because the cottage mother 'was worried'.

The PIC also stayed with her father on weekends, despite a report by a welfare officer five years earlier that the father was 'considered unsuitable as a parent as he has interfered with them on several occasions'. The director of the department had previously ordered that there was to be no contact, saying:

*In all circumstances, I am strongly of the opinion that none of the children should be allowed to live with [the father] either full or part-time, temporarily or otherwise.*

Records show, however, that between this time and the PIC's placement in Hay Cottage the department allowed her to gradually resume contact with her father.

The PIC's SWIC shows that during a holiday period while she was at Hay Cottage she was placed with a couple who received a subsidy to look after her. She alleged that on more than one occasion the man sexually abused her. He would 'undress me and play with me' and penetrate her. The PIC said she could not remember whether she told anyone about the abuse, but recalled that the perpetrator said, 'Just that I wouldn't be believed'.

The PIC obtained work while at the cottage, and her life was 'going along very well'. When she was about 14 she was placed in a hostel and then Davenport House. Before and after this time she lived in three separate places with three different relatives. She alleged she was sexually abused at all three placements and was forced into prostitution in one of them.

She told the Inquiry:

*I still to this day, sir, find myself very insecure, alone, abandoned, afraid and vulnerable ... I have asked myself often, 'Why has this happened to me?' and I have no answers. There are many times I have felt it's my fault. I have deserved this. That is sad, I know, but that's how I've felt. The pain and the feelings of my childhood and adulthood are without question very traumatic to say the least.*

### Fullarton Cottage, 1970–79

#### History

Fullarton Cottage at Myrtle Bank opened in 1970. It could house up to six children aged between seven and 16, with day-to-day care provided by a housemother and an assistant. Former residents told the Inquiry that boys slept on the cottage's upper level and girls on the lower level. In 1979 the cottage became known as the Youth Therapy Unit.<sup>23</sup>

#### Allegations of sexual abuse

Two PICs gave evidence of sexual abuse during placements at Fullarton Cottage.

#### Abuse by multiple perpetrators

One PIC was placed in State care by a court as a baby boy in the mid 1960s; according to his SWIC, the court found him to be neglected and under unfit guardianship. The PIC alleged he was sexually abused during a placement at Fullarton Cottage in the 1970s and also in a later placement at the South Australian Youth Training Centre.

The PIC lived in various government institutions until he was six. Throughout this period he was returned to his family for brief periods but, according to his SWIC, was often placed back in institutional care for 'safekeeping'. At seven, in the early 1970s, he was placed at Fullarton Cottage, where he stayed for about nine years. The PIC told the Inquiry about eight children were living in the cottage when he arrived and he shared a room with two other boys.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*; CWPRB annual report 1970, p.20.

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He alleged an older boy resident who had his own room sexually assaulted him. He 'would coax us into his bedroom and get us to touch him'. He said this boy showed him and another younger boy how to masturbate him and 'forced me to play with him on numerous occasions'. The PIC said he believed this abuse went on for about two months, but noted that 'it seemed to go on forever'.

He said he and the other younger boy took to sharing a bed 'so as to ward this guy off, you know'. The abuse ceased only after the other boy physically assaulted the alleged perpetrator.

The PIC recalled that the other alleged victim was transferred from the cottage soon after this confrontation; the transfer is recorded on that boy's SWIC. The PIC, who was 13 at the time of the transfer, said he disclosed what was happening to another resident, but did not know whether the resident reported the allegations to staff. He believed that by the time of the altercation between the boy and the alleged perpetrator, 'I'm pretty sure it was pretty much out in the open as to what had happened'.

The PIC told the Inquiry he reported the sexual abuse to his departmental social worker, who spoke to him about 'what was right and what was wrong' regarding sex. The PIC summarised the talk as concluding that 'males should not be together'. He did not clarify whether the social worker undertook to act on the information provided. In retrospect, he said, 'there are some things I said that he should have repeated to somebody else'. There is no record of this disclosure on the PIC's departmental file.

About one month after arriving at the cottage the PIC was placed on holiday leave with a family for almost six weeks. He alleged the foster father sexually abused him throughout the placement, rubbing his penis over the PIC's genitals while the PIC was standing in front of the toilet, and masturbating himself to erection. The PIC said that the first time this occurred 'I didn't know what to think'. He remembered that such incidents happened regularly: 'Every time you sort of wanted to go to the toilet he was there'. He did not disclose this abuse to staff at the cottage on his

return, although he said he has not been able to forget it: 'I relive it every day.'

The only mention of the placement at the foster home in departmental files supplied to the Inquiry is a report written by a community welfare worker who notes that,

*Over Christmas, [the PIC] spent his holidays with family at [name of location] who had a dull son.*

*Since his return [the PIC] appears to have regressed a little and this could be attributed to his close contact with this dull boy.*

**A**nother PIC who alleged sexual abuse during his placement at Fullarton Cottage was placed in State care in the mid 1960s when he was a baby. After a family breakdown, the PIC was found by a court to be neglected and under unfit guardianship and was remanded to a government institution. The PIC also alleged he was sexually abused during a subsequent placement at Kumanka Boys Hostel.

The PIC was placed in Fullarton Cottage in the early 1970s when he was eight, and lived there for about five years. He alleged that an older male resident sexually abused him 'straight after I arrived, basically' and recalled that 'he used to force me to do sexual things in the shed' at the cottage. He believed this happened on at least two subsequent occasions but possibly more. The PIC said he complained to a cottage parent immediately after the first instance of abuse and she told him 'she would get back to me with it'. He said he complained to cottage staff after the second incident, and also reported the abuse to his departmental worker, but no-one at the cottage spoke to him about the incidents afterwards.

A note written by the PIC's community welfare worker in the departmental file states that the PIC approached a cottage parent to discuss another boy at the home 'involving him in homosexual activities'. The boy named in the file note has the same name as the alleged perpetrator the PIC named to the Inquiry. Departmental records received by the Inquiry did not set out what action, if any, was taken in response to the PIC's disclosure. Another notation details a telephone call from the cottage parent to the PIC's community welfare

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worker, about one month after the PIC's request to discuss 'homosexual activities'. The worker's summary of the telephone call reads, 'concerned with [PIC's] persistent [sic] lying'. It seems the cottage parent was concerned.

About a year later a report from the cottage supervisor noted that the PIC's behaviour had 'deteriated [sic] dramatically in the past six months. No explanation can be given by us or him'. A Cottage Home Review Board report on the alleged perpetrator completed by the cottage parent about seven months after the notation observed that he 'threatens the other boys if they won't do the things he wants them to do'. The alleged perpetrator and the PIC shared the same welfare worker, and the former's records show the worker initiated discussions about him moving from Fullarton Cottage. There is a reference to the alleged perpetrator being 'upset by ultimatum re [suggested government home for transfer] and that he has been accused of standover tactics at school'. Another note written about two months later reads, '[Alleged perpetrator] given choice of going to [a private hostel] or [a government home]'. Soon after, the alleged perpetrator was transferred from Fullarton Cottage, 12 months after the PIC's disclosure.

The PIC gave evidence about a six-week holiday placement with a couple in his first year at the cottage, when he was eight. He alleged that while the woman was occupied in the nearby kitchen, the foster father took him to a bedroom and forced him into anal sexual intercourse: 'I was screaming and screaming and screaming for him to stop and it didn't stop and it kept going'. He recalled he 'was bleeding from the anus' afterwards. He alleged such abuse occurred three times during this placement.

He said that on his return to the cottage he was bleeding from the anus and had difficulty walking. Staff had noticed this and, when they spoke to him about it, he asked to speak to the cottage parent. After hearing about the alleged abuse, he said, the cottage parent told him to rest, assured him the matter would be investigated and said he would be told of the outcome. The PIC told the Inquiry that on the following day he lost his privileges and staff called

him a liar. He said he believed the cottage parent had consulted his community welfare worker and the foster parents.

No information about this disclosure or any action in response could be found in department records provided to the Inquiry.

The PIC also alleged he was sexually abused during sanctioned leave when he visited a boy at another home. He told the Inquiry he sat in this boy's room and a male staff member checked on them periodically, as did another man. He asked the other boy who the men were and was told that one man worked at the home and the other was not a staff member but a friend of the first man.

The PIC alleged that during the visit the other boy gave him pills, telling him at the time that they were Mandrax.

His next memory was of waking in the shower block at the home, naked and bleeding from the anus. He said his anus 'would not stop bleeding' and he recalled 'sort of not vaguely remembering my name, where I was, who I was, what happened, what was going on'. The other boy had told him the two men were responsible for what had happened to him. He was showered and clothes were provided for him, and he was taken back to Fullarton Cottage. He was too drugged to remember details including who showered and dressed him. He said he reported this incident immediately to the cottage parent. The Inquiry was unable to locate any department records about the incident or the disclosure.

The PIC told the Inquiry he began absconding from the cottage when he was about 12, as a result of the older resident's abuse. He said he met a man in the city who befriended him, bought him food and invited him to make contact when he was away from the cottage, saying he would collect him. The PIC said he contacted the man on several occasions, leaving the cottage during the night. Over time, the man began visiting him at the cottage during the day and became known to staff there. Records confirm the department was aware of the PIC's friendship with this man:

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*[The PIC] recently met [the man] who has shown quite a lot of interest in [the PIC], who has been out with him several times. [The PIC] is very enthusiastic about the friendship.*

The PIC told the Inquiry:

*I didn't trust him one bit. I just wanted him for his cigarettes and that he was going to give me hot coffee ... I had no parents, no nothing, he was a sugar daddy.*

Another report written a month later notes:

*[the PIC] has found a new friend whom the Community Welfare Worker has not met as yet ... [the PIC] recently asked if he could spend a weekend at [the man's] home, but this was denied by Community Welfare Worker until Community Welfare Worker can meet [PIC's] friend and discuss the whole situation.*

The department's records note that the man visited the PIC at the cottage and the boy went on outings with him.

Although there is no record of overnight stays with the man, the PIC told the Inquiry that this did happen. He alleged the man took him to his home and gave him food. He recalled feeling 'drowsy' and 'really good'. He said the man showed him pornographic magazines. On another occasion, he recalled:

*I was sitting on his bed ... there was alcohol that I could have, there was marijuana I could have, there were pills I could have, there was anything I wanted ... that's when the old hand stuff used to come into it.*

He also alleged that on another occasion the man drove him to another man's home, where they gave him food and drink and then anally raped him, 'one at a time, each after each other, in the bedroom'. The PIC alleged that after this incident the first man raped him on several occasions at his home. He did not tell Fullarton Cottage staff what had

happened because 'I was asked not to, because at that stage I've got no family ... he's the only family I've got and he's giving me all these goodies'.

The PIC said he continued to meet the man while he remained at the cottage:

*I had no people visiting me, that was the silence I was keeping, to have that person visit me, and I felt important, and all this sort of stuff, and someone loved me so to speak. That's why I kept it quiet, because I had no-one else.*

His association with the man continued for about six months. A note in the department's records reveals that cottage staff refused the man access 'as it seems there have been some charges made against him for molesting kids'. A review of the alleged perpetrator's criminal history reveals a conviction for indecent interference two years earlier.

When he was 13 the PIC was transferred from the cottage to a departmental hostel. His records cite the reasons for the transfer as '[the PIC's] negative attitude to the staff at Fullarton Cottage and his disruptive behaviour within the Cottage'.

### Stirling Cottage, 1962–79

#### History

Stirling Cottage at St Peters opened in 1962 and accommodated up to 10 children, cared for by cottage parents with full-time and part-time assistants.<sup>24</sup> In 1979 the cottage closed and was replaced by the Northern Region Group Home.

#### Allegations of sexual abuse

Three people alleged they were sexually abused while living at Stirling Cottage. Their allegations included indecent assault, commission by a child to commit an indecent act, and unlawful sexual intercourse. The alleged perpetrators were cottage staff, other residents and sanctioned visitors.

<sup>24</sup> CWPRB annual report 1962, p. 13.

### *Abuse by multiple perpetrators*

The Inquiry received evidence from a PIC who was 12 when he lived at Stirling Cottage in the early 1970s. According to his SWIC, he was placed in State care by a court at the age of eight because of neglect. The PIC told the Inquiry he experienced family violence and alcohol abuse when he was a child and said that while in State care he was sexually abused at the family home and Stirling Cottage.

The PIC lived at the cottage for almost a year initially and for another year later. He said he clearly recalled his time there. He said there were about 10 residents ranging in age from about six to 15 and remembered there was only ever one staff member on duty at night. He said one male worker watched the residents, including girls, while they showered on the nights when he was working alone at the cottage.

He told the Inquiry about an occasion when an older boy—‘the main boy’ at the cottage and ‘pet’ of the cottage parents—forced other boys to rape a girl resident, threatening them if they did not obey him. The PIC said he was forced to rape the girl, who was ‘in one of the back sheds laying on the ground waiting for each of us to go in’.

The girl was, to his recollection, ‘terrified. My visions of her, the terror on her face, her constantly putting her hands—they were slapped down.’ The PIC said he lay on the girl as ordered but was unable to get an erection. On another occasion, he said, he walked into a living room at the cottage and found this same older boy trying to coerce a seven-year-old boy into having sexual intercourse with the same girl. He recalled that on this occasion another child kept watch for staff.

The PIC said a male friend of the cottage parents sexually abused him. This man, who often visited in the evening, came into his bedroom, sat on his bed and talked to him, then fondled the PIC’s penis. The PIC said this occurred on about three occasions and he welcomed the man’s sexual advances because they resembled affection. The Inquiry

ascertained that this man was a foster carer registered with the department, but was not employed at Stirling Cottage.

The PIC did not report the abuse to his departmental welfare worker, who he believed was not interested in his welfare. He told the Inquiry that ‘the abuse that I saw, it was just so ... lonely, it’s degrading, it’s inhumane, you know, to children’.

As an adult, he said, he has struggled with relationships:

*I tend to push people away ... Just the fear of getting close. Fear of intimacy, fear of abuse, fear of abandonment. It’s easier to be a loner and not have to deal with any of that.*

### *Abuse by staff*

A PIC told the Inquiry she was sexually abused by her father before being placed in State care in the mid 1970s, when she was 14. After she went ‘missing from home’ then ‘refused to return’ she was placed in State care for three months, and during this period lived at Stirling Cottage for three weeks. After that, because she was found to be neglected, she was placed in State care until the age of 18. The PIC gave evidence that after she was sexually abused at Stirling Cottage she was also sexually abused at Vaughan House and in a subsequent boarding placement.

She recalled there were about six boys and one girl living at Stirling Cottage and she shared a room with the girl. On her first night there, she said, a male staff member entered her bedroom and went to the other girl’s bed:

*It felt like he stayed there for a long time, and she would chuckle a little bit ... To me, it just felt like this had been going on—it wasn’t her first time. He was laying over her and his hands were under the blankets ... I could see he was fondling her.*

The PIC said that another time she woke up to find the same staff member sitting on her bed. He had been performing oral sex on her and touching her breasts. She said she ‘freaked’ and the man got off the bed and quietened her.

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On another occasion, she said, the same man abused her during an outing from the cottage. She recalled that children were encouraged to go off and play by themselves ‘and then he would just come up around you, like, to make sure that you’re doing the right thing, but he wasn’t really’. She spoke of being alone among several large rocks: ‘I’ll never forget ... he would take his penis out and expose his penis ... I just hated that outing’. The worker allegedly exposed himself to her ‘more than once. That was normal, yes.’ He also had access to the shower block and watched her in the shower.

She did not disclose the alleged abuse—‘That was something that you just didn’t talk about’—but persuaded her roommate to abscond: ‘We just kept walking and walking and the police got us and brought us back again’. The PIC called the abuse she suffered at Stirling Cottage pivotal to her life: ‘That’s where I believe that that was it for me’.

**A**nother PIC was placed in State care when he was six. His parents had separated repeatedly and the remaining parent did not provide adequate care for the PIC and his siblings. A court found him to be neglected and in the mid 1970s he was placed in Stirling Cottage when he was 10. He spent the next two years there, a period interspersed with various holiday placements and two brief transfers to other cottage homes. He told the Inquiry he was sexually abused at Glandore Boys Home and later at Stirling Cottage.

He said there were about six children living at Stirling Cottage and that boys and girls slept in separate areas. He went to a nearby school, and also recalled that the children were supposed to attend church services but that he and others did not; they spent the money intended for the collection plate at a nearby shop. He said residents would sneak into one another’s beds: ‘Everyone was having sex in the place’.

The PIC told the Inquiry a male staff member ‘made me do a few things to him’, forcing him to perform oral sex and masturbate him on several occasions. He said the abuse occurred in the cottage’s shower area, usually after

the other children had showered and were getting ready for bed:

*I was the last one because I never ate my vegetables or anything and he made me sit at the table until basically everyone had gone to bed just about. He’d still make me eat them, then I’d go to the shower by myself.*

The man would appear while he was showering. The PIC recalled that the abuse ‘happened a few times’ until ‘I said I’d had enough. I decided to stand my ground and it worked, so he didn’t touch me after that.’

The PIC said another resident ‘would organise everyone to have sex and that, while he was watching them’ and have sex with female residents. He also recalled that supervising staff sent an older female resident out of the cottage at night; she did not return for several hours and he and other residents inferred that she was sent to take part in sexual activity. He could not recall her name or that of the resident who organised the sexual encounters.

The PIC remembered having a departmental social worker while he was in State care, but could not recall whether the worker ever visited Stirling Cottage. He did not disclose the abuse at the time; when asked whether there was anyone in his life he felt he could have confided in, he replied, ‘I don’t think so, no’. The PIC told the Inquiry that as an adult he ‘started having the nightmares and remembering things’. Many of his recollections of his time in State care are vague, but of the abuse he suffered at Stirling Cottage he said, ‘I’ll never forget that’.

### **Pleasant Avenue Cottage, Glandore, 1975–79**

#### **History**

Pleasant Avenue Cottage, established in 1975, was situated on the grounds of the former Glandore Boys Home.<sup>25</sup> It accommodated an average of six children.<sup>26</sup> In the late 1970s, when the department reorganised its residential care facilities for children, Pleasant Avenue was closed.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> DCW annual report 1975, p. 42.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, 1979, p 79.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 24–25, 79 and DCW annual report 1986–87, p. 25.

### Allegations of sexual abuse

One woman gave evidence to the Inquiry that she was sexually abused while placed at Pleasant Avenue Cottage.

#### *Abuse by another resident*

The PIC's records show she was placed under two consecutive three-month care and control orders in the late 1970s, during which time she was placed at Pleasant Avenue Cottage. Her parents were separating and the court deemed she was 'in need of care'. When the second order expired she was released from care and control and returned to her family. Two years later, she was again placed in State care due to 'difficult behaviour'. She was under short-term orders before being placed under the guardianship of the Minister until she turned 18 in the early 1980s. It appears from the records that her mother privately placed her at the Salvation Army Girls Home, Fullarton, between court orders. She alleged she was sexually abused at Pleasant Avenue Cottage and later at the Fullarton home.

The PIC had few memories of Pleasant Avenue Cottage, recalling that, 'I didn't really mix with any of the kids. I really stayed by myself.' She said she had just turned 10 when she went to the cottage, and an older boy whose name she could not remember but who she thought was about 16 'used to get to me all the time'. She alleged he raped her on two occasions: the first time in a basement-style room at the cottage and a second time when, she said, 'I tried to hide under the kitchen table and he got me, and he had sex with me'. The PIC said she did not tell anyone at the cottage or her departmental welfare worker about what had happened: 'I never told anybody. I was too ashamed to.'

<sup>28</sup> DCW annual report 1973, p. 49.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, 1975, p. 42.

<sup>30</sup> SRSa GRS 10989/1 Unit, p. 1 of 4 supplied, 'Summary of findings' (undated and author not indicated) attached to internal memo from [name removed] to [name removed] 6 May 1996.

<sup>31</sup> SRSa GRS 10989/1 Unit 2, Chief residential care worker, Slade Cottage, notes in file marked Slade Cottage.

<sup>32</sup> Unsentenced record, 'Slade Cottage various documentation' (manila folder), provided by the department, June 5 2006, letter, chief residential care worker, 20 Aug. 1973.

<sup>33</sup> DCW annual report 1982, p. 30; unsentenced record, 'Slade Cottage various documentation' (manila folder), provided by the department, 5 June 2006, author unnamed, minutes Slade Cottage review meeting, 24 Sep. 1985.

### Slade Cottage, Glandore / Somerton Park, 1973–88

#### History

Slade Cottage opened as one of four cottages on the former site of the Glandore Boys Home on 5 February 1973.<sup>28</sup> It was moved to Somerton Park in 1975, on the site of the former Seaforth Home, which had closed as an institution for children that year.<sup>29</sup> Slade Cottage remained at Somerton Park until its closure in 1988, when the department considered it 'the least satisfactory physical site owned by the Department for the care of children'.<sup>30</sup>

Slade Cottage provided accommodation for up to 12 boys aged between 10 and 15, each with his own bedroom. The boys attended local schools and community clubs, including the YMCA at Glenelg. A chief residential care worker was responsible for the implementation of programs and the overall management of the cottage.

Other staff included three male and one female residential care workers, a cook, part-time gardener and nurse attendant.<sup>31</sup>

Slade Cottage was the department's first 'therapeutic' cottage—intended to provide a home for the therapeutic treatment of boys regarded as 'disturbed'. The treatment program was reportedly devised with the assistance of psychologists, doctors and social workers.<sup>32</sup>

Boys with behavioural problems, who could not remain in their own homes or easily be placed in foster care, were generally admitted to Slade. A review of the cottage noted that most of the residents were boys 'needing caring controls' who 'had been let down most of their lives'.<sup>33</sup>

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The Inquiry received departmental documents that provide insight into the care of boys at the cottage. In the mid 1980s, one resident brought charges of assault against the cottage's senior residential care worker. A court dismissed the charges and the department allowed the worker to resume his employment, although it warned him that 'the striking of young people in departmental care is totally unacceptable'. It also imposed conditions that the worker submit to reviews and that the cottage be reviewed and be under ongoing supervision.<sup>34</sup> Six months later a 'concerned citizen' sent an unsigned letter to the South Australian Ombudsman alleging physical abuse by the same worker against three residents. The ombudsman's office took no action because the letter was unsigned. According to an internal memo, the department took no action due to apparent discrepancies in the letter.

Allegations of physical violence by workers toward Slade residents were registered at this time, including hitting with telephone books to avoid bruising.<sup>35</sup> An internal memorandum about Slade Cottage one year after these allegations were made detailed a departmental visitor observing a child being punished by having to eat meals alone at a table facing the wall—a scene the visitor described as 'positively Dickensian' and 'grossly discriminatory'. In response, the senior residential care worker issued a point-by-point rebuttal, noting the resident's violence toward others at mealtimes.<sup>36</sup> The notes of one staff member at this time indicated that the senior residential care worker had told him 'that a lot of bad things have been said about Slade but no-one could prove a thing'.<sup>37</sup>

An internal memorandum filed six months after the dining room incident was critical of the care and administrative practices at the cottage. These included limited written information on boys; the cottage logbook containing insufficient detail about events; inconsistencies and irregularities in the way in which money intended for the residents was administered; poor dissemination of procedures; and the fact that 'the standard procedures in the cottage were not filed in any order and therefore were useless'.<sup>38</sup>

One memorandum based on interviews with staff detailed disciplinary practices resulting in 'an accusation of undue aggression' against the senior residential care worker.<sup>39</sup> This worker reportedly 'gave lip service to professional interventions unless they clearly fitted his outdated unacceptable frame of reference'.<sup>40</sup> It was claimed that the worker undermined the implementation of disciplinary and educational programs for residents. The memorandum reported staff concern 'at the secretive way in which many of the Slade operations were carried out'. The worker imposed a 'dictatorial' style that resulted in staff ignorance of residents' needs.<sup>41</sup>

The department held an internal inquiry into Slade Cottage in 1987. The senior residential care worker did not give evidence and resigned.<sup>42</sup> The inquiry's summary of findings stated there was:

*... sufficient cause to ask further questions about the whole line of management stewardship and also the quality of care of those children who stayed in Slade while it was functioning.*

<sup>34</sup> Unsentenced record, 'Slade Cottage various documentation' (manila folder), provided by the department, 5 June 2006, letter director-general, DCW, to senior residential care worker, Central Southern Region, 12 April 1985.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, Community welfare worker, 'Allegations against Slade staff made by Mr \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_', CWW, 29 Apr. 1985.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, Internal memorandum, manager Specialist Services, Southern Metropolitan Region (SMR), 22 April 1987; Letter senior residential care worker to manager Specialist Services, SMR, 5 May 1987.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, Notes of worker [name removed] (unsigned), 'Impressions of Slade Cottage', 13 April 1987.

<sup>38</sup> SRSA GRS 10989/1 Unit [number removed], Memorandum acting senior residential care worker, Slade Cottage, to director, human resource management, DCW, 'Situation at Slade Cottage', 9 Dec. 1987.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p.1.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> SRSA GRS 10989/1 Unit [number removed], Author not indicated, memorandum to director, human resource management, 'Slade enquiry – programmes', [date removed], pp. 1–3.

<sup>42</sup> SRSA GRS 10989/1 Unit [number removed], p. 1 of 4 supplied, 'Summary of findings' (undated and author not indicated) attached to internal memo from [name removed] to [name removed] 6 May 1985.

The internal inquiry found that it was

*... not at all satisfied that Slade was a unit in which this Department should take any pride at all and believe it to be an indictment of every level of management.<sup>43</sup>*

### Allegations of sexual abuse

Seven men who lived at Slade Cottage as children gave evidence of sexual abuse, including indecent assault, acts of gross indecency and anal rape. The alleged perpetrators included workers and other residents, as well as outsiders.

#### Abuse by multiple perpetrators

A PIC testified about abuse he allegedly suffered during his two months at Slade Cottage in the late 1970s, when he was 15. The PIC was four when placed in State care in the late 1960s; his SWIC indicates that a court found him to be neglected and under unfit guardianship. He told the Inquiry he was sexually abused at Glandore Children's Home and, later, at Slade Cottage.

The PIC recalled an occasion when he left the cottage to visit a family member and was approached on the street by a man who offered to take him to a party. He agreed to go and was driven to a private residence in a nearby suburb, where there were about five other boys and two men. The boys were given alcohol and drugs and participated in sexual acts. He said the man who picked him up sexually assaulted him. He could not recall how he returned to Slade Cottage, and did not report the abuse.

The PIC also told the Inquiry that he remembered a person standing by his bed one night at the cottage. He described the person as 'a bloke—a big person' and said he 'panicked' and 'just blacked out'. The next morning he awoke feeling 'like I was dirty' and with an 'uncomfortable' genital area. The PIC could not name the person and told the Inquiry he mentioned the incident to 'the welfare officer'. The Inquiry received a partial record of the residential care worker running reports from Slade Cottage, which do not indicate any disclosure.

A PIC who was placed in State care in the late 1970s described sexual abuse while he was at Slade Cottage when aged about 12. He was placed under a short-term care and control order after repeated non-attendance at school and a family breakdown. Over the next few months he was at Slade Cottage for several brief periods, during which he also was placed in the Northern Region Assessment Unit. He was later remanded to the South Australian Youth Remand and Assessment Centre (SAYRAC) several times for offending. The PIC alleged he was sexually abused at the assessment unit and SAYRAC.

He recalled there were about six children living at Slade Cottage during his stay. He described systematic physical abuse, telling the Inquiry that the officer in charge of the cottage was a 'control freak' who used to like 'flogging you and beating you and torturing you'. The PIC named another resident who allegedly reported this physical abuse to police; the PIC gave a statement to police but told the Inquiry he did not reveal anything to corroborate the other resident's statements because the Slade officer had threatened retaliation if he spoke out. The PIC said he absconded from the cottage several times. Department records show at least one instance of absconding, which occurred just two hours after the PIC had been placed at the cottage.

The PIC alleged that during the physical punishments at Slade the officer tried 'a few times' to insert a cane into his anus. The same officer attempted to grab his penis in a feigned, joking manner. The PIC said he did not disclose the abuse. He recalled that he 'just didn't feel comfortable in that house one bit'.

He also recalled absconding on one occasion with two other boys and going to the home of a man one of the boys knew and had contacted. The SWICs of those two boys record them as absconding from Slade Cottage. The PIC said he did not know the man well but could name him. He told the Inquiry there were several men at the home and that he and the other boys were given alcohol. He had no memory of anything that happened after they were sitting and drinking in the living room, and awoke the

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.* The department advised the Inquiry that missing pages containing the report's findings could not be located.

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next morning in a bed, naked, feeling ill and with his anus sore and bleeding. He saw one of the other boys eating breakfast in the kitchen and believed the third boy was asleep in another bedroom. He recalled being in pain for the next two weeks and said he did not associate with the two boys again.

The PIC also told the Inquiry about another occasion when he had been granted a day's leave from the cottage to visit his parents. He used the time to go into the city, where a man approached him and offered him money for amusements, which he accepted. They then walked around the city for some time; the PIC said he believed the man was looking for a quiet area. They entered a disused building, where the man 'cornered' him, forced him to remove his trousers and touched his genitals. At this point, the PIC said, a passer-by who had seen him being led off walked in and interrupted the abuse. This passer-by contacted the police, who returned him to Slade Cottage.

Records from a secure care facility, where he was placed temporarily, show the PIC absconded from the cottage during this period. The facility's logbook notes that he told staff and residents he planned to abscond rather than be transferred back to Slade Cottage.

### **Abuse by staff**

**A**nother PIC alleged he was sexually abused after he was placed at Slade Cottage for about two years in the early to mid 1980s, when he was 13. The PIC had been placed in State care for two years, which expired during his placement at Slade Cottage, and was then extended until he turned 18. The department had known the PIC since he was seven because of his parents' separation and his mother's inability to control him, when he was placed under a three-month order. In the six years before going to Slade Cottage, the PIC was placed in more than 11 institutions and foster homes. He told the Inquiry he was sexually abused at the Northern Region Admission Unit, the Salvation Army Boys Home (Eden Park), Smith Street Cottage, Slade Cottage and the Southern Region Group Home.

The PIC gave evidence of persistent physical abuse at Slade Cottage, saying one worker called him 'one of our bad boys'. One witness gave evidence that she remembered the PIC after he left the cottage:

*I just remember this little boy, this 14-year-old boy, and he was so distressed and, you know, you'd stroke him and ... he came ... from Slade Cottage and he would talk about physical abuse. I figured if it happened for one it happened for more.*

Departmental records confirm the PIC regularly absconded from the cottage and committed offences. He alleged he was stripped naked on one occasion and his window was nailed closed to prevent him from escaping. He said, 'That's where my criminal offences started, at Slade Cottage ... Everything from there was pure rage and violence to get locked up.'

The PIC recalled trying to convey to the Children's Court what was happening at the cottage, that 'they are bashing us kids there. Please don't send me back. You send me back there I'm going to reoffend.' His crimes included property offences, larceny and assaults. The PIC was remanded to secure care on at least seven occasions but said, 'I got treated better by the staff in [the secure care institutions] than I did ever in any of these departmental homes I was in'.

He told the Inquiry he was sexually abused by different workers at Slade Cottage, including by one woman who, he said, grabbed his testicles on one occasion in front of his mother.

The PIC also alleged he was sexually assaulted by a cottage worker on about two occasions in the bike shed on the premises: 'It'd turn from an assault to sex, where I was hit first'. He said that because 'things had already happened' to him 'that it's just the way shit was when I was a kid ...' The worker would call his mother and tell her 'I am ... selling my arse out on the streets', and he surmised that this was to deflect attention from what was really happening:

*Why is he doing that? Because he doesn't want me out running around being caught by police saying that I was raped by him or something. I never did.*

The PIC told the Inquiry he said nothing about the abuse because

*... maybe it had been going on for so long that ... you just learnt from, I suppose, Mt Barker [Eden Park] Boys Home with the punishments there, it was the same old routine ... sometimes it's just better to shut your mouth.*

He spoke of being punished by having to scrub floors and walls for days on end,

*... from top to bottom with a toothbrush ... when you're getting punishments like that, you don't want to say anything ... You say you've got to say something, you cop your punishment, you just think, well, what can you do? You try to tell people things and no-one ever wanted to listen to anything I had to say—I was a liar, I was a compulsive liar.*

The PIC alleged that while at Slade Cottage he was anally penetrated on one occasion by another worker who entered his room when he was lying on his bed in the dark. He could not recall telling anyone about this abuse. He also recalled being assaulted and 'knocked out' by this worker, and spoke of a volunteer carer at the cottage comforting him.

*[The volunteer] ... promised me that he would get me out of [Slade Cottage] and he would help me and get me up with his family. From then that's when he gave me his home number and started picking me up from school, when I'm wagging school; getting me to run away for long periods of time ...*

The PIC described the volunteer as 'the most loving, caring person I met in my life; I'd never met anyone like that'. The volunteer bought him expensive gifts—'he bought me everything I wanted and even the stuff I didn't want'. The volunteer became involved with the PIC's family, in

particular his mother, and there was talk of marriage so he could adopt the boy. Records document the volunteer's gifts to the PIC; their outings, sometimes to the home of the volunteer's family; and the volunteer's correspondence and contact with the department, expressing his desire to foster the boy.

The PIC alleged to the Inquiry that the volunteer sexually abused him. He said that at the volunteer's family home they watched pornographic movies, and oral sex and masturbation occurred. This would also happen at the volunteer's places of work, where the PIC would sometimes go after he had absconded from school or the cottage. The PIC alleged the abuse continued throughout his association with the volunteer at the cottage, and at his later placements, including the Southern Region Group Home, until about the time he left State care.

Departmental records reflect departmental workers' concerns about this relationship, particularly during the PIC's final six months at Slade Cottage. The relationship was initially seen as positive, to 'build his self-esteem—someone interested in him'. However, records show certain workers' disquiet about the apparent blurring of the boundaries between the volunteer's role in the cottage and his 'enmeshment' with the PIC. One report suggests the volunteer had an 'almost obsessive focus on wanting to foster [the PIC]'.

The PIC told the Inquiry he did not specifically disclose the volunteer's sexual abuse to the department. He cannot recall being asked about any sexual conduct, and says that even if he had he would have denied it. However, he recalled having a meeting with departmental workers and his mother at one stage, when 'I felt, like ... everyone was on my side; they all liked me again and everything was going to be all right'. He also disclosed at the meeting that the volunteer had taken him and his brother to a cemetery and had told him that 'this is where he was going to put my brother if I start saying shit'. The PIC recalled that the workers 'all freaked out', and back at Slade Cottage 'they made me get on the phone ... and put this stuff to [the

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volunteer]’. It is recorded that the PIC told the volunteer he did not want to see him any more, but a short time later changed his mind and started seeing him again.

The PIC told the Inquiry:

*I was scared of him, you know, I really was. He was a nice guy but I was scared when he—drunk or if he flipped out ... Yes, I said this stuff and—I don’t know, and then I felt bad for doing it. I tried to make contact with [the volunteer] again because [he] cared about me.*

The records contain numerous mentions of staff concerns about the relationship, and it is reported that the PIC’s psychologist considered the volunteer ‘highly dangerous to children—should not be allowed near children’. It is recorded that the department warned the volunteer on several occasions about the inappropriateness of his attention to the PIC. However, despite these warnings, records show the volunteer continued his contact with the PIC, giving him gifts such as delivering a birthday cake to him in the South Australian Youth Remand and Assessment Centre (SAYRAC), and accommodating him after he absconded from Slade Cottage. Records show that formal attempts to prevent contact were unsuccessful at the PIC’s next placement, the Southern Region Group Home, and at other placements. The PIC alleged another volunteer worker with the department sexually abused him at the Southern Region Group Home.

**A**nother former resident of Slade Cottage was placed in State care in the mid 1980s when he was 13, after a court found him in need of care. The PIC told the Inquiry he was sexually abused at Gilles Plains Assessment Unit and then at Slade Cottage. He also said he was sexually abused when living on the streets while he was in State care.

When he was 14 the PIC lived at Slade Cottage under a court order for six months, and told the Inquiry he was both physically and sexually abused there. He described one senior worker as ‘a complete animal’. The physical abuse included punishments such as ‘getting tied to a tree

and left there all night’ and being beaten with a bicycle pump. The PIC said he was sexually abused at night, when there was only one staff member on duty, and recalled that he was on medication administered by staff. He said the senior worker, who he described as an animal, would come into his bedroom at night:

*You’re medicated out of your brain anyway, and he used to love—he used to have a belt that he’d tie your hands up together on to the bed, and just do nasty things.*

The PIC said the man would ‘force us to, you know, fondle him, give him oral sex’. The abuse occurred ‘sometimes in the staff sleeping quarters or more often than not in my bedroom or even in the office’. It happened ‘at least once a week minimum’. During the day, other staff took the residents on outings but he did not always go: ‘I would be the only one there and that’s when [the worker] would more than likely come up and want you to sit on his knee.’

He said that, at the time,

*I just tried not to think about it and just stay out of [the worker’s] way, because it’s not as if he would come looking for you. You’d come walking out of the lounge room, going up to your bedroom, and he’d see you through the office door and say, ‘Hey, come here,’ you know, but only at night time he ever came into the bedrooms.*

The PIC said he did not mention the abuse to his social worker because he was too embarrassed. He worried that any disclosure would become common knowledge at the cottage: ‘I’d get my arse kicked often enough as it was, never mind adding more fuel to the fire’. He said that later during his time in State care he attempted to inform staff at a secure care facility of the abuse, but

*As soon as you said anything and they says, ‘Well, who was it?’ and you said [name], instantly they would say, ‘How dare you speak of that man like that. He’s a good man. He’s been in the department for so many years. He’s got a good reputation.’*

The PIC's departmental files and logs from the secure care facility do not record this disclosure.

**A**nother PIC was 12 when he was placed under the guardianship of the Minister in the early 1980s for three months, after he was deemed uncontrollable. He had experienced a family breakdown and truanted regularly from school. A review panel concluded that he would benefit from the care at Slade Cottage and a court ordered him to live there. He stayed at the cottage for seven months, with brief periods in secure care and placements with his family. He also alleged he was later sexually abused during a placement in the Southern Region Group Home.

The PIC told the Inquiry there were about six residents at Slade Cottage during his stay, and described the staff as a 'little evil clan' and the senior residential care worker as a 'scumbag dog' who physically punished him. He said that after one assault, 'I asked for my social worker ... [he] basically said, "if you want to tell them about that, why don't you tell them about this?"' The senior worker then beat him with a bicycle pump across the legs, face and back. The PIC was not allowed to see his family or his social worker until the bruises healed. He recalled of the senior worker: 'He wanted to be known as the one that hurt the children if they stepped out of line'.

The PIC said that another staff member at Slade attempted to initiate sexual activity with him on at least two occasions. On one occasion he went into his bedroom to find the worker masturbating. Some weeks later, during the evening, the man grabbed him by the hair and pushed him into a corner. He started screaming and the man tried to muffle his protests. The PIC's memory of the event was incomplete; he remembered that he had lubricant all over him and believed the alleged perpetrator had anally penetrated him. He said he absconded the next day and did so 'every chance I got, just about'. The PIC's SWIC shows he absconded twice in his first two weeks at Slade Cottage and once in his last month. His files show concern for his safety while absconding. One report notes:

*During [the PIC's] placement at Slade there were several episodes of his being remanded to [secure care] on safe-keeping as [the PIC] is associating with known older homosexuals when on the run and there were grave concerns for his physical safety.*

He remembered the atmosphere of the cottage at night when lying in his bed: 'You would hear noises and just wonder, should I be grateful it's not in my room ... you would have a million things going through your head'.

**A** man who gave evidence about sexual abuse at Slade Cottage was first placed in State care in the mid 1980s, when he was 12. During his six years in State care he was placed on 'in need of care' guardianship orders and orders for offending. The PIC told the Inquiry he was sexually abused while on remand at the South Australian Youth Remand and Assessment Centre (SAYRAC) and during a placement at Rose Cottage, Prospect.

The PIC was placed at Slade Cottage for one month when he was 14. He estimated there were about five boys in residence then. He spoke of a residential care worker at the cottage who helped boys build their own bikes from spare parts and said this man also 'made us play with his dick, made us lay down while he penetrated us'. The same worker took him out alone in the cottage vehicle to a nearby beach, where he parked and, the PIC recalled, 'I'd have to do sexual things for him'. He told the Inquiry this abuse occurred both during the day and in the evening. The worker took him swimming, and 'I wouldn't go near him. The more I could stay away from him, the better'. He said the worker told him, 'You're my favourite little boy'.

The PIC said he felt 'horrified' and 'terrorised' during his time at the cottage. He absconded, 'slept under the rocks' at a nearby beach, asked strangers for money and stole food. He was found and returned to the cottage, when staff locked him in his room and struck him with a cane as punishment. He told the Inquiry his parents visited him during this period and, while he told them about being physically assaulted, he did not disclose any sexual abuse:

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## Chapter 3 Allegations of sexual abuse

'I was ashamed to tell anyone what happened'. The department's files on the PIC show he absconded on more than one occasion and refused to return. A welfare worker noted after one telephone call from the PIC that he was 'refusing to return to Slade. [The PIC] alleges some "non welcoming" by Slade—maybe a kick in the bottom? May need follow up'. The files record the welfare worker's efforts to persuade the PIC to return to the cottage and the PIC's refusal. They also show the department knew the PIC was associating with a person known to the department as having involvement in child prostitution; the welfare worker warned the PIC that 'he was in danger of being exploited for male prostitution if he remained in the company of [the person]'

The PIC was removed from the cottage as a result of his offending.

### *Abuse by other residents*

The SWIC of another PIC shows that in the early to mid 1970s, when he was seven, a court found he was neglected and placed him in State care until he turned 18. The PIC understands that his mother was unable to care for him. He was placed in foster care with extended family when he was eight, and said he was sexually abused in this placement; the perpetrator was convicted of indecent assault and placed on a good behaviour bond. The PIC told the Inquiry he was sexually abused when he was later placed in Slade Cottage in the early 1980s, when he was 15.

The PIC's SWIC records that he spent only a few months at the cottage before being placed with his mother. He recalled that soon after his arrival at Slade he was taught how to build a bike. He remembered 'little punishments if you did anything ... drastic' and said he 'tended to not act up as much' while he was there.

The PIC told the Inquiry his time at the cottage was one of the 'spots that I block out', because on one occasion another boy anally raped him in the shower; he still

remembers the boy's build and distinctive hair colour. He did not disclose what had happened: 'I never told anybody. Never thought anything of it.' The boy did not abuse him again but would 'blow kisses to me as he was walking past in the dining room and stuff like that'. The PIC said he felt 'repulsed' by what had happened, and said he 'wanted to run away but I knew if I run away they'd ask why I ran away and then I'd have to say something'.

### **Southern Region Group Home, Glenelg 1979–81, Glandore 1981–90**

#### **History**

In the 1970s congregate care was dismantled and residential facilities that resembled a 'typical' family home were developed.<sup>44</sup> Group homes in each metropolitan region were designed for small numbers of 'teenage young offenders who need therapeutic care', although initially non-offenders who were difficult to place in foster situations were also accommodated.<sup>45</sup>

The home opened in 1979 on the site of the former Merrillama Cottage at Glenelg and moved to Pleasant Avenue, Glandore, two years later. It accommodated an average of six children at a time<sup>46</sup> until it closed in 1990.

The Inquiry received a departmental review of the home, which showed that workers faced difficulties arising from the accommodation of children of different ages, as well as offenders with non-offenders. The lack of other placement options meant that some children were inappropriately placed in the home. The review identified the need for standard procedures for community residential care and also for a special unit for children who had been sexually abused.<sup>47</sup>

#### **Allegations of sexual abuse**

Two men gave evidence to the Inquiry about sexual abuse at the Southern Region Group Home.

<sup>44</sup> Department of Social Welfare and Aboriginal Affairs (DSWAA) annual report 1971, p. 4, & DCW annual report 1972, pp.5–6.

<sup>45</sup> DCW annual report 1979, p. 24.

<sup>46</sup> See DCW annual reports 1979 – 1989–90 for data.

<sup>47</sup> SRSA GRS10987/1 Unit 1, 'Community residential care review 26/08/1987–10/11/1987', DCW Community residential care review consultation, Southern Region Group Home, 31 Aug. 1987.

### *Abuse by outsiders*

The Inquiry took evidence from a PIC who was 12 when he was first placed in State care in the early 1980s, after his parents had separated and neither could offer him a stable home life. The PIC constantly ran away from home and school and began offending. He was placed on several short-term guardianship and detention orders and during his time in State care lived at numerous government admission units, cottage homes and in secure care. He alleged he was sexually abused during his time at Slade Cottage. He lived at the Southern Region Group Home for about one year in the mid 1980s, when he was 14, and was released when his detention order expired.

The PIC's departmental files show he absconded from most of his placements and frequented the city, which prompted concerns that he was at risk of being sexually abused. His social workers devised a case plan that included attendance at work and educational programs.

A staff member in one work program allegedly sexually abused him. The PIC described the worker as a man in his 60s. Their first contact was when the PIC and another resident absconded from the group home and the other resident asked the worker for a place to stay; the PIC said they stayed at the worker's house and he showed them pornographic material that night. On a subsequent occasion at his home, the man allegedly supplied him with prescription drugs and alcohol. The PIC said he became intoxicated, fell asleep in the living room and awoke in the man's bed, partially clothed, having been penetrated anally. The PIC recalled that the man apologised to him and gave him a large sum of money. He said the contact between them continued, with the man collecting him from the group home and driving him to the work program. The sexual abuse continued, often in exchange for money or items such as new clothes. The PIC told the Inquiry the worker kept telling him he would stop their sexual activity before penetration but that he always penetrated him anyway. He said he often stayed at the man's home and was required to telephone before he arrived. Whenever he arrived unannounced he was turned away, and realised the man had other children there.

Records confirm the PIC's constant contact with the alleged perpetrator, who was known to the department. Records maintained by the PIC's social workers and group home staff show he absconded repeatedly but continued to attend the work program; that it was the alleged perpetrator who collected him after he had been arrested for offending; and that the same man had shown a particular interest in the PIC during his participation in the work program. The PIC 'rarely catches public transport. Relies on [the alleged perpetrator] to take him to school', reads one report. Another records that the work program 'seemed to bring out a lot of positives'. Yet another noted that the PIC 'formed a good relationship with a degree of trust' with the alleged perpetrator. The worker participated in the PIC's case reviews and encouraged him to stay in the work program. About eight months after the PIC was placed at the group home, records show, the alleged perpetrator was considered for a role as his mentor as part of the department's Intensive Personal Supervision (IPS) program. An IPS agreement was 'deemed appropriate with [the alleged perpetrator] as an Intensive Personal Supervision person, given his excellent rapport with [the PIC]', concluded one assessment.

The PIC told the Inquiry his association with the man continued for about four years and that the sexual abuse persisted throughout the rest of his time in State care. The alleged perpetrator wrote character references and acted as an advocate for the PIC when he faced charges. One departmental review noted that his 'association with [the alleged perpetrator] in the IPS contract, has proved beneficial'.

The PIC said the alleged perpetrator told him he should not disclose what was happening because both of them would be punished. He said he believed his history of offending affected his decision to remain silent:

*That's why I've never, like, even thought about trying to do anything, because, like, I don't think my word—I'm easily discredited ... That's the way I feel, anyway.*

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## Chapter 3 Allegations of sexual abuse

Another PIC was placed in the Southern Region Group Home in the mid 1980s when aged about 15. He had been placed in State care when a court found him to be in need of care. Departmental records indicate the PIC was initially placed in care because his mother was unable to control him and there were allegations of physical abuse in the family home. The PIC confirmed this in evidence to the Inquiry, stating that on one occasion, 'Mum sort of put the extension cord to me severely, from head to toe' and his school 'noticed whip marks' on his body. He told the Inquiry he was sexually abused at the Northern Region Admission Unit, the Salvation Army Boys Home (Eden Park), Smith Street Cottage, Slade Cottage and the Southern Region Group Home.

After two years in Slade Cottage and intermittent periods in secure care, the PIC stayed at Southern Region Group Home for about three months when he was about 15. It is reported that at the time he refused to return to Slade Cottage on bail after a court appearance. Records report that the group home was the most appropriate placement for him because of a behaviour modification program and the older age group of young people there.

The PIC told the Inquiry he was sexually abused by two volunteers with the department during his placement in the group home.

In relation to the first volunteer, he alleged the abuse started while he was placed in Slade Cottage and continued throughout his next placement in the group home until about the time he was released from State care. The abuse allegedly consisted of oral sex and masturbation with the volunteer and watching pornographic videos, and occurred at the volunteer's home or workplace, when the PIC absconded from the home.

Departmental records show that soon after the boy was placed in the group home and the volunteer was continuing to contact him, the boy's welfare worker became concerned she could not give his mother 'clear

information or assurance that what exactly is being done to protect her son from this man'.

Records reveal that the department finally ordered the volunteer by letter 'to have no further communication' with the PIC pursuant to section 77(b) of the *Community Welfare Act 1972–1981*. This section made it an offence for a person to have any communication with a child when forbidden to do so by the department's director-general. Records also show that steps were taken to deregister the volunteer as a community aide. Despite the letter, records show the volunteer continued his contact with the PIC. The PIC told the Inquiry the volunteer used to 'introduce me to people as [if] I was his nephew ... so people didn't think anything bad'.

He said he continued to abscond from the group home as he had from Slade Cottage, and that the volunteer 'actually kept me on the run for so long, so many times'. The volunteer effectively set him up in residence at different locations, including, on one occasion, in a caravan. The volunteer visited him every couple of days, bringing food and to 'make sure I had everything'. After being in the caravan for some time, the PIC said, he became bored and called his departmental workers to see whether he could return without punishment—which he did. The PIC reflected to the Inquiry that the volunteer

*... was someone I met in a department home and he said he'd foster me and they'd look after me and everything like that, and then just disregarded me when I was about 17, 18.*

Department records indicate the volunteer continued his contact with the PIC until the end of his time in State care, noting the PIC was living with the volunteer in a flat about that time. These records show the volunteer was not prosecuted despite his continued breach of section 77(b).

The PIC told the Inquiry he met another volunteer when he participated in a departmental employment program. He said the volunteer sometimes picked him up from the

## 3.2 Smaller group care

Southern Region Group Home and took him to the program. He came to learn that another boy was 'already [the volunteer's] little boy kind of thing', and said, 'I wanted to be [the volunteer's] favourite'.

He said that about the first time he went to the volunteer's house with another boy the volunteer gave them cigarettes and put on a pornographic movie. They also smoked dope there. Within a few months, the PIC said, he went alone to the volunteer's house, where the volunteer started to sexually abuse him:

*He never penetrated me but I used to give him oral pleasure. He'd make me masturbate or he used to have sex in between my legs and put baby oil there and stuff.*

The volunteer gave him money and cigarettes, he said. The volunteer allegedly continued his sexual abuse throughout the PIC's other placements after the group home; and the PIC reached a point where 'I didn't want to go there no more. I was growing up, you know. I realised this stuff is going on, it's wrong.'

The PIC told the Inquiry that when he was at a later INC placement he made an 'accusation' about the volunteer to his INC family. He said he told the family: 'I don't want to go there no more because this is what's going on. You know, what he tries to make me do and everything like that'. Records do not show this was reported to the department, but the PIC said he was pressured into retracting the allegations: 'Then next thing I nearly had every kid from bloody McNally's to Yatala [telling me] that my life is in danger'. The PIC said '[I] had to renege and said everything I said was lies'. He told the Inquiry the volunteer then 'took me back under his wing again and had forgotten all that had happened, and he told all the kids to leave me alone'.

The PIC said the volunteer later set him up in accommodation with other boys. He was committing offences at this stage and spent time in secure care. He said the volunteer gave character references for him in court and told him he had 'contacts':

*[The volunteer] was that well regarded and trusted among people, if [he's] coming into court to speak highly of you, you must be decent or you had some really bad shit happen to you and he cares enough that they will assist.*

He said the volunteer is

*... even on my resume for a reference because that's the only person I can use—is some asshole that liked to touch me, and that's all I can use to this day as a reference and it's still on there.*

The PIC told the Inquiry the volunteer's sexual conduct continued after he left State care:

*After I was 18 I was on the poverty edge of line, but I just let it continue to keep happening ... I knew it was maybe wrong, but because it had been going for so long and these people honestly believe they cared about me so much and I had no-one else to turn to—no-one. No-one to turn to for anything, so I had to go back to these people who done stuff to me.*

He attributes living on the poverty line to his lack of education, and said he spent many years after leaving care taking drugs, which '... made me forget who I was, where I was'.

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## Chapter 3 Allegations of sexual abuse

### Non-government cottage homes

Three people gave evidence to the Inquiry that they were sexually abused—by other residents and a staff member—while placed at non-government cottage homes. From available records, the Inquiry determined they were all in State care at the time of the alleged abuse.

### Smith Street Cottage, 1976–84, and Kennion Cottage, 1984–unknown

#### History

Smith Street Cottage and Kennion Cottage came out of the restructure of Kennion House, which the Anglican Church had operated since 1886. Kennion House management believed that converting to cottage-style accommodation was essential to the home's survival. In 1980, after considerable pressure from the department to operate in line with its child-care philosophies, Kennion House started to plan to convert existing buildings to house smaller groups of children.<sup>48</sup> The home's annexe was renamed Garden Cottage, which was moved to Ferryden Park and renamed Kennion Cottage in 1984. The original superintendent's house became Smith Street Cottage (this was also later relocated to Ferryden Park and called Ross Cottage) and the deputy superintendent's house became Fuller Street Cottage (renamed Farr Cottage in 1982). Each functioned as a separate group home.<sup>49</sup>

#### Allegations of sexual abuse

Two PICs who were placed in Smith Street Cottage or Kennion Cottage while in State care in the 1980s told the Inquiry they were sexually abused by other cottage residents.

#### Abuse by other residents

One of the PICs was placed in Smith Street Cottage by the department for 12 months in the early 1980s, when he was 11. He was in State care at this time, a court having made a two-year order on residence after finding

that the PIC was 'in need of care'. The PIC told the Inquiry he was sexually abused at the Northern Region Admission Unit, Salvation Army Boys Home (Eden Park), Smith Street Cottage, Slade Cottage and the Southern Region Group Home.

After being discharged from Eden Park, the PIC lived at home but it was recorded that his mother rejected him and wanted him put back into the department's care. A court report on the care proceedings stated that the boy 'grew up confused and emotionally deprived ... He has been told that his mother does not want him but he cannot as yet accept this'.

The PIC described to the Inquiry three small cottages or houses at Kennion House—two for boys and one for girls. He alleged that during his time there he was forced to witness and participate in sexual activity by other children. He said the children congregated in the old house, which was like a gymnasium, and here, around tea-time, 'all the girls used to go and make me touch them and do stuff'. He said older boys and girls were

*... there from another unit and they were a bit more active than what I was, but I was having my hands, like, ripped from my shoulders nearly, making me fondle these breasts.*

He recalled one occasion seeing an older boy masturbate and ejaculate over fish and chips to be eaten by the other children. This boy was the instigator of the sexual conduct directed towards him by the older children, he said. While the PIC said there was no sexual behaviour by cottage staff, he recalled that one male worker tried to hold a beanbag over his head as if he were trying to suffocate him. Staff were in the units at the time but he did not know whether they saw what happened, and he did not report it.

After leaving the home, the PIC lived at numerous other placements including Slade Cottage and Southern Region Group Home, where he alleged he was sexually abused by volunteer carers.

<sup>48</sup> Anglican Archives, Box 165, Church of England Boys' Home (Inc.) minute book, Nov. 1977 – Aug. 1980, supervisor's report, undated but pre-July 1978.

<sup>49</sup> Elizabeth Bleby, *Kennion House: A Hundred Years of Children* (Anglican Child Care Services, Prospect, 1986), p. 68.

The other PIC's SWIC shows he was just under 14 when placed in Kennion Cottage in the mid 1980s, and remained there for about two years. Three years earlier he had been placed in State care until he turned 18, as a result of neglect and persistent physical and emotional abuse. Before Kennion Cottage, he had been placed in other institutions, including the Salvation Army Boys Home (Eden Park) where, he told the Inquiry, he was sexually abused.

The PIC said that at Kennion Cottage, two other similarly aged boys encouraged him to sign a blank piece of paper to be a member of a 'club type of thing'. He alleged he was then physically coerced into engaging in sexual practices. He told the Inquiry that either boy would 'lay on top of me, you know, and rub himself up and down, and a lot of masturbating'. They made him 'masturbate while the other boy masturbated'. One boy kissed him and had anal sex with him: 'I was quite hysterical about this'. The PIC said the abuse often happened at night when staff were on the other side of the cottage watching television. He recalled that staff often did not check on residents at night: 'They figured we were in bed and everything was okay and they watched telly'.

The PIC said he told his cottage parent what had been happening. Departmental records report that a social worker with Anglican Social Welfare Services had said that the PIC

*... had not told the cottage parents because he had been threatened with violence ... in [the PIC's] past a similar situation had occurred at Eden Park, where violent threats against him had been carried out. This would have made a strong disincentive to [the PIC's] revealing to anyone what had been happening in his present situation.*

The social worker was also reported to have said she believed the abuse had been going on for a long time.

According to departmental records, these events occurred in the late 1980s. The records show there was a formal notification of the abuse of the PIC and all three boys were spoken to. The PIC said one boy was moved from the home and the other left soon after. An outcome of 'abuse confirmed' was recorded on the department's computerised Justice Information System (JIS). A case conference with relevant workers was held soon after the disclosure, at which appointments were made for the PIC to attend the Sexual Assault Referral Centre and therapy sessions. The PIC told the Inquiry these sessions gave him an opportunity to speak about 'a lot of things', including the abuse and the bed-wetting problem he had since Eden Park.

The department seems to have made a police referral, in that there is a brief handwritten entry on departmental records stating that, '[named social worker] has taken a copy of [PIC's] statement to the CIB. They will make an appointment to speak to all three boys.'

A week later it is recorded, again in handwriting, that '[named social worker] made contact with police last week but they gave no indication of when they would be investigating'. The department's JIS also records that the matter had been referred to police for investigation. However, there is no further reference to police involvement in the matter on the departmental records, nor any outcome of the referral, and neither is there a copy of the PIC's statement. The Inquiry asked SA Police to provide documents relating to 'an investigation of a disclosure of child sexual abuse by [the PIC] by a co-resident of Kennion Cottage, [named co-resident], referred to the CIB in [the late 1980s] by the Community Welfare Department'. However, SA Police told the Inquiry it had no record, saying that, 'All areas of SAPOL have been checked and there is no documentation available relating to this event'.

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## Chapter 3 Allegations of sexual abuse

Of coming to give evidence to the Inquiry, the PIC reflected:

*I never really had a chance before to talk about what happened to me and all things that was happening in my home to me, you know, and I want to use this—now that I have my own family I want to be able to use this as a positive step to my [child] growing up and me being able to help [my child].*

### Rose Cottage, 1988–93

#### History

Rose Cottage, in Rose Street, Prospect, was a residential facility owned and operated by Anglican Community Services from 1988 until May 1993.<sup>50</sup> The cottage was funded by the Department of Family and Community Services, Anglican Child Care Services and the Department of Social Security; the latter paying a family allowance for each child in its care.

The cottage was an older-style villa with two bathrooms and five bedrooms.<sup>51</sup> A licensing report dated May 1988 stated that it was intended to have a homely and relaxed atmosphere, with clear rules as in any household with children. In keeping with the philosophy of Anglican Child Care Services that cottages should be as home-like as possible, staff shared bathrooms with residents.

The cottage offered respite, emergency and temporary accommodation for up to 12 months for children aged up to 12 with behavioural dysfunctions.<sup>52</sup> Some children were placed at Rose Cottage because they had been assessed as being unsuitable for foster placements and were involved in a therapeutic program with their families, which was aimed at reunification. The cottage was licensed to accommodate up to six children at once and had an average occupancy of four. The children were referred to the cottage by the department. When the cottage closed, the program was moved to Farr Cottage at Nailsworth.

#### Allegations of sexual abuse

One man gave evidence to the Inquiry of sexual abuse while he was placed at Rose Cottage.

#### Abuse by staff

The PIC was 12 when he was initially placed in State care under a 28-day temporary guardianship order in the mid 1980s. He was then released, only to be placed under a further order within 12 months, and was subsequently placed in State care until he turned 18. Departmental records show he was placed in Rose Cottage during the last temporary order, when he was about 13, and remained there for six months. The PIC told the Inquiry his behaviour had been uncontrollable and he suffered from attention deficit disorder, which at the time was not recognised or diagnosed.

He said a staff member at Rose Cottage sexually abused him on more than one occasion, entering his bedroom at night and making him 'play with his penis'. The PIC also alleged that the staff member made him lie on his stomach and penetrated him:

*I had no choice. He was too big for me. He used to hold me down, hold my hands down, hold my mouth when I'd scream so it wouldn't wake up [the other boy in the room].*

The PIC said the staff member told him 'that no-one would believe me and that they'd put me away, put me in a place back then called SAYRAC'.

He also felt he could tell nobody at school:

*I think I got into a lot of trouble there and I got to the point where they wouldn't take me out of Rose Street and the only way I could think of getting out of there was committing crimes; and I did, by breaking into the school. All the anger that was in me I took out on animals and that.*

The PIC said he absconded from the cottage and returned home to his parents. His mother took him back to Rose Cottage against his wishes. He did not tell her what was happening to him there because he was 'too ashamed'.

After about six months the PIC was placed in the first of a series of institutions; he alleged he also was sexually abused at SAYRAC and Slade Cottage.

<sup>50</sup> SRSA GRS 2401/4/4 Rose Cottage file no. 31/010/56.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, DCW licence for children's home licensing report.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, Children's home assessment form for licensing.

He told the Inquiry the sexual abuse had a long-term effect on him and his ability to form lasting relationships as an adult: 'You know, I couldn't show love'.

The PIC has served several prison terms as an adult for crimes, and told the Inquiry:

*... years ago I was told that I was a habitual criminal, institutionalised. I did do all right out there for a while, but because of all this coming up in my head just spun me out and sent me turmoiling backwards.*

### Government hostels

Twenty-four PICs gave evidence to the Inquiry that they were sexually abused when they were children living in government hostels. From available records, the Inquiry was able to determine that 23 were in State care at the time of the alleged abuse. Due to the lack of available records, the Inquiry was unable to determine whether one woman was in State care. The alleged perpetrators included staff, other residents, outsiders and family members.

### Allambi Girls Hostel, 1947–77

#### History

In the mid 1940s the department found that older girls in State care who were working were finding it hard to secure accommodation in or near the city. To fill the need, it bought a house in Norwood and in 1947 opened it as Allambi, an Aboriginal word meaning 'a quiet place'.<sup>53</sup>

Allambi, which was also known as Norwood Girls Hostel, assisted residents in their transition to adult life. Girls paid board and their contact with departmental probation officers was limited. They were allowed to go out three

nights a week and to come and go during the day, subject to the matron's consent.<sup>54</sup> For about one year in 1956–57 and again in 1959, Allambi admitted girls from Vaughan House when the girls' reformatory was overcrowded.<sup>55</sup> From 1961, Allambi also admitted school-age girls who were in State care. The number of residents varied from five to 20 over the years.

During its early years, Allambi received complaints from the residents and the Norwood mayor that the girls were noisy, disruptive and behaved poorly in public places. The department directed the hostel's residents to keep the name of Allambi 'pure, sweet and clean'; those who did not were transferred to other institutions.<sup>56</sup>

According to the department, Allambi operated to 'provide care for a large number of young people (aged 12 to 18 years), where fairly intensive involvement between staff and young people is required'.<sup>57</sup> The hostel closed in 1977.

#### Allegations of sexual abuse

One PIC alleged she was sexually abused while placed in Allambi Girls Hostel.

##### *Abuse by outsiders*

One of several siblings who were placed in State care, this PIC told the Inquiry of the violence and sexual abuse that marked her home life when she was a small child. Records indicate she was placed under a three-month care and control order in the mid 1970s when she was 14—although she believes she was 11 at the time—because her parents were unable to control her. A court soon extended the order, placing her in State care until her 18th birthday. She said she was taken from her house by a social worker who told her she was 'going on a holiday'. She alleged she was sexually abused at Allambi, Vaughan House and Elizabeth Grace Hostel.

<sup>53</sup> SRSA GRG 29/6/1944/240, 'Establishment of a hostel for working girls', Secretary to CWPRB acting chairman, 25 June 1945, & Acting chairman to chief secretary, 6 Sep. 1945; CWPRB annual report 1946, p. 6.

<sup>54</sup> SRSA GRG 29/124 vol. 15, CWPRB minutes, 2 Oct. 1947, (minute 1050).

<sup>55</sup> *Finding Your Own Way (FYOW)*, Nunk-warrin Yunti of South Australia Inc., July 2005, s. 4.72.

<sup>56</sup> This occurred in 1950, when two girls who had 'been involved with boys outside the institution' were removed to Vaughan House and Central Depot respectively. See SRSA GRG 29/124 vol. 16, CWPRB minutes, 16 Nov. 1950, (minute 1199); SRSA GRG 29/6/1948/174, 'Misconduct of certain girls and various complaints re girls' conduct etc.', CWPRB secretary to matron, 31 May 1949; CWPRB secretary to acting matron, 29 Nov. 1948; acting matron to CWPRB secretary, 3 Dec. 1948; CWPRB secretary to matron, 10 July 1950.

<sup>57</sup> DCW annual report 1976, p. 20.

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Departmental records show the PIC was placed at Allambi at the age of 14 after absconding from a previous placement at a government cottage home. Her departmental file records: 'She has grown out of the cottage and needs to develop with the influence of older girls'.

The PIC recalled of Allambi: 'There were a lot of tough girls there'. She told the Inquiry she and another girl were raped by a man who used to 'hang around' the high school she attended and 'always hung around Allambi on a motorbike'. She said the man's associates also raped her and her friend, and that the rapes occurred in the back shed of a house in the area:

*I still feel dirty to talk about it ... in the shed and, yes, they just all raped me and ... one after another. It was really bad. I was just a kid.*

She said she told nobody because 'no-one wanted to know nothing, you know'.

The PIC's departmental files record that 'Allambi is proving traumatic for her after living in [the cottage home] environment'. Her SWIC shows that within weeks of being placed there she went home for the holidays, but absconded and was placed in Vaughan House and, later, Elizabeth Grace Hostel.

Of her feelings now, this PIC said:

*How am I coping now? Well, since all this, I've come a long way ... I have bad dreams that I actually yell out names ... and then I'm all sweaty. I still sleep with the passage light on.*

### Davenport House, 1964–77

#### History

Davenport House, in Millswood, was an open residential care centre for secondary school girls in State care for whom accommodation in private homes was not available. The building, bought by the department in 1964, accommodated 18 girls after renovations. They attended

various local schools, were given a small amount of pocket money by the department and, with matron's permission, could participate in community activities such as sport. Contact between the girls and their families was encouraged, in keeping with the hostel's emphasis on open living. Hostel staff fulfilled some parental duties and residents were also encouraged to be responsible for their own care. Ideally, children leaving Davenport House were returned to their own families; otherwise they were placed in foster care or private hostels. Between 1972 and 1975 there were, on average, 11 girls living at Davenport House.<sup>58</sup>

#### Allegations of sexual abuse

Six women alleged they were sexually abused in their early to mid teenage years while placed in State care at Davenport House in the late 1960s and 1970s. Their allegations ranged from indecent assault to rape, perpetrated by staff, immediate and extended family, or unknown people outside the home.

#### Abuse by multiple perpetrators

A PIC was five in the early 1960s when placed in State care until the age of 18 because she was neglected and under unfit guardianship, according to her SWIC. She told the Inquiry she does not remember living with her mother but can recall 'episodes of violence and hiding' before going into State care. She believes from case notes she has read that 'there was some sexual abuse as a child', perpetrated by 'partners' her mother 'brought home from the pub' and that 'supposedly that's why in the end we were taken and made State children'.

The PIC told the Inquiry that at Davenport House in the early 1970s, she was 'bullied and teased a lot' while going through 'the normal initiation'. She remembered a staff member who 'used to hit us, degrade us ... I hated the food and she would hit me on the back of the head to make me eat the food'. She said the worker beat her when she was falsely accused of stealing money.

<sup>58</sup> FYOW, s. 4, p. 74.

The PIC recalled accepting an invitation from another girl to sleep with her—‘you know, like girls do, and just talk all night and that sort of thing’. But when the girl attempted to remove her bra she ‘got scared and I jumped out of bed ... and told her “No”’.

During a holiday period, the PIC said, she was placed in a foster home near a suburban beach that had a carnival. The PIC said, ‘I had a really big attitude, and I came and went as I felt like it, and I lived at the carnival mostly’. She alleged that one day, while walking near the carnival, she was picked up by some young men in a car, driven to sandhills and raped. She bled and ‘it was all over in 20 minutes’. She told the Inquiry:

*I was scared, I was sore, I was angry. Haven't been able to go there the rest of my life since. Yes, it reinforced all the things that I'd been told, that I was ugly, unlovable. I've lived the next 30-odd years with that. Not being able to have a relationship with anyone, not being able to trust anyone, not feeling lovable.*

The PIC said she returned to Davenport House within days and told a worker there what had happened. The worker responded with something to the effect of, ‘You wear your dresses up your arse so high, what do you expect?’ She told the worker she was bleeding—‘I didn't know what to do’—and was directed to get some pads, but was given no medical treatment: ‘No, no-one gave two shits’.

The Inquiry did not receive the PIC's client files and the department advised that it ‘cannot provide a definite explanation why no records have been located’.

The PIC told the Inquiry that soon after the rape she ran away from Davenport House with one of the ‘street-wise’ girls from the home:

*I think that's when I decided that I had to get out, and I used to plot how that would happen, and I think it was not long after that I ran away with one of the girls there ... That's when I went to live on the streets.*

This is confirmed on departmental files relating to the other girl; it is noted that police had been contacted ‘about their disappearance’. An entry in the files two weeks later shows a senior welfare officer expressed concern about ‘the recent critical situation at Davenport, where a great number of girls have absconded’, and commented that it would be helpful to ‘interview each of the girls before they return to Davenport’.

The PIC told the Inquiry she did not return to Davenport House and instead went to live with her friend's extended family, but ‘then we lived in parks, in telephone boxes, in empty houses, wherever’. She alleged she was sexually assaulted by male relatives of a friend, and said: ‘I let them do that because I figured that's what I had to do to pay for a roof over my head, or that's what they told me’. She alleged she was raped almost daily by one of the men, but told no-one:

*After the Davenport incident, I thought that's what I was, a slut, didn't deserve any better, and I had to earn my keep, he told me. I had no money, didn't know anyone.*

After staying there for about a month she teamed up ‘with normal streeties’, slept in city buildings, took clothes from clothes bins and stole milk money to survive. She got ‘mixed up with some bikers’, who gave her shelter and ‘provided I gave sex, there was never any argument’.

The PIC's SWIC shows that several months after she absconded from Davenport House in the early 1970s she lived in boarding placements. Still in State care and in her mid to late teens, she met a young man who showed her ‘affection ... in genuine terms’ but ‘I still felt I was just there for someone's convenience, like it was my job to make him happy’. She became pregnant to this man before leaving State care.

In later life, the PIC returned to school and achieved tertiary qualifications to work with children: ‘My driving force in my life has been that I will get to a position where I will make change’.

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### Abuse by staff

**A** PIC was placed in State care at Davenport House for the duration of two three-month orders in the late 1970s, when she was 15. Her SWIC states: ‘Mother does not want [PIC] home’, and ‘Mother and daughter experiencing difficulties’. The PIC told the Inquiry her mother took her to the department ‘to talk to them about not wanting me at home any more’, and that the matron and a worker came to take her to Davenport House after attempts at reconciliation failed. She had been close to and protective of her younger siblings, and her placement in the home made her feel ‘abandoned’ and ‘segregated ... I didn’t know what I was in for’. She felt ‘scared’ because some of the other girls ‘seemed really rough’. At school she did not associate with girls from the home, and ‘My close friends that I’d had at school I didn’t sort of really have any more’.

The PIC told the Inquiry the worker who picked her up to take her to Davenport House was ‘handsome’ and ‘easygoing’, and ‘over time he started spending a lot of time with me’. She had had ‘very little’ previous experience with boys. She said the man wrote poems to her: ‘He gave me a lot of attention that I certainly hadn’t had before’. He took her alone on outings to different places in the city and became ‘more and more affectionate’.

She said their relationship became sexual and they started having sex every week. The first time, when she was 15, she skipped school and he picked her up and took her to his house. She said of this man:

*I liked him. He was sort of nice to me ... I really honestly didn’t have anybody else ... I liked having somebody to talk to more than anything, I think. I was fairly isolated ... I didn’t know what was going to happen to me, you know.*

She told the Inquiry that other girls at Davenport House noticed the worker’s attention to her—to the extent that one performed a play about them at the home. The worker also told her the matron had told him he wasn’t to spend so much time with her alone: ‘He thought it was funny’.

He had talked ‘a lot’ about taking her interstate and staying

at a friend’s place. To make sure this trip happened, he encouraged her to return home at the end of the second three-month order to avoid being made a ward of the State. She said she left school and went home, and found employment.

She recalled she ‘packed all of my things ... my worldly possessions’ and started on the interstate trip in the worker’s car. They had sex on the way to their destination and went to a motel. She said the worker ‘obviously got cold feet and he rang up his wife’, and they turned around and came back to Adelaide: ‘He dropped me off down the road with all my little possessions and I went home and had to face my mother’.

The PIC said her mother was furious and forced her to leave home. She said she spent one night in Davenport House but could not continue staying there because she had been discharged. She said she stopped having sex with the worker and he ‘did not help me in any way, shape or form’.

Of the abuse, the PIC said, ‘He told me that he knew that I wouldn’t tell anybody’, but she did tell her friend at the time, and a sibling later on.

On reflection, the PIC told the Inquiry that after the worker left her:

*I think it had a big effect on my self-esteem; like when I realised that I had really been used and when it all happened that we came back ... after doing a U-turn ... I was sort of like, ‘That’s okay’ ... because it just seemed like it didn’t really matter what anybody did to me ... so therefore it was okay that he just went back into a nice and comfortable life and I was going to be left totally in the shit.*

She said that after meeting and talking with the worker in later years she believes he found a very vulnerable and, by his own admission, mixed-up teenager and took advantage, which had a lasting effect. Despite this, the PIC eventually returned to study, obtained tertiary qualifications and is now a successful professional, ‘worlds away from the girl I was’.

**A**nother PIC was placed in State care in the mid 1960s, when she was four, on the grounds of neglect and unfit guardianship. Departmental records from the time show the Women Police Branch had become involved, there was concern about the state of the family home, and the girl's mother had made allegations of 'indecentcies by her husband in the presence of and with his children'. The PIC told the Inquiry she was sexually abused in foster care and the family home, and at Davenport House and Hay Cottage.

Departmental records show that in the mid 1970s, when she was 15, the PIC was placed in Davenport House, where she remained at different times over about 12 months. She recalled that 'Davenport House girls ... used to get teased'; on one occasion she was suspended when she and another girl 'had just had enough' and hit another girl.

She told the Inquiry she was sexually abused at Davenport House by a person who may have been a worker or 'had something to do with there. He was there a lot'. She recalled a dark basement area where the girls played their records, and alleged, 'I can remember this guy having sex with me down in that basement room on a number of occasions'. She said he gave her money for this 'because I was smoking ... I always wanted to get smokes'.

The PIC had a 'vague memory' of this man taking her by taxi into the city and upstairs in a building, possibly a hotel, where there were about three 'men in suits'. She believes they gave her cigarettes and she had a drink, but 'I can't remember leaving there. I only remember going there'. Her next memory was of being back at Davenport House, feeling tired, with a headache, trembling and waking up at night with a dry mouth. 'I think I had the feeling of just something wasn't right. I didn't feel like I normally felt,' she said, and she senses that something sexual had happened to her although she 'had no recollection of it'.

The PIC's SWIC shows she lived with her father for several months on one occasion during her intermittent 12-month

stay at Davenport House, and again lived with him for a period after she finally left the home. During this time, she told the Inquiry, he sexually abused her, including by penetration. He made her have 'oral sex with him, play with him and just—yes, just bad things'. She told the Inquiry that she 'fled' to another relative's place but was forced into prostitution while living there.

Departmental records show that it had concerns about the father a few years after her placement in State care, when she was about six or seven. The department's director had instructed that the PIC and her siblings were not to live 'either full or part-time temporarily or otherwise' with the father; and it was later reported that he was 'unsuitable as a parent as he has interfered with them on several occasions'. However, over the following years the PIC was permitted to have contact with her father.

The PIC reflected on her time in State care:

*I've been placed in a system that was supposed to protect me as a child, the community welfare, and that system failed me terribly ... They've left me in very dangerous situations and dangerous homes where people abused me and I couldn't speak out ... I cried silent tears because I was afraid of the consequences and this will remain with me until the day I die.*

### **Abuse by outsiders**

**A**woman told the Inquiry she experienced little affection in her childhood home, was 'just neglected' and was sexually abused by two family members. The department monitored the PIC's family and, after she committed a minor offence in the late 1960s, when she was nine, she was placed in State care until she turned 18. She told the Inquiry she was sexually abused at Davenport House and, later, at the Marion Units.

In the early 1970s, when she was aged about 12, the PIC was placed at Davenport House, where she stayed for about three years, during which time she attended school

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and visited relatives. She described her departmental social worker as 'lovely' and 'friendly', but said that 'in all honesty it was no better for me than being at home, except that I was more isolated from my family because I still had no emotional support'.

The PIC said that when she was about 14 a person known to her family sexually abused her on an outing from Davenport House. The person had sexual intercourse with her but 'I didn't really realise what was happening at the time'. She did not tell anybody about the abuse and said, 'I was withdrawn anyway ... I used to live in my own little world'. When staying with relatives on breaks from Davenport House, the PIC said, another family member sexually abused her 'lots of times ... he came into my bedroom in the middle of the night and just had sex with me. He told me not to tell anybody'. The PIC believes she was 'taken advantage of' but said she felt guilty about what had happened and 'didn't stop him'.

She also told the Inquiry another older family member whom she used to visit while at Davenport House kissed her inappropriately on one occasion; another relative had caught him and 'told him to get away'. The family had arranged matters so she no longer visited the household and she concluded that the abuse had been her fault.

'I didn't say anything to anybody, like all the other instances, and I was already isolating myself from people,' she said.

### *Abuse after absconding*

According to her SWIC, a PIC aged 14 in the early 1970s was placed in State care by court order until the age of 18 for using drugs, and was soon placed in Davenport House for a month. The PIC told the Inquiry her parents fought regularly at home, and her father indecently assaulted her from her early primary school years—abuse she associated with his coming home drunk. She also alleged that a man in her neighbourhood sexually abused her when she was about the same age. In relation to her time in State care, the PIC alleged she was sexually abused about the time of her placement at Davenport House, while she was absconding.

The PIC told the Inquiry she became 'pretty rebellious' before being placed in Davenport House. Once there, according to her SWIC, she absconded four times in just under two weeks, mostly living on the streets.

She told the Inquiry it was about this time that she ran away interstate with an older girl. At this time, she alleged, several of the girl's male acquaintances raped her: 'Eventually they stripped me off of my clothes and threw me into this prickly bush—I'll never forget'. She said she was bleeding and the girlfriend did not help her. One of the men told her not to say anything: 'I was scared they were going to kill me'. She recalled being back at the place where she was staying, 'laying in the bath and just sobbing because my back—I had all prickles in my back and it was awful'.

The PIC said she hitchhiked back to Adelaide with the girl, but felt 'I couldn't go to my parents, I couldn't go to the police. I didn't trust the police'. She also did not contact the department. After her return, she alleged, she was raped by a group of bikies. When at first she refused to take off her clothes, the other girl 'turned on me' and threatened to call the PIC's parents. She said the owner of the premises where the bikie rape occurred also later raped her. She said she did not report any of these assaults.

The PIC, still aged 14, broke into a family member's home to get clothes, was charged with breaking, entering and stealing and was placed in secure care in Vaughan House. She told the Inquiry that while out with her parents one day she took an overdose of tablets because she did not want to go back to Vaughan House.

The PIC told the Inquiry that at 17 she entered into an abusive relationship and was coerced into the sex industry. After leaving State care she remained in contact with her social worker because 'I always felt very close to her'. The abuse she suffered had led her to take drugs 'to suppress my feelings' and left her anxious about dealing with authorities. Although she believes she is 'still institutionalised in some ways', she is 'working on it ...' She said, 'I just always believe that what happened yesterday doesn't have to make you the person you are today'.

Departmental records show that in the early 1960s, when she was two, an Aboriginal PIC was placed in State care until the age of 18 when a court found her destitute. She said she was sexually abused in foster care and later at Davenport House.

The PIC's SWIC records that she was placed in Davenport House in the mid 1970s at 14 and stayed for about a year. 'Once I went to Davenport, that's when I really rebelled,' she told the Inquiry. At the time she had no respect for adults: 'I wasn't happy with my life and I just thought, you know, "Stuff youse all"'.

At Davenport House, the PIC said she was picked on by some of the girls—'I hated it'—and recalled that one girl punched her in the mouth. She ran away numerous times to the beach area and particularly to the city, where she 'hung out with all the street kids—mostly the rocker kids and bikies'. At times she would stay out overnight, but on other occasions,

*... the police would find me and I'd be brought back and then I'd take off again. Those few years when I was a street kid, it's a bit of a blur, but a lot of stuff happened.*

She did not recall being punished for running away or whether anyone sat down with her to ask what was happening: 'I just felt unwanted, basically, like most people'.

She told the Inquiry that during this period a young male raped her at a friend's house:

*We were sort of dating ... The first time I had sexual intercourse I was raped. I was drunk and this guy just kind of helped himself to me ... so that was my first encounter.*

On another occasion she was raped by a group of three young men who picked her up from high school, offered her a lift home and 'then put me in the back of the panel van' near the beach. She did not know them at the time, but said the ringleader lived on the streets and raped her again when she was 15.

The PIC also alleged that during this time she was raped by a group of bikies and was 'sold off' by a particular bikie into prostitution: 'I didn't care any more'. She soon developed a drug habit and 'was into pretty well everything except heroin'. Of her earnings from prostitution, she said 'most of that money went to the guy who was selling me off'. He had made promises to her about getting her into modelling and going to Paris,

*... and all this bullshit, and that we were saving up all this money for that, but he was using me to get money to get his bike back on the road.*

He used to take pornographic photographs of her, put her in a massage parlour and take her to old men. She thought the last time she was involved in prostitution was when she was 16.

*Sometimes I'd beg for money on the streets, like, to go and buy some hot chips. Sometimes I had nowhere to stay, so I'd stay up all night and I'd just walk around the city.*

The PIC remembered being offered a job as a stripper at a club in the city. On one occasion in the club she saw 'a whole bunch of bikies watching a movie, a pornographic movie, and I ended up going home with them and they all used me'. This happened again at different times and she could not remember the numbers of men involved, but said:

*I didn't care. Once you get used and abused that much, you just end up becoming a bit numb. It ended up I didn't care who I slept with. If I had a feed and a bed, I was right.*

However, she alleged that on one occasion she was 'conned' by a man, and he and his friends drove her to the southern coast area and three of them raped her.

The PIC's departmental records show concerns about her absconding, contact with boys and 'promiscuity' while at Davenport House. It is written on one report after she returned from absconding that the PIC 'had been used by a number of boys sexually'. On another, it is recorded that she 'needs constant and individual attention to keep her in

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the house at all times' and that staff 'try to encourage her to be selective and stabilise friendships, but this she finds difficult ...' The records show a request was made through the PIC's doctor for a psychiatric assessment, and this was supported by her departmental worker, who wrote, 'This child is very much in need of psychiatric assessment and help'. However, the following month, the worker reported that, despite her request, 'no action had been taken'.

There are two other departmental reports in the same month around this period concerning the PIC and her contact with boys. One records on a 'running report' that the PIC and other girls

*... picked up some boys and went to a house where a number of boys forced them to have sex ... Police were informed but because of conflicting stories of girls, the police did not do anything.*

Another records that the PIC had to be brought back to Davenport House from a 'bikie hideout' where she was 'reported to be living with a large number of bikies'. The PIC and a younger companion 'had been pack-raped by nine bikies each'. The PIC was returned to Davenport House but had reportedly 'given such a conflicting story that the police had disregarded her tale completely'. The home's superintendent noted that 'there must be some truth in [the PIC's] story ...' and she was to be tested for venereal disease. It was also noted that the report's author, a departmental district officer, had tried without success to locate places and people with the PIC and her companion. The PIC was also recorded to have denied that sexual intercourse took place, but was 'in need of a visit to Wakefield Street Child Guidance'. The outcome of the Child Guidance Clinic referral is not evident on the records. There are no psychological reports on file, nor were there any records of which police were involved or police contact details for possible future reference for the department should further information come to light.

The Inquiry sought police records in relation to the rape allegations involving the PIC but was informed that the Paedophile Task Force 'have searched historical records and have been unable to locate any documentation pertaining to the initial reporting of sexual assaults to police as alleged'.

The PIC told the Inquiry that as an adult she has suffered from depression and has experienced abusive relationships. Her memories of the sexual abuse has affected her relationships, and 'I feel like I've taken on the shame of other people. I've taken on shame that's not mine. It's actually their shame and I've taken it on'.

However, she said of coming to the Inquiry, 'I haven't talked about it before, not like this. I've just held it for so long'.

### Elizabeth Grace Hostel, 1972–79

#### History

In 1972 the Vaughan House secure care facility in Enfield introduced an open hostel section for girls working in the community. Three years later the unit was moved from Enfield to North Adelaide and became the Elizabeth Grace Hostel. The rationale was that it would function more effectively as an open unit if it were situated in the community.<sup>59</sup> The department's 1975 annual report commented that 'generally, the residents have responded well to this setting'.<sup>60</sup>

The department described Elizabeth Grace as a hostel that provides 'a community-based setting for girls who require guidance and support in developing educational, employment, social, interpersonal and domestic skills to help them cope with community living'.<sup>61</sup>

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One woman told the Inquiry she was sexually abused when she was a child in State care and placed at Elizabeth Grace Hostel.

<sup>59</sup> DCW annual report 1975, p. 18.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, 1976, p. 31.

### *Abuse by staff*

In the mid 1970s a PIC was placed in State care between the ages of 14 and 18 under a court order that found she was neglected. She told the Inquiry she was also sexually abused at Vaughan House and Allambi Girls Hostel.

The PIC was placed at Elizabeth Grace Hostel in the mid to late 1970s for several months. She said that while she was living there one of the staff regularly raped her in an unused room. She said the staff member also took her into an office, showed her pornographic pictures and forced her to touch his penis. 'It just makes me feel sick to my stomach,' she said.

The PIC told the Inquiry, and her SWIC confirms, that she absconded several times in an attempt to escape the sexual abuse and was returned to Elizabeth Grace on each occasion. She said she did not report the abuse:

*I didn't tell anyone. Because you're government property, they can do whatever they want, but you can't tell no-one because if you tell someone, you still get more punishment, no matter what.*

Being taken from her home and placed in institutions did nothing to improve her life, she said: 'I was in hell and then I get put into hell, hell, hell. There was no-one there. No-one gave a shit about you.'

### **Nindee Hostel 1971–present**

#### **History**

Nindee Hostel for Aboriginal children opened in Beulah Park in 1971. Financed by the Australian Government, it was established to provide accommodation for Aboriginal children working or studying in the city and/or suburbs. Nindee was specifically used as accommodation for remote area children who attended secondary schools in the Norwood area. The hostel was run with the assistance of an advisory committee that included Aboriginal representatives.

With the establishment of the Department for Community Welfare in 1972, responsibility for Nindee was transferred to the new, separate Department of Aboriginal Affairs.<sup>62</sup>

### **Allegations of sexual abuse**

One woman told the Inquiry she was sexually abused while placed at Nindee Hostel.

### *Abuse by outsider*

The PIC lived at Nindee Hostel from the age of 12 in the early 1970s for about three years while she undertook secondary schooling. The United Aborigines Mission (UAM) sent her to Nindee on leave from her foster placement where, she said, she also was sexually abused.

The department told the Inquiry there are no childhood client records relating to the PIC; however it once had a family file that was destroyed by fire. The UAM provided only a limited number of records in relation to the PIC. Due to the lack of records, the Inquiry was not able to properly determine whether the PIC was in State care.

The PIC said the people who ran Nindee were 'lovely. We finally felt like we had a family, the children—all us teenagers at Nindee, you know; that someone understood us'.

She recalled there were about 12 to 15 teenagers living there, both boys and girls. She enjoyed her time at the hostel and made friends: 'The Aboriginality part of me was that ... I had people to identify with. So yes, it was easier for me then.'

The PIC told the Inquiry that while living at Nindee Hostel she and another girl absconded and went into the city one night. They met a group of men, one of whom offered to take them for a drive; she said they accepted, and later one of them raped her. She said he warned her that if she did not have sexual intercourse with him he would punch her in the head.

She became pregnant as a result of the rape and told workers at the hostel, who arranged a termination. She

<sup>62</sup> FYOW, s. 4:80.

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said she did not want any action taken against the man at the time, because she did not think her account would be believed:

*I sort of knew it was wrong that he was standing over me and threatening me. I knew that was wrong. I just felt that my little word against this man—in the report my name will get slandered and he'll end up still being the good guy, so I didn't go there.*

She told the Inquiry the abuse 'stopped my education'. She was offered secretarial work, but 'I felt so degraded and worthless'. She felt she couldn't go back to school either: 'I just couldn't face all the girls in the school, you know, if anybody told anybody.'

The PIC left the hostel and did not complete her secondary education. She is now involved in caring for her grandchildren, and told the Inquiry she wants them and other Aboriginal children to be kept in 'with family foremost from everybody else—I want them to have a future'.

### Kumanka Boys Hostel, 1946–80

#### History

The department bought a property in North Adelaide in 1945 as a response to the need for accommodating children in State care who were moving from reformatory living to working in the community. It was named Kumanka, an Aboriginal word meaning 'comrades'. The hostel was designed to accommodate working boys in State care, with provision for accepting some aged over 18 at the department's discretion.<sup>63</sup> By September 1945 a superintendent had been appointed and a matron was employed soon after. The existing building was renovated to provide improved bathroom facilities, a workshop and sports room. The home opened in January 1946 and by June that year 14 boys were in residence.<sup>64</sup>

Kumanka aimed to give boys a means of developing skills for living as citizens in the wider community. They were allowed to come and go, subject to the superintendent's approval; contact with the department's probation officers was minimised. The boys paid board and were helped in saving some of their wages.<sup>65</sup> Social contacts were also organised, including outings from the hostel.<sup>66</sup> From 1962, in addition to working boys, older schoolboys lacking suitable accommodation were also admitted to Kumanka and the hostel's superintendent monitored their progress at school. In 1966 the average number of boys at the hostel was 18.<sup>67</sup> By the mid 1970s Kumanka was one of five hostels in the metropolitan area for children aged 12 to 18.<sup>68</sup> Kumanka closed in 1980.

#### Allegations of sexual abuse

Seven people gave evidence to the Inquiry that they were sexually abused at Kumanka Boys Hostel between the early 1960s and the late 1970s.

#### *Abuse by multiple perpetrators*

One PIC alleged he was sexually abused during his placement at Kumanka in the late 1970s. In the mid 1970s, when he was 13, a court placed him in State care until 15 for habitual truanting and sent him to Brookway Park for safekeeping. The PIC told the Inquiry he was sexually abused at Brookway Park and then at Kumanka.

After four weeks at Brookway Park the PIC was transferred to Kumanka and stayed there for almost 18 months. He said he first experimented with drugs while at Kumanka. He also told the Inquiry that staff were often violent towards boys at the home. He said of one staff member, 'I have several scars on the back of my head from where he hit me with his keys'. He alleged another staff member 'grabbed me by the nuts and marched me up and down the stairs seven times'.

The PIC alleged that sexual things were happening at Kumanka: 'I seen it and I was involved in it'. He told the

<sup>63</sup> SRSA GRG 29/124 vol. 15, CWPRB minutes, 28 Feb. 1946, (minute 974).

<sup>64</sup> CWPRB annual report 1946, p. 6.

<sup>65</sup> GRG 29/124 vol. 15, CWPRB minutes, 28 Feb. 1946 (minute 974).

<sup>66</sup> CWPRB annual report 1947, p. 6.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, 1966, p. 17.

<sup>68</sup> DCW annual report 1977, p. 23.

Inquiry that he and other boys at the home frequented hotels nearby and in the city, where gay men and paedophiles were common among the clientele. He also said hotel staff and police turned a blind eye to the under-age drinkers and sexual activities.

He alleged he was sexually abused during his placement at Kumanka but 'away from the house'. He said he was introduced to a man who owned a shop near the home and that the man sexually abused him and other boys: 'He used to give us \$10'. He also said there were other men at the shop: 'They were meeting boys there and taking them with them'.

The PIC also alleged he met a doctor who took him to places where men sexually abused boys. He said the doctor and a Kumanka staff member sometimes took him and other boys to a Glenelg house where they posed nude for photographs:

*He used to pay us, I think it was \$15 or something, and it was nude photos and nude sketching only, no touching. \$15. If you got 10 photos you get \$150.*

He told the Inquiry he was taken to parties where there were boys and men, and said the boys were given drugs and alcohol:

*Everybody would just party. You could name your drug—it was there. You could name whatever you wanted to drink—it was there. The younger you were the more you were encouraged to drink.*

At one party at the doctor's house he allegedly was given a drug called Mandrax:

*He had, like, a big pickle jar, I suppose you could call it, and it was chock-a-block full. There was thousands in there. It was, walk through a door, just grab what you want and, if you didn't want to take them, you could sell them ... The next thing I remember I wake up. I was at a strange house that I'd never been at before in the lounge room and there was one bloke filming and another bloke was having sex with me and I remember them waking*

*me up, saying, 'Come on. Where do you live? Come on. Where do you live?' and the next thing I remember is my mother going off her face because I was passed out on her front lawn, and I slept for three days.*

### **Abuse by staff and other residents**

In the mid 1960s, when he was 11, a PIC was found to be destitute and was placed in State care by court order until the age of 18. He alleged his father physically and sexually abused him regularly.

The PIC told the Inquiry that while in State care he was sexually abused at Windana Remand Home, Glandore Children's Home, in the family home, at Kumanka Boys Hostel and McNally Training Centre.

At 15, the PIC was transferred to Kumanka, where he stayed for nearly three months. He alleged a staff member who had previously abused him at Glandore also sexually abused him at Kumanka. He also said that other resident boys sexually abused him there: 'They seemed to enjoy beating me up and deciding who would have sex with me ... I either did it or got bashed'.

He said he absconded from Kumanka as a result of the abuse, and that he spoke to a Kumanka staff member about it but the person would not listen to him.

Files from the department reveal that the PIC was considered to be in need of psychiatric assessment and possibly treatment but because such services were not readily available, this did not occur. The records do not mention any reports of alleged sexual abuse.

### **Abuse by other residents**

In the early 1960s a four-year-old PIC was placed in State care until he turned 18 after a court found him neglected and under unfit guardianship. He recalled there was violence and alcohol abuse in his family home and said that occasionally he 'used to eat out of bins'. He told the Inquiry he was sexually abused in foster care, at Glandore Children's Home and then at Kumanka.

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## Chapter 3 Allegations of sexual abuse

The PIC was 14 when he went to Kumanka in the early 1970s and lived there for almost two years. He said he suffered violence, both from staff and other boys, and that an older boy resident sexually abused him by 'getting us to do things to him, or me to do things to him'.

He also recalled an incident in which he was abused by a group of residents. These boys 'flipped me over, ripped my pyjamas off me, and one was having a go and four others were holding me down'.

The PIC said he did not report this sexual abuse. He told the Inquiry he has been psychologically affected by the sexual abuse he suffered while in State care: 'I keep blaming myself for it, and that's where I'm going to have to be, what, deprogrammed, de-institutionalised?' He said he feels 'violated and screwed up' and that 'the system has let me down and let us down'.

### *Abuse by outsiders*

A court placed one PIC in State care in the early 1960s when he was 12 for criminal offending. He said his parents separated when he was about five and his father privately placed him in different non-government homes. He told the Inquiry he was sexually abused at Windana Remand Home and Kumanka.

The PIC's SWIC records that within months of being placed in care he was transferred to Kumanka after being in two other institutions: 'Eventually they figured it was just that I needed a more family-orientated environment, and that's when I wound up at Kumanka'. He stayed in Kumanka for about nine months, according to his SWIC.

The PIC told the Inquiry that while at Kumanka he went with other boys on outings, including to the theatre. During these outings he observed what he considered to be men making sexual advances to the boys: 'We each sat with an adult between us. In most cases they would make some kind of sexual advance'. On one such occasion:

*The fellow sitting next to me put his arm around my shoulder and wanted to play with my boob. I was, like, you know, 'You go any further than that, you're going down'.*

He also said he and other boys were taken to parties where sexual things happened with men.

During and between the various institutional placements the PIC was sent for holidays with a family—'lovely people'—who later fostered him for a few months. He also was returned at times to his mother's care, but said that:

*In between stints in these homes the dickhead welfare system would send me back to my stepfather, who I absolutely hated, who would flog me more often than I'd had bloody hot dinners.*

His SWIC shows the placement at Kumanka ended because he was charged with a criminal offence and transferred to secure care, including Windana Remand Centre, where he said he was sexually abused.

A PIC born in the mid 1950s alleged he was sexually abused during a placement at Kumanka in the late 1960s. His parents had previously placed him in several non-government homes. When aged nine he was charged as being destitute and then while on remand was charged with larceny and placed in State care until the age of 18. The PIC alleged he was sexually abused during placements at the Boys Reformatory, Magill, Brookway Park, Kumanka and McNally Training Centre.

At 14 the PIC was placed at Kumanka. He alleged that two other residents took him to a house where he took drugs before a man sexually abused him by having anal intercourse.

The PIC told the Inquiry that he felt 'dirty' after the assault and did not report it: 'I thought I'd be safe by not saying anything anyway'. He also was reluctant to report the abuse when the same two boys again attempted to convince him to go to the man's house:

*They were going to take me back another night and I refused to go, and they tied me up naked to the basketball pole and threw basketballs at me.*

Records show the PIC continued to abscond and commit offences. He was later placed at McNally Training Centre where, he said, a staff member sexually abused him.

**A** PIC born in the early 1960s alleged he was sexually abused while placed at Kumanka in the mid 1970s. He was charged as neglected and placed in State care by a court before he was three. Departmental records show his parents were considered incapable of caring for their children or providing proper accommodation. The PIC's mother alleged her husband had behaved indecently in front of the children, which he allegedly later admitted. The PIC spent short periods at a government home and with his father before being placed in foster care, where he alleged his foster father sexually abused him. He also alleged he was sexually abused at Lochiel Park Training Centre when he was about 12.

When he was 14 the PIC was transferred to Kumanka, where he remained for six months. He told the Inquiry his memories of Kumanka were

*Horrifying ... I remember one incident in the pool room. They had a pool room upstairs. They were hitting me and throwing pool balls at me; calling me ... this, that and the other thing. Everywhere I looked it seemed like someone would hit me in the back of the head or call me a name. It's like the rest of them; it's blank.*

He said that while living at Kumanka another boy took him to an art shop in North Adelaide: 'Went out the back, behind some curtains ... can't remember what happened there. I had forgotten all about that. I remember they gave us some money.'

He regularly absconded from Kumanka and often went to the River Torrens to swim. On one occasion he met a man there:

*He had a motorbike. He offered to take me for a ride. I had never been on a motorbike so I said yes. I had a lot of fun and he dropped me off near Kumanka and offered me another opportunity the next day. That was when he took me to his house ... Then he talked me into having sex with him.*

The PIC said he did not like the sex but continued to visit the man:

*Although I didn't like it I went back because at that time it was an escape from Kumanka where I was severely bullied by the boys. It was a refuge. It was a place I could get away from all the nastiness.*

He said his father was aware of and approved of the PIC's contact with the man. He also alleged that this man introduced him to other men who sexually abused him. On one such occasion the man took him bowling with another man and let this man take him home: 'That's where someone forced their way into me'.

One of the men to whom he was introduced took him interstate:

*The first time I went to [city] I was taken there by a friend of [the man] whose nickname was [name]. He tried to sell me in [a hotel].*

The PIC said he was eventually apprehended by police and placed in a detention centre from which he later absconded: 'The SA welfare just brought me back and forgot about it'.

Records from the department confirm that the PIC absconded from Kumanka more than once. They confirm that on one occasion he absconded to another State.

A note on the department's file states that on another occasion the PIC absconded and was

*... located by police at Magill, in the company of an older man. [Name] stated to me he was in his mid 30s. This relationship will have to be watched carefully because according to [name], it has just recently taken place.*

There is no further mention of this relationship on the file.

The PIC said he did not report any of the abuse but said he suffered anal injuries and required surgery. He said the department was aware of his injuries at the time he

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absconded interstate. The department's file does not record any medical treatment for these alleged injuries.

He said he lived on the streets until he was about 32. He said he still carries feelings of guilt about the abuse he suffered as a child:

*I have always been of the opinion it was my fault; that's why I've told no-one ... I've always assumed it was. I have felt ashamed and guilty all my young and adult life. It has affected my relationships, my ability to look society squarely in the face. I have always felt like a lower grade of person and believe society treats me as such.*

The PIC said he hopes that he can put his past behind him, and would also like to help others:

*I'd like to see things changed ... I'd like to know that when families do break down, when children go to homes, they're not going to be taken to motel rooms. I'd like to think that a child can feel safe wherever he is.*

### Abuse after absconding

In the mid 1960s, before his first birthday and as a result of family breakdown, a PIC was placed in State care until the age of 18 when a court found him neglected and under unfit guardianship. The PIC told the Inquiry he was sexually abused while placed at Fullarton Cottage and at Kumanka.

The PIC was placed at Kumanka not long after his 13th birthday and remained there for just under six months. He said he became a drug user while in State care: 'I was sniffing petrol by the time I was eight, nine, 10. By the time I was out of Kumanka and Stuart House I was sniffing glue.' The PIC said he absconded from Kumanka on more than one occasion. He alleged that during his placement he travelled to another State, where he was drugged and sexually abused.

Records from the department reveal that the PIC absconded from Kumanka with another boy for several days before being returned to the home by police. Within

15 minutes he again absconded. The PIC told the Inquiry that a man who was sitting in a car outside the home talked him into going for a drive, gave him alcohol, cigarettes and pornography, then offered him a free interstate trip by plane. He said he flew interstate and evaded police at the airport by using a false name. When he arrived at the destination he was met by a man and taken to a house owned by another older man. The PIC said he was treated to luxurious accommodation:

*I was told that I was going to be there on a holiday and that they would fly me back within the next 24 hours. So the main thing was, 'Help yourself to anything that's here; swimming pool, whatever you want. It's all here, alcohol, pornography; we've even got videos here for you to watch.'*

The PIC alleged the two men drugged and sexually abused him on a number of occasions over an extended period: 'I was there for three months. The whole time I was there I was their love monkey, so to speak.'

He told the Inquiry he was raped by the older man:

*I was lying on my back on his stomach and he was anally raping me from behind and playing with my penis at the same time. It was some sort of pleasure and pain sort of thing that they were into. They had a machine that they used to use on my penis as well, that used to vibrate. Like, there's a part on my penis that gets sexually aroused when you've got a little vibrating machine on it, and they knew that it does that.*

The PIC alleged the younger man also anally raped him and that he suffered injuries: 'I remember going into the pool and when my body hit the pool I remember red being in the water'.

He said the two men continued to sexually abuse him during the three months: 'It was just ongoing, nonstop, nonstop, nonstop.' He told the Inquiry he eventually escaped and went to a local police station.

The records show the PIC telephoned the department from the other State and told a worker that the older alleged perpetrator was sexually abusing him. The worker then collected him and took him back to Adelaide.

Departmental records consisted of copies of documents from the PIC's client file; the original files were not located.

Records received by the Inquiry show the PIC was absent from Kumanka for nearly three months. They also show that departmental officers were aware he had absconded—an unidentified caller had alerted them that the boy was leaving the State. Police were notified and 'covered the airport with no result'. The records also show that a departmental officer noted that police were looking into a possible association the PIC had with the known older man. Police reported that they were unable to locate the man.

The departmental officer's notes show he suggested to the PIC that he give information to police. The PIC told the Inquiry that on his return to Kumanka he reported details of the sexual abuse to a worker, but said the worker refused to accept his account of events and told him:

*You are full of bullshit. We know that you've just been on the run—whatever. We know you've just run away. What you are just saying is all lies.*

Records show that about six weeks after returning from interstate the PIC was in and out of placements and regularly absconding. During that time, he said, several men in Adelaide and interstate sexually abused him. Records received contain a note by the departmental officer that the PIC was spending time with homosexual friends. There is nothing to suggest the department took preventative measures in relation to these associations or investigated the possibility that sexual abuse or under-age sexual activity was occurring.

Of the men who allegedly sexually abused him during his time in care, the PIC told the Inquiry, 'All I can say is that it's like they were training us to be sexual objects, to be actual sexual objects'. He said he has suffered and continues to suffer: 'I still haven't got a relationship and I still haven't got children and when my family or anybody comes near me I get affected by that'. He also told the inquiry he has suffered psychologically and has had thoughts of self-harm: 'All this did to me as a kid, it just caused me to just want to end it all'.

### **Stuart House 1964–90 / North Adelaide Community Unit, 1990–97**

#### **History**

Stuart House was a government hostel in North Adelaide that operated between 1964 and 1997. It housed older schoolboys who were in State care but had no suitable accommodation. Hostel staff monitored their progress at primary or high school, as well as 'any personal problems'.<sup>69</sup> The boys were permitted to join local sporting and community clubs, and outings were organised by hostel staff. Numbers of boys living at Stuart House varied over the years: the average was 23 in 1964 and six in 1977.<sup>70</sup> An average of 11 boys lived there between 1986 and 1989.<sup>71</sup> From 1990 until 1997 the hostel operated as the North Adelaide Community Unit.<sup>72</sup> It was then relocated to Regency Park, where it still operates as the Regency Park Community Unit.

#### **Allegations of sexual abuse**

Seven PICs gave evidence of sexual abuse at Stuart House between the early 1960s and late 1980s. All were in State care at the time, placed by a court or by the department under an administrative order.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, 1969, p. 19.

<sup>70</sup> FYOW, s. 4.82; DCW annual reports, 1976, p. 53, & 1977, p. 70.

<sup>71</sup> DCW annual reports 1987–88, p. 174, & 1988–89, p. 109.

<sup>72</sup> Department of Family and Community Services annual report 1990 – Stuart House no longer listed, appears as North Adelaide Community Unit.

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### *Abuse by multiple perpetrators*

In the early 1960s, when he was 11, a PIC was placed in State care by court order until he turned 18 because he was neglected and under unfit guardianship. He told the Inquiry he was from a large family and, after his parents separated, it was difficult for his remaining parent to work and care for the children, some of whom began stealing food to try to help out. The PIC recalled the police taking him from his home to Glandore Boys Home and spoke of his father's distress at his removal. He alleged he was sexually abused at Glandore and then at Stuart House.

The PIC said he was sexually abused while at Stuart House in the mid 1960s. He was placed there when he was 12 and remained there for three years. He alleged an older boy at the hostel sexually harassed him and other boys: 'He was always trying to root you ... you'd go in the shower and he'd be masturbating himself and then he'd come to your bed at night ...'

He said he reported the boy to a staff member:

*Several occasions I would say to [the staff member] what was going on, but most of the time nothing was ever done and generally—I remember one time I was coming up the stairs and [the staff member] was up the stairs and I said about [the boy]. I said, like, '[boy's name] is trying to do stuff.' [The staff member] slapped my face and said, you know, 'Get on'. So you sort of think, well, 'What do I do then?'*

The PIC also alleged a male psychologist sexually abused him in Stuart House. When he was about 14 he had several meetings with the psychologist, who visited the home for vocational assessments of the boys. At their first meeting, he said, the psychologist made suggestive sexual comments. At another meeting, the psychologist rubbed his groin on the outside of his clothes. At the next meeting, the man exposed his penis and induced him to do the same; this had then progressed to mutual masturbation. At a subsequent meeting, the sexual abuse allegedly escalated when the man anally penetrated him. The PIC said he

*... grabbed and pulled my pants down. Then all of a sudden he pushed really hard and, I tell you what, it really hurt. So he penetrated and I just shot away really quick and then he come up and tried again and in the end I just, like, 'I'm out of here,' you know, and I got out.*

The PIC said he told a staff member at the home that the psychologist

*... is a poofter and he tried to do me. He smacked me in the mouth and I got a week's punishment. Then I tried again to tell him—again—and I got stand-out for a month.*

At 16, the PIC left Stuart House and lived with his father. He told the Inquiry he became promiscuous, used drugs and got into fights. Now, about 30 years later, he says his life is stable.

An Aboriginal man born in the late 1960s alleged he was frequently and extensively sexually abused during a placement at Stuart House from the age of 11. The PIC was sent to the hostel after a court had placed him in State care until he turned 18, finding that he was in need of care. The PIC also alleged he was sexually abused in a foster placement arranged under the department's supervision but before he was placed in State care.

The PIC said another boy sexually abused him not long after he arrived at Stuart House. He told the Inquiry the older boy induced younger boys at the home to take drugs and have sex with him: 'He got us sniffing glue and [did] sexual acts with us'. He alleged the abuse involved anal intercourse on more than one occasion.

He said that while at Stuart House he found employment, and on one of his rounds he met a man [A] who befriended him and gave him very generous tips. The man was connected with a religious organisation, which ran youth camps. Over a period of weeks and months, he said, he continued to receive generous tips from the man and visited him at his house. After a few months [A] allegedly started to sexually abuse him—the first incident occurred under a bridge near a river:

*The first time something happened with him he just groped me and stuff, you know, and, like ... I was shocked at first, but he sort of, like, convinced me that it was cool—everyone done it and it was normal.*

The PIC said that on several occasions [A] took him to his house, where he played records and Monopoly. He alleged that on one visit the man got him to perform oral sex and told him that,

*It was all right for people to do that and, because I'd had those experiences in the past, it made me believe that what he was saying was right, and also I think I thought that it would be okay because, like, he was always good to me, so it was okay to do that.*

The PIC said [A] introduced him to marijuana and alcohol. On one occasion [A] brought another boy to his house and made him and the PIC perform sexual acts and took photos. The PIC said [A] then went into the bedroom, where he had oral sex with the other boy.

He alleged [A] continued to sexually abuse him during his placement at Stuart House and began to pass him around to other men who also sexually abused him. He told the Inquiry [A] took him to a religious centre which was a drop-in centre for homeless children: 'I basically went there because they used to have these, like, cream cakes that were delivered, and pies and stuff like that'. He also alleged [A] had anal sex with him at the religious centre and that another man put his hands up his shorts and fondled him.

The PIC told the Inquiry [A] also sexually abused him at a camp, giving him marijuana to smoke before anally penetrating him. He also alleged a younger man who was a carer at the camp had oral sex with him on the bus on the way to the camp. He told the Inquiry he cannot get on a bus today as a result of this abuse.

[A] allegedly continued to sexually abuse him at different locations, including a church, where he was penetrated anally. The alleged abuse happened regularly while he was at Stuart House: 'Sometimes once a week. Sometimes we could go three times a week.'

The PIC said [A] also introduced him to a middle-aged man [B] who gave him money in return for oral sex. He alleged that on one occasion [A] took him to a church where [B] anally raped him: 'Like, I was begging for him to stop, you know, and crying and that'.

The PIC said he suffered injuries and this resulted in a heated argument between the two men,

*... because I was, like, crying and I was really distraught and, like, there was blood coming down my legs and [A] ran—bolted inside and got toilet paper and told me to put that there—toilet paper or tissues? I'm pretty sure it was toilet paper—and went in and, like, they had loud words.*

He told the Inquiry that [A] panicked when he saw he was bleeding and the next day bought him a Holden jacket: 'I wanted a Holden jacket, everyone else had one ... I was elated ... I had someone caring about me ... I was eager to please him.'

He said [B] abused him on a number of occasions: 'I remember several times being drugged by him and waking up after being abused'. He alleged that [A] often passed him around to other men who sexually abused him; he sometimes received gifts from the men but said he agreed to go with them to please [A].

The PIC alleged that [A] took him to a homosexual beat near the river, sometimes in the company of other men:

*They'd take us there so they could have sex with people in the toilets and they'd try and get me and another person to go out and go into the toilets and have sex with people and that.*

On one occasion, he said, [A] sexually molested him in the Adelaide Park Lands and was apprehended by police:

*He took off running and the coppers just run him into the ground and chased him and give him a couple of punches in the head and that and they dragged him, handcuffed, in front of me and the copper goes, 'You've got no idea how lucky you are. This man's a paedophile'. I didn't know what a paedophile was.*

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He said he and [A] both gave their personal details to police, who noted them, including the fact that he was from Stuart House. He also told the Inquiry he was scared to walk back to Stuart House through the Park Lands and asked the police to drive him back, but they refused. There is no record on the department's file indicating that police notified them of the incident.

The PIC told the inquiry a professional man [C] sexually abused him more than once, including oral sex on one occasion. He alleged that on another occasion a man drugged him at a youth drop-in centre and took him to a house where he was again sexually abused by [C]: 'I was pretty well drugged up. I was pretty drugged. I think he basically had to almost carry me in there'. The PIC recalled that he woke to find he was being anally raped by [C], who was dressed in women's clothes.

He alleged [C] also sexually abused him at a party where, even though there was no swimming pool, 'everyone was dressed just in bathers. All the kids were all in bathers and there were a number of them there, not just me'. Other men, including [A], were also at the party. The PIC said he had oral sex with [C] and was then sexually abused in the bedroom by someone he did not know.

The PIC told the Inquiry he did not report any of his allegations of sexual abuse. Records from the department show it was aware the boy was absconding regularly but there is no mention of sexual abuse and little discussion about the cause of the absconding. It was noted that the boy exhibited behavioural problems at school and frequently got into fights.

The PIC said he has become addicted to illicit drugs and committed offences to maintain his addiction.

**A** PIC born in the mid 1960s was 15 when a court placed him in State care until the age of 18 on the basis of neglect. Before that he had been placed under a temporary administrative order when his mother was unable to care for him. The PIC alleged his stepfather sexually abused him before he was placed in State care. He also alleged sexual abuse by a foster father when in foster care as well as during a placement at Stuart House.

The foster placement broke down after a short time and as a result he was placed at Stuart House, where he remained until he was nearly 18. The PIC alleged he was sexually abused on several occasions during this placement—the first instance was not long after arriving at the home. The PIC recalled that one night his door opened and three people came in and held him down on his bed:

*One of them grabbed my pyjama pants and pulled them down, exposing my butt. He then held my legs apart while the other one was holding my shoulders and pushing my head into the pillows. I then felt something cold and hard like metal or glass being pushed into my butt cheeks.*

He said he suffered injuries as a result of this incident but was too scared to report it.

The PIC also said that another boy at Stuart House told him how he could earn money if he was prepared to perform sexual favours for men. On one occasion he arranged to meet a man at a location near the hostel and was taken to a house, where there were about 10 males and females. He said he was given alcohol to drink:

*Very soon the room was starting to spin and my last clear memory was looking down at [name] as he took my penis in his mouth. From then I just closed my eyes and went to my safe place deep in the back of my mind. I can't recall too much from then. Every now and then I opened my eyes and saw other people around us just watching.*

He also alleged another man sexually abused him at a homosexual beat in the Adelaide Park Lands, anally raping him and hurting him badly in the process: 'He started getting a bit rough and I said I wasn't really interested then. He just forced me down. Yes, just held me down and had sex with me'.

The PIC said the sexual abuse has caused him a great deal of trauma, including nightmares and an inability to have a normal sexual relationship. He said he suffers from depression, for which he takes medication, and has seen a psychiatrist. His work has enabled him to help disadvantaged children: 'They could see that I, you know, respected them and they gave it back'.

**A** PIC born in the early 1960s alleged he was sexually abused at Stuart House during the 1970s. The PIC was placed in State care when he was five, a court finding he was neglected and under unfit guardianship. Departmental records reveal that the department had been in contact with the family due to unsatisfactory housing and domestic complaints. The PIC said he has memories of being sexually assaulted when he was about three. He told the Inquiry he was sexually abused at Glandore Children's Home, in foster care and then during a placement at Stuart House.

Following unsuccessful placements the PIC was sent to Stuart House not long before he turned 13. While at Stuart House he went to a local school, and alleged a teacher there introduced him to drugs and sexually abused him; he also started to drink heavily during this period. He told the Inquiry the abuse went on for a couple of years.

The PIC also said he obtained work at a local art shop where he was introduced to several men who paid him for sexual favours such as anal intercourse and oral sex, which occurred at various locations around Adelaide and in the back of a motor vehicle. He alleged the abusers warned him to keep quiet, although he did report these incidents to a staff member at the home:

*I was telling him that they were interfering with me. He just said, 'Don't worry about it. Just tell them not to,' sort of thing. I said, 'But how can I?' you know.*

Records show he regularly absconded from Stuart House, sometimes for several weeks. He left school at 15, while still at Stuart House, and found employment.

He told the Inquiry he has frequently abused drugs and alcohol, and that the sexual abuse has affected his ability to form relationships: 'Every relationship I've fucked up, basically. Excuse my language. I've damaged. You know, it's been the reason we've split'.

### **Abuse by outsiders**

**A**nother PIC told the Inquiry that when he was about 10 in the late 1960s he was sexually abused by a stranger who lured him into his vehicle, took him to a house and forced him to perform oral sex. From this point

his life changed for the worse, he said, and he started to get into trouble with the law. At 14 he was charged with offences and as a result was placed in State care by a court until he turned 18. He told the Inquiry he was sexually abused at Stuart House, Windana Remand Home and McNally Training Centre.

When he was almost 15 the PIC was placed at Stuart House for about two months, during which he absconded. He told the Inquiry that while placed at Stuart House he had a sexual relationship with a young man:

*He was a paedophile but I didn't consider him a paedophile; I thought he was closer to my age. And I was learning about sex ... He sort of taught me to drive and groomed me and paedophiled me ... But I, to be really fair, just saw it as my first sexual experience. I now know better.*

The PIC told the Inquiry he had a full sexual relationship with the man for about two years but did not report it because at the time he considered it a relationship rather than sexual abuse. He said the relationship continued while he was placed in other institutions.

**A** PIC born in the late 1960s was placed in State care from the age of 11 under several temporary administrative orders after he was found to be uncontrollable. He alleged he was sexually abused while at Stuart House, then in foster care.

He was placed twice at Stuart House in the early 1980s, the second time for eight months. During this second stay he met a man who was kind to him:

*He was there to take kids out motorbike riding or work on his concreting foundations and that kind of thing. I thought he had something to do with the place.*

The PIC said he stayed overnight at the man's house. He said the man told him, 'Look, you can sleep in my bed. I mean, I won't—nothing will happen', but when he awoke he found his hand was on the man's erect penis. The PIC did not report the incident: 'I didn't tell anyone because, for a start, I felt uncomfortable about it. Secondly, who's going to bloody listen to you anyway?'

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## Chapter 3 Allegations of sexual abuse

He said boys at Stuart House took drugs and did things to each other: 'There was incidents when there was, like, boys with boys. I mean, that happened with me.' He said this happened two or three times: 'That's because you're off your face. Just totally off your face, yet you remember it the next day.'

**A** PIC born in the mid 1970s told the Inquiry he was sexually abused during his placement at Stuart House in the late 1980s. Records from the department show his parents separated before he was 12 and he began stealing and truanting from school. The PIC was placed in State care by a court when he was 15 for committing offences including break and enter and larceny.

Records show he lived at Stuart House for about six months. The PIC told the Inquiry he frequented homosexual beats in the Adelaide Park Lands and met men who then passed him around to other men. 'You'd just get passed on, like, to anyone, like a parcel, you know? ... It was like pass the parcel.' Records from the department reveal it was aware the PIC was regularly absconding and prostituting himself. The PIC said that on the homosexual beats he met a man who was looking for young boys for sex. This man allegedly sexually abused him:

*He was mainly into licking arse and, you know, shoving his arse in your face and, you know, biting your damn nipples and shoving his fingers up your arse, and things like that, you know.*

The PIC told the Inquiry some of the men with whom he had sex were prominent identities: 'How do you say "No" to these people?' The PIC also alleged he was sexually abused by a man who worked for the department and had significant involvement in the management of his case. He said the man sexually abused him 'many times'. On the last occasion he suffered injuries and required medical attention: 'He had my balls and sucking too hard and put me in hospital'. Hospital records received by the Inquiry show that at 14 the PIC was admitted with severe testicular pain that required surgery, but the cause of the problem was not noted.

The PIC also alleged that a man who performed volunteer work for the department helped him and then took advantage of him sexually.

He said he became acquainted with other boys who were also engaging in prostitution and performed in pornographic films with some of them when he was 15 to 16. He also took boys to men for sex and 'got paid \$80 for every delivery of every young boy younger than me in Adelaide'.

The PIC alleged that a man who befriended his mother abused him sexually many times, including raping him. He said he reported the rape to police but no action was taken. Police records reveal the allegations were reported in 2001. The alleged perpetrator was interviewed and denied the allegations. Police interviewed other potential witnesses and concluded that they were unable to corroborate the allegations. Police spoke to the PIC again and noted that he was unable to provide any further information to assist with the investigation and signed a form stating that he did not want any further action to be taken. The matter was then filed and no further action was taken.

The PIC told the Inquiry that he did not report any of the other allegations of sexual abuse: 'Who's going to believe your story, your word over mine? No-one will and no-one has.'

Following his placement at Stuart House the PIC was released to live with his father. However, he spent significant periods living on the streets and committed crimes. He was then placed in the Intensive Neighbourhood Care (INC) scheme, but soon absconded to the eastern states, where he lived off the earnings of prostitution.

He was eventually returned to South Australia and placed at Stuart House but absconded after one week. According to departmental records the police picked him up in another town and he admitted to them he had been 'selling his arse'.

### Youth shelters

Six people gave evidence to the Inquiry that they suffered sexual abuse while living in youth shelters. The Inquiry was able to determine from records that two of those people were in State care at the time of the alleged sexual abuse. The alleged perpetrators were an adult resident and a staff member.

Records received indicated that four of the people were not in State care at the time of the alleged sexual abuse in the youth shelters<sup>73</sup>, although two had significant contact with the department when they were children. Their allegations are not set out in this report as they are outside the terms of reference. However, their evidence has contributed to the Inquiry's knowledge about youth shelters and the long-term effects of child sexual abuse.

### Exodus Youth Shelter, 1985–unknown

#### History

Exodus Youth Shelter was also known as the Edwardstown Shelter. It was developed in 1985 by a church organisation known as the Christian Family Centre. The concept came from a committee of concerned citizens formed in the early 1980s in response to violent incidents involving young people at Glenelg. The committee planned services to address what were perceived as the underlying causes of youth violence, such as family breakdown and drug abuse. Departmental records show that Exodus received a subsidy for children in State care who were accommodated at the shelter.<sup>74</sup> However, records do not indicate whether the shelter also received operating grants from the department.

#### Allegations of sexual abuse

One man alleged to the Inquiry that he was sexually abused while placed at the Exodus Youth Shelter.

#### *Abuse by another resident*

The PIC's SWIC indicates he was placed in State care at 14 in the early 1980s. He was placed under several short-term 'in need of care' orders before a court placed him in State care until he turned 16. He lived in non-government institutions, secure care, government cottage homes and admission units, and in foster care. He told the Inquiry he was sexually abused in foster care and then at Exodus Youth Shelter.

The PIC was placed in the shelter when he was 16 and spent six months there until his guardianship order expired. During his stay, he said, he shared his room for a single day with a man old enough to be his father. This man raped him, both 'oral and in the anus', he said, but because he had experienced sexual abuse in other placements he had not resisted: 'I just thought it was natural'.

### Unit Living, Marion, 1974–90

#### History

Commonly known as the Marion Flats, this group of five self-contained units opened in December 1974 to assist young people in State care to live independently. The department's annual report noted, 'Care and accommodation is provided there for senior school students expected to move into the workforce within about 12 months. The young people living there have shown a capacity to carry on their responsibilities in a supervised situation.'<sup>75</sup> From 1990, the facility was known as the Sturt Community Unit.

#### Allegations of sexual abuse

One PIC alleged she was sexually abused while she was a resident in the Marion Units.

<sup>73</sup> Adelaide Kids Shelter, Little Para House, Norwood Youth Shelter, St John's Shelter.

<sup>74</sup> The Inquiry viewed a SWIC showing the subsidy payment. For other general information see Givewell, <[http://www.givewell.com.au/details\\_name.asp?txtOrganisation=CFM](http://www.givewell.com.au/details_name.asp?txtOrganisation=CFM)>, viewed 31 Jan. 2008.

<sup>75</sup> DCW annual report 1975, p. 5.

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## Chapter 3 Allegations of sexual abuse

### *Abuse by staff*

The PIC was nine when placed in State care in the late 1960s until she turned 18. Her SWIC indicates she was placed in care for a criminal offence; departmental records also indicate concerns that she was neglected. She told the Inquiry she was sexually abused by two family members before being placed in State care, and that she was sexually abused while in State care at Davenport House and then the Marion Units.

In the mid 1970s, the PIC lived at the units for about two years in her teens after the breakdown of a short placement with her family. She lived in a two-bedroom flat that she usually shared. In the units, she said, 'the boys were ratbags' and 'were not people that I'd sort of had much to do with'. She 'kept to myself pretty much'.

After living in the units for a year she alleged sexual abuse by a male worker on separate occasions. She recalled that she visited him in his office 'all the time' to talk to him; on one occasion he had sexual intercourse with her in the nearby staff bedroom. She was surprised but 'I felt like it was almost expected'. After this incident she 'used to still visit and talk to him' but 'I might have been a bit wary and didn't get too close'. She said the man was no different in his behaviour towards her after the incident, although 'he did say something like, "Well, I'm sorry"—something like that'. The PIC described the worker's actions as 'irresponsible'. She felt she couldn't trust people, 'and I still don't'.

The PIC told the Inquiry that soon after the incident, another male worker in his 30s had sexual intercourse with her at the units, and she told him the same thing had occurred with the other man. She recalled that 'It was a bit demoralising for me anyway' but said this worker laughed and commented that he 'wasn't the first'. She said she felt 'guilty afterwards' that she hadn't rejected both workers' advances because 'I was not in a very strong position emotionally'. She never told anyone at the time about this abuse.

After leaving State care, the PIC told the Inquiry, 'I don't think I had a very good opinion of myself at all'. In giving evidence she said, 'All I really wanted for myself was just to be able to talk to somebody that would listen, because I haven't had it'.