

To STEPHEN TEECE

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10/07/15 R

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## STATEMENT OF ALBERT RONALD DE ROOY

REDACTED

D.O.B: 16 December 1955

**1. An overview of your involvement with the Jehovah's Witnesses Church, including but not limited to an overview of:**

- (a) the congregations you have attended;
- (b) any roles you have held within the Church; and
- (c) your role as an elder in the Mareeba Congregation

1.1. I was associated when very young with the Belgrave Congregation in Victoria and then the Narrabeen Congregation in New South Wales. As a teenager I attended the Rockhampton Congregation in Queensland and the Glen Iris Congregation in Victoria. In the 1970's I moved to the Cairns Congregation in Queensland and married my wife there. My family and I moved from there in 1981 to the Mareeba Congregation which I have attended since then.

1.2. I was appointed to serve as a Ministerial servant when about 28 years of age. At the age of 30 I was appointed to serve as an Elder in the Congregation.

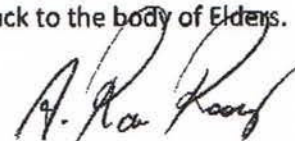
1.3. As an Elder in the congregation I have been appointed to be a shepherd in the congregation to help and protect spiritually the members of the congregation. This involves teaching from God's word at the meetings to strengthen the faith of those in attendance. Also taking the lead in our preaching work and training ones who I work with. Also included is the role of keeping the congregation spiritually clean and healthy which sometimes involves handling matters of wrongdoing.

1.4. I am now 59 years of age.

**2. Your knowledge and understanding of the systems, policies and procedures in place within the Jehovah's Witness Church between 1988 and 2000 to;**

- a. respond to allegations or complaints of child sexual abuse made within the Church;
  - b. prevent child sexual abuse within the Church;
- including but not limited to, your understanding of those systems, policies and procedures as they related to your role as an elder in the Church.

2.1. When a charge of sexual abuse is made, as an elder I have to follow that allegation through. This would include informing the body of elders of the allegation. 2 elders then are assigned to investigate the accusation, and report back to the body of Elders.



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The body of Elders from that report determine if the accusation has substance and if there is, then appoint a Judicial Committee of 3 elders.

2.2. If an allegation of child abuse is raised, the body of elders is also obligated to report the allegation to the Branch Office immediately. I believe this reporting procedure began in the 1990's. Prior to that, child sexual abuse was handled in the same way as other cases of serious wrongdoing, as I have stated in 2.1 above.

2.3. Child sexual abuse is absolutely not tolerated in the congregation. Any Elder or Ministerial Servant guilty of this is immediately removed from serving in that capacity. An unrepentant child abuser will be disfellowshipped from the congregation, and others from the congregation do not associate with him.

2.4. The procedures for preventing sexual abuse of children are:

- \* keeping the congregation clean by disfellowshipping unrepentant sinners;
- \* teaching the congregation members the high moral standards of the Bible at our meetings;
- \* being vigilant as elders to follow through on any accusation made.

2.5. Also, all members of the congregation are taught that, if they learn of serious wrongdoing including child abuse, they have a personal responsibility to report the wrongdoing to the elders if the wrongdoer does not come forward himself.

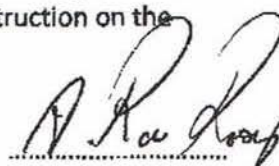
**3. Any training that you have received, participated in, and/or delivered in relation to responding to allegations; prevention, and/or identification of child sexual abuse prior to and/or during your consideration of the allegations made by BCG [redacted] in 1989.**

3.1. As an elder I received training at a number of schools for elders which included teaching on handling cases of serious wrongdoing including child sexual abuse, and handling judicial matters on such wrongdoing.

3.2. I also received a number of articles for elders based on Bible principles for handling cases of serious wrongdoing judicially (including child sexual abuse), which were compiled into a publication "Pay Attention to Yourselves and All the Flock".

3.3. I also personally studied God's Word the Bible and various articles in our magazines Awake and the Watchtower that dealt with child sexual abuse.

3.4. From the 1990's I and other elders received specific instruction in the form of letters from the Branch Office which instructed us to report matters of child sexual abuse immediately to the Branch, and we commenced receiving instruction on the subject at elders' schools.



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3.5. My wife and I made sure we warned our own daughters when very young about the danger of sexual abuse and what kind of behaviour was unacceptable even from one of us parents.

3.6. I therefore treated as very serious the accusation that [BCG] made against her father.

**4. A summary of your experience, both prior to and since the allegations made by [BCG] [BCG] in 1989, of responding to allegations of child sexual abuse within the Church.**

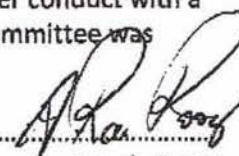
4.1. I recall I was involved in one other case of child sexual abuse in the early 1990's. A brother in the congregation was strongly counseled and was deleted as an elder when the allegations of abuse first came to light. However a number of other complaints were reported in the next couple of years and he was therefore disfellowshipped.

4.2. Since [BCG]'s case and this other case, more information on the subject has been dealt with in our magazines, also since that time more instructions have been given to elders in dealing with child abuse.

**5. The response of the Mareeba Congregation to allegations of child sexual abuse made by [BCG] in relation to [BCH] in or around May 1989, with specific reference to:**

- a. when, and in what circumstances, you became aware of the alleged abuse;
- b. any correspondence, including the substance of that correspondence, that you, alone and/or together with any other member of the Mareeba Congregation, had with the Legal and/or Service Departments of Watchtower Australia after you became aware of the alleged abuse;
- c. any discussions or meetings that you, alone and/or together with any other member of the Mareeba Congregation, were involved in, including the substance of those discussions or meetings, with any person about the alleged abuse, including but not limited to any discussions or meetings with:
  - i) [BCG]
  - ii) [BCH]
  - iii) any other member of the [REDACTED] family; and/or
  - iv) [BCJ]

5.1. My memory is vague because of time elapsed but I seem to recall that [BCJ] [BCJ] and [BCG] came together to inform the elders of the accusation against [BCH]. At that time [BCH] was already being handled by a judicial committee, of which I was a member, to look into his improper conduct with a married sister [REDACTED] and his lying about this. The judicial committee was

  
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investigating the view that BCH wanted to divorce his wife BCI on a technicality and marry REDA who we understood was also planning to divorce her husband on the same technical grounds. It was in the context of this committee that BCG made her allegations of sexual abuse by BCH and the body of Elders immediately investigated it, but BCH denied it vehemently and with aggression towards BCG

5.2 I tried to focus on doing my job as an elder to deal with the matter in the judicial committee setting, to discipline BCH and give spiritual help to his family. Other members of the congregation were giving support to BCG such as Kevin Bowditch and his family. I do not recall the question of going to the police being discussed at any time. I did not make any comment as to this. I am not surprised that BCG reported the abuse to the police some years later.

5.2. I cannot remember any correspondence with the Legal or Service Department after I became aware of the alleged abuse. Other than stated above, I cannot recall details of any discussions with other members of the Congregation, as it is too long ago. I do recall that I was a member of the judicial committee that disfellowshipped BCH that he appealed against the disfellowshipping and that I attended the appeal committee proceedings.


**6. The decision of the Elders in the Mareeba Congregation to disfellowship BCH in 1989 and the reasons for that decision.**

6.1. From memory, BCH was disfellowshipped for loose conduct with REDACTED and for lying about this. In the view of the judicial committee, we were unable to make a conclusive finding about the abuse allegation, as it amounted to one person's word against another's, and we were bound by the scriptural principle that all facts should be established by 2 or more witnesses. BCH appealed his disfellowshipping.

6.2. It was during the appeal committee hearing that BCH admitted in front of 6 persons present that what BCG had alleged was true. The original decision of the judicial committee to disfellowship him was confirmed by the appeal committee, with the admissions by BCH added as additional grounds for disfellowshipping him.

**7. The decision of the Elders in the Mareeba Congregation to reinstate BCH in 1992 and the reasons for that decision.**

7.1. I recall very soon after BCH was disfellowshipped, he moved away from Mareeba Congregation to another congregation.

  
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7.2. I believe [BCH] first went to Brisbane and then to St. George Congregation in western Queensland. I recall that the elders in Mareeba Congregation received a recommendation for [BCH] to be reinstated from the elders at St George Congregation, but we rejected this recommendation. Later we received another recommendation from St George Congregation and [BCH] was subsequently reinstated. I can no longer recall the grounds for reinstating him including whether he had apologized to [BCG]

**8. Your knowledge of any correspondence between the Mareeba Congregation and any other Congregation and/or Watchtower Australia relating to the allegations of child sexual abuse made by [BCG]**

8.1. I do not recall what correspondence there was with other congregations or with the Branch, other than the fact that the original judicial committee sent a report to the Branch, and that there was correspondence with St George Congregation about reinstating [BCH]

**9. Your knowledge and/or understanding of any specific systems and/or procedures that the body of elders in the Mareeba Congregation put in place in relation to [BCH] contact with children while he was a member of the Mareeba Congregation.**


9.1. All I recall is that [BCH] left Mareeba Congregation very soon after his disfellowshipping, and I do not recall any such systems or procedures. I do recall that the body of elders in Mareeba Congregation were protective of [BCG] and at the time [BCJ] provided good support for her.

9.2. I also recall that [BCG] moved in and lived with Kevin Bowditch and his family for a time. They were very supportive of her and treated her like a daughter. I believe Kevin helped pay for her wedding to [BCJ] and gave her away at her wedding.

**10. Your involvement, if any with the Queensland Police in relation to their investigation of [BCH]**

**11. Your involvement, if any, in the criminal proceedings against [BCH]**

11.1. I recall that a police officer named Natalie Bennett was helping to prosecute [BCH]. As I recall all the elders on the original judicial committee and the appeal committee provided statements and any documents we held at the time to the police, and we were all involved in giving evidence in the trial at Brisbane. The case was dismissed. Later it went to court again but I was not involved this time. This time [BCH] was convicted.

  
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