

Special Inquiry into St Andrew's Hostel

Held at: Courtroom 4, Level 18,
111 St Georges Terrace, Perth

Thursday, 10 May 2012 at 10.17am
(Day 28)

Before: The Hon Peter Blaxell

1 HIS HONOUR: Just before we proceed this morning I wish to
2 make a short statement.

3
4 Today we are hearing evidence from five witnesses who
5 are all members of the McKenna family. Some of those
6 witnesses have requested their evidence be heard by video
7 link. The ground for that request is that they might be
8 abused or harassed as they enter or leave the building.
9 Given that there has already been an incident of that type
10 with another witness, there is some justification for those
11 fears. Nevertheless, I have refused the request for the
12 video link and, instead, put in place measures which will
13 provide the witnesses with some limited protection from the
14 risk of harassment.

15
16 However, those measures do not provide complete
17 protection. In particular, witnesses will be waiting
18 outside the hearing room throughout the day. I wish to
19 make it clear that if there is any disorderly incident
20 involving a witness, I will immediately adjourn today's
21 proceedings and recall the balance of witnesses at a later
22 date by video link. I trust that will not become
23 necessary.

24
25 Yes, Mr Urquhart?

26
27 MR URQUHART: Thank you very much, sir. The first witness
28 to be called this morning is Robyn McKenna.

29
30 <ROBYN LEE MCKENNA, sworn:

31
32 <EXAMINATION-IN-CHIEF BY MR URQUHART:

33
34 MR URQUHART: Q. Mrs McKenna, would you be able to just
35 give us your full name, please?

36 A. Robyn Lee McKenna.

37
38 Q. Lee?

39 A. Yes.

40
41 Q. And how is "Lee" spelt? That is just for the
42 transcript.

43 A. L-E-E.

44
45 Q. Thank you. Mrs McKenna, I don't wish to be rude, but
46 I need to ask your age, so we can set in context how old
47 you were when certain things happened.

1 A. Fifty-five.
2
3 Q. Thank you. You just simply reside in the Perth
4 metropolitan area; is that right?
5 A. Yes, we do.
6
7 Q. Are you working at the moment?
8 A. No, I'm not.
9
10 Q. You are married to Wayne McKenna?
11 A. Yes.
12
13 Q. When did you get married?
14 A. 1976.
15
16 Q. You have children?
17 A. Yes, three.
18
19 Q. What years were they born?
20 A. '76, '84 and '86.
21
22 Q. If I can go back to the seventies now. How long were
23 you boyfriend and girlfriend with Wayne?
24 A. Oh, gee.
25
26 Q. About?
27 A. Roughly about a year.
28
29 Q. Did you meet members of his family during that year?
30 A. Yes, I did.
31
32 Q. Is it the case that he had five brothers?
33 A. Yes.
34
35 Q. Did you meet one of his brothers by the name of
36 Dennis?
37 A. I did.
38
39 Q. What was your relationship with Dennis up until the
40 time you got married?
41 A. Not that close, but after we were married it was
42 closer after that.
43
44 Q. What observations did you make, if you were able to,
45 of the relationship that Dennis had with your
46 husband-to-be?
47 A. He was very controlling. He was very controlling of

1 all the family. He used to try and look out for all of
2 them.
3
4 Q. Did you notice that prior to you getting married to
5 Wayne or was this afterwards?
6 A. This is after.
7
8 Q. Do you know where he was in the family? Was he the
9 eldest or second eldest, or where did he come out of the
10 brothers?
11 A. Dennis was the oldest.
12
13 Q. He was the eldest?
14 A. Yes, Dennis.
15
16 Q. Wayne?
17 A. Wayne was the third.
18
19 Q. So you got married in 1976. When you got married were
20 you aware of where Dennis was working?
21 A. Yes.
22
23 Q. Where was that?
24 A. That was at Katanning.
25
26 Q. Did you know what job he had there?
27 A. Yes. He was a house master then.
28
29 Q. At the hostel?
30 A. Yes.
31
32 Q. Had you visited him at all in 1976 when he was down
33 there?
34 A. No. Not till later on in the year. We moved down
35 there in '76.
36
37 Q. I was going to ask you about that. Did he offer you
38 and Wayne a job - or two jobs down there?
39 A. Yes, he did.
40
41 Q. How did that come about?
42 A. We didn't have any employment at the time, so I just
43 think he thought - he offered us work.
44
45 Q. Wayne wasn't working at the time?
46 A. No.
47

1 Q. How old was he?
2 A. Twenty-seven, I think. I'm not sure.
3
4 Q. How long hadn't he had a job for, can you remember?
5 A. Oh, not that long. He worked on a Shire and he worked
6 away on the SEC, and then after that I'd probably say only
7 a few months, and then we got offered the position down
8 there.
9
10 Q. At the time that you got offered the position had you
11 already had your first child?
12 A. Yes, I had.
13
14 Q. That was a daughter, was it?
15 A. Yes.
16
17 Q. How old was she at the time that you got offered this
18 job?
19 A. She was six months when we moved down there.
20
21 Q. You accepted the job offer?
22 A. Yes, we did.
23
24 Q. Can you recall what job it was that was offered to
25 you?
26 A. Wayne was offered the house master job and I was just
27 a supervisor.
28
29 Q. Were you formally interviewed at all, either of you?
30 A. I can't recall that. No.
31
32 Q. Did you meet anybody else down there before you worked
33 who spoke to you about this job?
34 A. I think it was Colin Philpott, but I'm not positive.
35
36 Q. Not positive?
37 A. Yeah. Not quite sure.
38
39 HIS HONOUR: Q. What do you think happened with Colin
40 Philpott at the time you got the job?
41 A. I think we were - he came down there, I think, to the
42 hostel and interviewed us. I'm not sure.
43
44 Q. You think you remember that?
45 A. Yes, I think. I'm not positive on that though.
46
47 Q. Do you remember there was an interview with someone or

1 what's the position?
2 A. I can't really be positive about it, I'm sorry.
3
4 MR URQUHART: Q. Did you have any qualifications
5 yourself?
6 A. No.
7
8 Q. Had you had any experience looking after children?
9 A. No. I was only 19 then. And then when I had my
10 child, no, I hadn't had any experience; no.
11
12 Q. Had you worked at all after you had left school?
13 A. I did a few office jobs and that sort of thing.
14
15 Q. Secretarial?
16 A. Yes.
17
18 Q. Our records, Mrs McKenna, indicate that you and your
19 husband started at the hostel on 29 January of 1977. I am
20 not expecting you to remember --
21 A. Proper dates, no.
22
23 Q. -- but does that sound about right; that it was the
24 start of the year in 1977?
25 A. '77.
26
27 Q. So that is the year after you got married?
28 A. Yes. That would be probably right. I'm not sure of
29 dates.
30
31 Q. Where did you live when you moved down there?
32 A. We lived in the house that was next door to the
33 hostel.
34
35 Q. Was it on the hostel grounds?
36 A. Yes.
37
38 Q. Did you know what that house was usually used for?
39 A. I think it was the warden's house, but I'm not sure.
40
41 Q. How many bedrooms did that house have?
42 A. That had three bedrooms.
43
44 Q. What were your duties there, yours in particular?
45 A. Just supervising the girls; getting them up in the
46 morning, checking their dormitories and things before they
47 left for school, and just basically supervising them when

1 they were around the hostel when they came back from
2 school.
3
4 Q. Prior to you doing that did you receive any training?
5 A. No.
6
7 Q. None at all?
8 A. No.
9
10 Q. Didn't receive a booklet?
11 A. No, nothing.
12
13 Q. What to do?
14 A. No.
15
16 Q. Did Dennis tell you anything?
17 A. No.
18
19 Q. Nothing?
20 A. No. He just told me how you get them up in the
21 mornings, make sure their dormitories are clean before they
22 left for school, and that sort of thing. Just basically
23 supervising.
24
25 Q. After you were there, Mrs McKenna, can you recall
26 whether Dennis' parents and Wayne's parents had moved down
27 to Katanning to live?
28 A. Yes. Yes, they did come.
29
30 Q. Can you recall how long that was after you and Wayne
31 started working there?
32 A. I'm not sure of the dates, I'm sorry. They did stay
33 out on a farm house, out at Kings, and they stayed in an
34 estate housing house down in the town.
35
36 Q. Were they working down there?
37 A. They ran, I think for a little while, I'm not sure,
38 they ran the fruit shop. Dennis had a shop in the town and
39 they used to look after that for a while.
40
41 Q. You said Dennis had a shop in the town?
42 A. Yes, he did, for a while. I'm not sure what dates or
43 whatever that was, but he like had a fruit shop there -
44 fruit and veggie shop, and they used to come down and get
45 veggies and do things.
46
47 Q. Did you know where the supplies came from?

1 A. Yes. They came down here. Wayne's parents used to
2 come and do that sort of thing.
3
4 Q. Yes, but where did the fruit and vegetables come from?
5 A. Oh, from Canningvale or somewhere, you know, at the
6 markets or something.
7
8 Q. You believed that was Dennis's shop?
9 A. I thought it was, yeah.
10
11 Q. Just while we are on first names, what were the names
12 of Dennis and Wayne's parents?
13 A. Doug and Mary.
14
15 HIS HONOUR: Q. So it was your understanding that Doug
16 and Mary, they both worked in the shop, did they?
17 A. For a while they did, yes.
18
19 Q. Were they paid wages by Dennis?
20 A. I'm not sure of that, what he did with that. But he
21 did have the shop and they ran the shop for a while, yeah.
22
23 Q. Do you know who it was that looked after the books for
24 that shop?
25 A. I couldn't tell you anything to do with any of that.
26
27 Q. Do you know whether the hostel would purchase any
28 items from that shop?
29 A. No, I don't think they did. I'm not sure where they
30 got their --
31
32 Q. Was there a stage when you and Wayne were down there
33 that you both moved to Albany?
34 A. Yes, we did.
35
36 Q. Can you recall when that was?
37 A. I think that was the end of '77. We were down there
38 for a year-and-a-half at Albany.
39
40 Q. How did that come about?
41 A. Dennis asked us if we wanted to go down - they needed
42 somebody down there, and if we would like to go down there
43 for a while.
44
45 Q. When you say, "down there", you're referring to the
46 hostel down there?
47 A. Yes, sorry. Yes. Amity House it was called then.

1
2 Q. Amity House?
3 A. Yeah.
4
5 Q. You think that was at the end of '77?
6 A. Yes.
7
8 Q. You were there for, I think you said, about a
9 year-and-a-half?
10 A. A year-and-a-half.
11
12 Q. What did you both do down there?
13 A. We were both supervisors down there. Wayne controlled
14 the actual hostel. He was in charge and I supervised.
15 There wasn't many kids there at this stage.
16
17 Q. Did Dennis tell you how long that would be for?
18 A. No. No. But we did have an interview - I think I
19 might be getting mixed up now, but I think Colin Philpott
20 came up and interviewed us then at the St Andrews to go
21 down to there.
22
23 Q. Now you have a clearer memory of that?
24 A. Yes.
25
26 Q. Did you know what position Colin Philpott held?
27 A. Yeah, he was the chairman of the whole - of the
28 association, I thought.
29
30 Q. We know he was the chairman of the Country High School
31 Hostels Authority?
32 A. Yes, yep.
33
34 Q. Do you recall any other occasions that you saw Colin
35 Philpott, apart from that one?
36 A. No. No.
37
38 Q. Where did you live when you were down at Albany?
39 A. In a flat that was up on one of the wings, yeah.
40
41 Q. How was it that you came back to Katanning? Was there
42 any particular reason?
43 A. No. Just that I didn't particularly like it much down
44 there and Des asked if we wanted to come back and I said
45 yes. So we did.
46
47 Q. Your time, yours and Wayne's time down at Albany,

1 anything of significant happen there, or of importance?
2 A. No.
3
4 Q. No?
5 A. No.
6
7 Q. Do you know who lived in the house that you were both
8 living in Katanning before you went down to Albany; do you
9 recall who lived in that house whilst you were away?
10 A. I'm not sure, but I think maybe Neil and Wendy did.
11
12 Q. My next question was going to be, do you recall who
13 replaced the two of you at that time?
14 A. I was under the impression that Christine was going to
15 replace me, but I'm not sure.
16
17 Q. Now "Christine" is Christine McKenna?
18 A. Sorry, yes.
19
20 Q. She was married to which brother?
21 A. Graham.
22
23 Q. You also mentioned Wendy and Neil might have been
24 there. That's Wendy and Neil McKenna?
25 A. Yes.
26
27 Q. Can you recall whether you were told or saw that
28 Dennis's and Wayne's parents ever stayed in that house?
29 A. I think only on one occasion. They came down and
30 stayed when Wendy was having her first child.
31
32 Q. Can you recall that year?
33 A. I'm not sure of the year.
34
35 Q. Do you know how it was that they came to be living in
36 the warden's house?
37 A. Because Neil resided there, so they just came down for
38 the week and spent the week there to go and see the new
39 baby.
40
41 Q. Are you aware whether Doug and Mary ever had jobs at
42 the hostel?
43 A. No, they didn't have any. Oh, maybe occasionally - I
44 think on a weekend one time he came down and coached a
45 football team for Dennis.
46
47 Q. Doug did?

1 A. Yes. And the mother, Mary, she did cook sometimes on
2 a weekend.
3
4 Q. In the hostel kitchen?
5 A. Yeah, she helped sometimes there.
6
7 Q. You also mentioned Graham.
8 A. Yes.
9
10 Q. Can you recall whether Graham ever worked for the
11 hostel?
12 A. I don't think he ever did that I know of. Maybe drove
13 the bus once or twice.
14
15 Q. I know you have said, Mrs McKenna, that you're not
16 very good with dates, but can you remember when it was that
17 you and your husband finished working at the hostel?
18 A. We left there when my son was born in '84. End of
19 '84.
20
21 Q. End of '84?
22 A. Yes.
23
24 Q. You were still working there right to the time that
25 your son was born?
26 A. He was born in Katanning.
27
28 Q. He was born in Katanning?
29 A. Yes. And he was about six months old when we left.
30
31 Q. What date was he born?
32 A. The 2nd of February.
33
34 Q. Second of February '84?
35 A. No. Sorry, 7th of February. I'm getting them a bit
36 confused.
37
38 Q. The month would have been fine. So your recollection
39 is that you and Wayne then worked for another six months
40 after that?
41 A. Yes.
42
43 Q. Did you both finish working there together?
44 A. Yes.
45
46 Q. You obviously had some time off after the birth of
47 your second child; is that right? Or not?

1 A. No. I'm not sure. I don't - I'm not sure whether I
2 worked after that or not.
3
4 Q. How did you cope with your job as --
5 A. Older girls used to come and help me look after her.
6
7 Q. What, the students there?
8 A. Yeah. Not with the son, but with the daughter.
9
10 Q. I was going to ask you that, how you managed to --
11 A. Yeah, they used to come and sit in the flat or the
12 house with their homework and watch over her till I came
13 back.
14
15 Q. Your position as supervisor was regarded as a
16 full-time positions, wasn't it?
17 A. It was.
18
19 Q. Did any other family member work there for any length
20 of time whilst you and your husband were there, other than
21 maybe Neil and Wendy when you were away in Albany?
22 A. No.
23
24 Q. Now, Mrs McKenna, have you been following this Inquiry
25 since it began, these public hearings in February of this
26 year?
27 A. Yes, I have.
28
29 Q. Have you done that by reading the newspaper and
30 listening to reports on the television?
31 A. Yes.
32
33 Q. Have you been following it by reading the transcript
34 of what has been said at the hearings? There is a
35 transcript available on a government website.
36 A. No.
37
38 Q. Have you looked at that at all?
39 A. No.
40
41 Q. This is no criticism of you. I gather you have
42 discussed things that you have read about with your
43 husband?
44 A. Yes, yes.
45
46 Q. And with any other relatives of the McKenna family?
47 A. With his father probably.

1
2 Q. That's Des?
3 A. With Doug.
4
5 Q. Sorry, with Doug?
6 A. Yes.
7
8 Q. What have you discussed with him about it?
9 A. Just basically what things have been transpired.
10 Things like who we thought was probably to fault, and
11 things like that.
12
13 Q. Who was probably at fault, did you say?
14 A. Hm.
15
16 Q. I will ask you that now then. Do you have a view as
17 to who was probably at fault?
18 A. Yes, I do.
19
20 Q. You're talking about your brother-in-law's sexual
21 offending?
22 A. Yes.
23
24 Q. Dennis in particular, is it? Okay then, who do you
25 regard was at fault?
26 A. Well, I think Mr Philpott, actually.
27
28 Q. Why do you say that?
29 A. Well, I just heard that people had gone to him and
30 things were happening with him and --
31
32 Q. Oh, I see. So it is from what you have --
33 A. And he didn't follow up, to what I heard.
34
35 Q. It is from what you have read in the newspaper
36 reports --
37 A. Yes. Yes.
38
39 Q. -- that you believe that. So that wasn't something
40 you felt that he was to blame prior to the Inquiry
41 happening, it is only what you have read about or heard
42 about since?
43 A. No. It's only what I have heard.
44
45 Q. I am glad we have clarified that. Mrs McKenna, you
46 may well have read this in the reports, but this is just
47 what we have heard that your brother-in-law Dennis, how he

1 behaved when he was at the hostel. I am not actually
2 talking about his actual sexual offences that he has been
3 convicted of, but we have heard evidence from a number of
4 witnesses, ex-students and, in some instances, adults who
5 were at the hostel that he would be holding the hands of
6 boys, he'd been seen with boys sitting on his lap or boys
7 with their heads on his legs as he was sitting down, so
8 they would be lying across with their heads in his lap, and
9 other accounts of ex-students seeing him with his hands
10 down the front of boys' shirts. This is all taking place
11 at the hostel. Did you ever observe anything of that
12 nature when you were there?

13 A. No, I did not. I saw kids around him. There were
14 kids around him all the time. There were kids around all
15 of the staff lots of times, but I never saw any of the
16 goings on, no.

17
18 Q. Sorry, never saw any?

19 A. Any of the goings on or things happening.

20
21 Q. I am not suggesting anything to do with his actual
22 sexual offending. But these are the sorts of things?

23
24 A. No. I saw kids around him, yes. But I did not ever
25 see actual --

26
27 Q. You never saw those kids around him, he'd be holding
28 their hands?

29 A. No. I saw them, like they might be sitting at his
30 feet or things like that, but I never actually saw any of
31 that. I wasn't down the boys end a lot of the time either.

32
33 Q. I realise that. The kids, as you saw, that were
34 around him, did you notice whether there were more of one
35 sex than the other?

36 A. Yes.

37
38 Q. And what?

39 A. Yes, it was boys always around.

40
41 Q. Did you ever think something about that?

42 A. No, not really; no.

43
44 Q. Did he appear to you to have students that were his
45 favourites?

46 A. Yeah, probably; yes.

47

1 Q. What made you draw that conclusion?
2 A. Oh, cause they got - I suppose they got favouritism, I
3 suppose.
4
5 Q. Did you see those sorts of displays of favouritism,
6 what they were?
7 A. Yes.
8
9 Q. Can you tell us what they were?
10 A. Oh, they got extra things, like to stay up later at
11 night, or whatever.
12
13 Q. When they stayed later at night did you know where
14 they went to? I'm talking about back then rather than what
15 you may have read about now.
16 A. Yes. They all used to sit in his flat, yes. And
17 sometimes - it wasn't just boys. Sometimes girls - we had,
18 like, we would get things out of the canteen and all sit in
19 there and have super in there or something.
20
21 Q. Would you ever join them for that?
22 A. Yeah, sometimes.
23
24 Q. You did?
25 A. Yes.
26
27 Q. What would happen there, the occasions you were there?
28 A. We would just be all talking, watching TV and having
29 cool drinks or lollies and things and just --
30
31 Q. When you left did you take the girls with you or did
32 they stay behind?
33 A. No. They never stayed there. We all used to go.
34
35 Q. What about the boys?
36 A. They were still usually there.
37
38 Q. Did you ever hear anything about what would happen in
39 the unit with Dennis and the boys on those occasions?
40 A. No.
41
42 Q. Nothing at all?
43 A. No.
44
45 Q. Didn't ever hear any rumours or gossip?
46 A. No.
47

1 Q. No?
2 A. No.
3
4 Q. Are you able to tell us, Mrs McKenna, how Dennis ran
5 the hostel? He was the warden, he was in charge. Can you
6 give a description of how he ran it?
7 A. We didn't have much say in the running or the
8 disciplining of the children or anything. He was the main
9 one. So things would come from him to us and then we would
10 pass on. He was very strict but he was very controlling, I
11 think, of a lot of it.
12
13 Q. Very controlling of?
14 A. Of the children. He probably had to be, in a way,
15 having boys and girls in the hostel.
16
17 Q. Did you think he over-did that side of things with the
18 control?
19 A. He was like a Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. He was like two
20 different people, really. You could never know - yeah.
21
22 Q. Tell us about that?
23 A. Well, he could be as nice as pie sometimes and then he
24 could just blow up over little things.
25
26 Q. You obviously saw that happen?
27 A. Yes, I saw that.
28
29 Q. Were you the recipient --
30 A. Because he was like that with us as well.
31
32 Q. I was going to ask you that. Concentrating first, did
33 you see that happen with the students; blowing up at the
34 students?
35 A. Yes, yep. And then he'd be different. He'd, like,
36 probably apologise to them or something later on, or
37 something.
38
39 Q. Does any occasions stand out as to what the subject
40 matter was regarding those blow-ups?
41 A. No. He often ridiculed kids in front of the whole
42 lot. But he'd be standing at the back and he'd have other
43 people do the dirty work.
44
45 Q. Yes?
46 A. Yes.
47

1 Q. Would that be other students?
2 A. Yes, or staff. He always told us what we were to say
3 and to do.
4
5 Q. Where would these instances take place?
6 A. Probably in the dining room, at meal times and things
7 like that.
8
9 Q. Explain to us what would happen?
10 A. He would probably stand the person up at the front and
11 get other - either a staff member or an older student to
12 ridicule them in front of everybody.
13
14 Q. Can you recall any specific examples of what the
15 subject matter of the ridicule would be?
16 A. No, not really. Like, he didn't like them having a
17 girlfriend and boyfriend and that sort of thing. Yeah,
18 things like that.
19
20 Q. Did you ever feel uncomfortable about what was taking
21 place?
22 A. Yes. But we couldn't have any control over it. We
23 couldn't sort of - he wouldn't, sort of, listen. He'd blow
24 up if you told him anything anyway.
25
26 Q. So you're saying you couldn't do anything?
27 A. Even if we wanted to, yeah, we wouldn't say. We
28 wouldn't challenge him or anything really.
29
30 Q. Why not?
31 A. I just don't think we - we just wouldn't.
32
33 Q. When you say, "we", who are you referring to?
34 A. And my husband, Wayne. He was always controlling over
35 the whole lot of us, really.
36
37 Q. What were you concerned about if you were to say
38 something to him?
39 A. That he'd blow up and then we'd lose our job, I
40 suppose, lose employment and things.
41
42 Q. You mentioned there how he would get staff involved in
43 this. Did that include yourself?
44 A. Yeah.
45
46 Q. No doubt you can recall some of those occasions. What
47 was it?

1 A. Like, if there was someone in bed and they didn't want
2 to get up to go to school, for example, and I'd tell him
3 and he'd say, "Go and get them up. Make them get up and
4 go", and stuff like that.
5
6 Q. Is this when the child might have a legitimate reason
7 for not wanting to get up?
8 A. Like, in the first year, there was some that didn't
9 want to go to school and things, and - when I first
10 started.
11
12 Q. But did they have a good reason for that, in your
13 view?
14 A. Probably not, no. They were probably just putting it
15 on to stay home from school.
16
17 Q. Well, I thought you - when we were talking about the
18 public ridiculing in the dining room - I thought you were
19 saying that he not only got students to do that, but he
20 also got staff members?
21 A. Well, not when I - not when I was actually there, but
22 I heard he got certain ones up there in the front and made
23 staff members do it. He never made me, myself, do it,
24 personally.
25
26 Q. So can you recall who those staff members were who had
27 to do that?
28 A. I think Wendy might have had to do it one time, I'm
29 not sure, and then there was other, like, other staff
30 members that were there that I didn't know of.
31
32 Q. I see. And you and Wendy weren't ever working there
33 at the same time; is that right, or you were?
34 A. We were for --
35
36 Q. You were?
37 A. -- for a little bit, I think, yes. I'm not quite sure
38 whether she took over from me or Christine. The both of
39 them were.
40
41 HIS HONOUR: Q. Did you ever see any good reason for
42 this ridiculing thing, as to why Dennis did that?
43 A. No, I don't know why he did it. No one knows how his
44 mind was working.
45
46 HIS HONOUR: Right.
47

1 MR URQUHART: Q. And did you see what sort of impact
2 that had on the student who was being ridiculed?
3 A. I'd say it didn't have a very good - they weren't very
4 happy with it, I suppose.
5
6 Q. And could you see that?
7 A. Yes, I probably could see it, yes.
8
9 Q. Did they cry?
10 A. No, I didn't see anyone ever break down and cry or
11 anything.
12
13 Q. These students who were subject to ridicule, were they
14 boys and girls?
15 A. Yes, yes.
16
17 Q. You've said that you would sometimes feel
18 uncomfortable about that, and you couldn't approach Dennis
19 for the fears that you've raised with us. You were aware,
20 were you not, that there was a Board that oversaw the
21 hostel?
22 A. Yes.
23
24 Q. Okay.
25 A. Yes.
26
27 Q. Did it ever cross your mind that you could speak to
28 one of the Board members about what you were seeing?
29 A. No, it didn't really cross my mind to go to a Board
30 member. I think my husband, Wayne, did on a couple of
31 occasions, or one occasion.
32
33 Q. Yes. We're going to hear from him about that, but
34 that's the only - are you referring to a boy we know as
35 "S"?
36 A. Yes.
37
38 Q. Okay. But you can't recall any other occasion that
39 your husband did that?
40 A. No.
41
42 Q. You said that you had concerns about raising these
43 matters directly with Dennis. Is that your understanding
44 of the reason why your husband didn't raise matters, apart
45 from that one?
46 A. Yes, I think so.
47

1 Q. You mentioned there that you remember meeting Colin
2 Philpott. Did it ever cross your mind to raise that - what
3 was going on - with him?
4 A. No.
5
6 Q. Was there other behaviour of your brother-in-law -
7 that is Dennis - that caused you concern, apart from the
8 public ridiculing in front of the other students?
9 A. No, I never had any other concerns about it.
10
11 Q. Apart from that?
12 A. No.
13
14 Q. Were you aware of any instances where he would
15 intimidate students?
16 A. No, really, no.
17
18 Q. Or bully students?
19 A. No.
20
21 Q. Did you ever see him be involved in this ridiculing of
22 students in front of the others, in the dining room?
23 A. He'd stand at the back, I think.
24
25 Q. Right.
26 A. Yes. The back of the servery - there was a servery,
27 and he'd stand at there.
28
29 Q. As I understand there was a PA system that operated at
30 the hostel when you were there?
31 A. Yes.
32
33 Q. Can you ever recall the PA system being used to
34 ridicule students?
35 A. No.
36
37 Q. No?
38 A. No.
39
40 Q. Were you aware - I'm talking about back then, maybe
41 not now, of an activity called scragging?
42 A. No.
43
44 Q. No. Were you aware of any - or did you hear of
45 anything about initiations ceremonies?
46 A. No.
47

1 Q. That would be conducted with boys in particular?
2 A. No.
3
4 Q. You never heard of an activity where boys would be
5 stripped naked by other boys?
6 A. No, definitely no.
7
8 Q. No. That would be condoned by Dennis?
9 A. No.
10
11 Q. And then that boy, whilst naked, would be hit with
12 rolled up towels by the other students?
13 A. No.
14
15 Q. And that there would be occasions when Dennis would
16 actually announce that that was taking place over the PA?
17 A. No. Only thing I'm aware of is he used to let the
18 boys go up to the girls dorms and put their toys all on top
19 of each other, or wreck their beds and let the girls go
20 down there and short-sheet their beds or whatever. That's
21 all I'm aware of.
22
23 Q. And when the boys used to do that, did the girls
24 complain to you?
25 A. No, they thought it was fun.
26
27 Q. They thought it was fun. Did they ever make a
28 complaint to you that they had items stolen?
29 A. No.
30
31 Q. Such as their diaries?
32 A. No.
33
34 Q. Nothing like that?
35 A. No.
36
37 Q. And, Mrs McKenna, regarding those visits that the boys
38 would have to Dennis McKenna's unit, we've heard evidence
39 of this Inquiry that during the time that you worked there,
40 that boys were shown, what I refer to as students, but
41 particularly boys, were shown pornographic films --
42 A. Well, I didn't.
43
44 Q. -- in his unit?
45 A. I didn't know anything of this until it all came -
46 started coming out.
47

1 Q. And that he would also supply alcohol to them?
2 A. No, I didn't know anything of alcohol either.
3
4 Q. Now, I'm just saying if you became aware of that,
5 someone said that to you, what would you have done?
6 A. I probably approached a Board member, or police,
7 spoken to police about things.
8
9 Q. Probably.
10 A. I would have.
11
12 Q. You would have?
13 A. I definitely would have.
14
15 Q. Even though that could have ramifications for your
16 job?
17 A. No, I still would have spoken out. That's wrong, that
18 would have been wrong.
19
20 Q. Would you have spoken to Dennis at all about it first,
21 to see whether that was the truth?
22 A. No.
23
24 Q. No?
25 A. If I saw something, I would have spoken up.
26
27 Q. No. What about if you were just told by a student, if
28 you were told by a student that this is what was happening,
29 what would you do in that instance?
30 A. I'm not sure. I probably would have spoken to my
31 hubby first about it, spoken to Wayne about it first, and
32 then probably approached - we would have had to approach
33 Dennis then.
34
35 Q. And if he denied it?
36 A. Then we would have probably spoken to Board members or
37 something, about it.
38
39 Q. Sure?
40 A. Yes.
41
42 Q. He could be quite intimidating, couldn't he?
43 A. Yes, he can. He can be, yes.
44
45 Q. I know we are dealing with hypotheticals, Mrs McKenna,
46 but if you had raised it with him - now we are just talking
47 generally about if you come across any inappropriate

1 behaviour by him - I'll use that example of supplying
2 alcohol and having the boys watch the pornographic movies -
3 if you had approached him and he denied it and then made
4 the threat to you, "Well, if you take this further, you are
5 going to both lose your jobs" --
6 A. Well, I would have still taken it further. I wouldn't
7 - I would have, yes.
8
9 Q. Are you certain about that?
10 A. Yes, I would.
11
12 Q. We've also heard accounts, again which took place
13 whilst you and your husband were there, of him coming into
14 the shower blocks and watching the boys shower? Did you
15 ever hear any occasion of that happening, other than what
16 you've heard over the last few months. I'm talking about
17 at the time?
18 A. No, no, but I think they did that to - I'm speaking on
19 my husband's behalf, but he did that to make sure no one
20 was left in the showers and things like that. I know they
21 were all open. I don't know what Dennis did down there,
22 because I didn't go down there.
23
24 Q. Are you saying your husband would do that?
25 A. He'd go in there, but he'd check - just to check that
26 they were all not playing around in there, and all out and
27 gone to school and stuff, or to bed or whatever.
28
29 Q. Now, is that your actual recollection of the shower
30 blocks - that is, that they were all open?
31 A. They were all open, yes.
32
33 Q. That was in the boys?
34 A. Yes.
35
36 Q. What about the girls?
37 A. No, they had doors.
38
39 Q. They had doors. The boys were open?
40 A. Mm-hmm.
41
42 Q. We've also heard evidence that Dennis McKenna would
43 take photographs of the boys as they were showering?
44 A. I wouldn't know anything of that, I'm sorry.
45
46 Q. And, once more, if you became aware of him doing that,
47 what do you think you would have done?

1 A. We would have had to have approached him about it
2 because it's not right.
3
4 Q. And once more, if he'd said, "No", that's just a pack
5 of lies?
6 A. No, I would have to go further. We'd have to take it
7 further.
8
9 Q. Did you know who would be on the Board at the time
10 that you worked there?
11 A. I only knew a few times - Mr Parks, Mr Stephens - Mr
12 Parks and Mr Addis, they were all on the Board, chairmans,
13 at different times.
14
15 Q. And how did you become aware of that? If you can't
16 remember, that's fine.
17 A. No, I can't remember that.
18
19 Q. Did you ever see what sort of relationship any of
20 those three had with Dennis?
21 A. No, not really, I can't.
22
23 Q. No.
24 A. They all had children in the hostel, so they were
25 probably pretty close with Dennis. I'm not sure.
26
27 Q. Mrs McKenna, whilst Dennis has only been convicted of
28 sexual offending against boys, we also heard evidence of
29 how he would demean girls, during the course of this
30 Inquiry. For example - I'll just give you one example - he
31 would mention a girl's name over the PA, and then say
32 something like, "Nice legs, shame about the face". Do you
33 ever recall an occasion where he'd used PA to demean a
34 student --
35 A. No, I don't.
36
37 Q. -- in that way?
38 A. No.
39
40 Q. So do you agree that sort of conduct could have or
41 would have a terrible impact upon a student if that was
42 announced over the whole hostel PA system?
43 A. I can see that it would do, yes.
44
45 Q. And it would well lead to some subject of public
46 ridicule from her peers?
47 A. Yes.

1
2 Q. And would you agree with me that's totally
3 inappropriate behaviour for a warden?
4 A. I would say now I'd say that, but back then I thought
5 it was all taken in a fun sort of a thing, a fun way.
6
7 Q. But, Mrs McKenna, how could that be fun for the girl
8 involved?
9 A. It is - no, it wouldn't have been fun, but I thought
10 at the time it seemed like it was just like a joking thing.
11
12 Q. Well, I am sure that would be how Dennis McKenna
13 explained it, but it's at the expense - at the very public
14 and humiliating expense of a young girl?
15 A. Yes, I can see that.
16
17 Q. So at the very least do you agree with me it's a
18 particularly tasteless joke?
19 A. Yes, it was.
20
21 Q. And, once more, had you become aware of that sort of
22 behaviour, would you have done something about it?
23 A. Yes, I would have.
24
25 Q. Do you think so? And what would have you done?
26 A. I'm not sure.
27
28 HIS HONOUR: Q. But if you thought it was a fun thing at
29 the time, why would you have done something about it?
30 A. I - probably not then I wouldn't have probably done
31 anything about that then because I did think it was just
32 all in a - in a fun context, but now I can see it now, that
33 it wasn't the right thing to do.
34
35 MR URQUHART: Q. So another "fun" thing - and I use
36 quotation marks - that we've heard he would do is that he'd
37 place a large washing bowl filled with cereal at the place
38 of where a girl was sitting in the dining room while she
39 was up getting something else, and then she would come back
40 and sit down to this huge bowl of rice bubbles, and he'd
41 make grunting noises like a pig?
42 A. I never ever saw anything like that.
43
44 Q. Well, again, of course, the other students would just
45 simply laugh. And once more this is an example of a
46 particularly tasteless joke; but, again, if you were aware
47 of that, do you think you would have done something about

1 it?
2 A. I think I would have.
3
4 Q. But it might well have been easier, do you agree with
5 me, just to simply go along with the joke?
6 A. Probably that's what I did, I suppose, with some of
7 the things.
8
9 Q. Did girls that you were looking after ever complain or
10 confide in you about Dennis McKenna's behaviour?
11 A. No.
12
13 Q. Not once?
14 A. No.
15
16 Q. After you'd seen the public ridiculing of a student
17 that you were responsible for, so it is a girl in that
18 dining room, for example, did you go up to the girl after
19 that to see if they were okay?
20 A. No.
21
22 Q. Was there any reason for that?
23 A. No.
24
25 Q. Even if they didn't look upset by it?
26 A. I never saw them looking upset or anything like that,
27 else I probably would have approached them.
28
29 Q. You're not for a moment suggesting they were enjoying
30 that sort of thing?
31 A. No, no, no.
32
33 Q. But even if they didn't look upset, you'd expect them
34 to be, wouldn't you?
35 A. Yes, I would.
36
37 Q. Was it the case, Mrs McKenna, if you did that you
38 would be potentially seen as disagreeing with something
39 that the warden had done?
40 A. Probably, yes.
41
42 Q. So you've told us that no girl ever confided or
43 complained to you about Dennis McKenna's behaviour?
44 A. No.
45
46 Q. But you have heard the news reports about what's -
47 what ex-students say was going on at the hostel at the

1 time?
2 A. Yes.
3
4 Q. And for certain instances there, was when you were at
5 the hostel, do you agree that if a student, particularly a
6 female student, had a genuine complaint to make about
7 Dennis McKenna, they would be potentially reluctant to
8 confide in you as their supervisor because of the fact that
9 you were related to him?
10 A. Yes, that's right. That's what I feel.
11
12 Q. So on those occasions when you were uncomfortable
13 about how Dennis McKenna was behaving, did you ever think
14 that it was going to be difficult for a student to make the
15 first step and come and see you about it.
16 A. Yes, that's right.
17
18 Q. Now, I fully accept that you have no training in this
19 field, and no previous experience --
20 A. That's right.
21
22 Q. -- but I --
23 A. And I was nearly as - I was only 19 and I was just
24 about as young as some of the students, the older ones in
25 the last year. I was only around their age.
26
27 Q. Certainly when you started out.
28 A. Yes.
29
30 Q. Although by the time you finished you were in your -
31 you were beyond your mid 20s, weren't you?
32 A. Yes, yes.
33
34 Q. So I'm just asking you though, that it didn't seem
35 that your response to what your brother-in-law was doing
36 changed over the years. Am I right there, insofar as
37 speaking to him about it, or confronting him?
38 A. I'm not sure of that question. Probably.
39
40 Q. Can you recall an occasion where you ever said to him,
41 "Look, what you're doing is not appropriate?"
42 A. No, I never said that.
43
44 Q. But would you agree that there were occasions where
45 you saw him behaving or doing things that were
46 inappropriate - I'm not talking about sexual offending, but
47 just inappropriate. The public ridiculing, for example -

1 you saw that?
2 A. Mm-hmm.
3
4 Q. But you felt you weren't able to stand up to him?
5 A. No.
6
7 Q. Just getting back to what I was originally saying, I
8 accept, yes, that you were very young to start with, and I
9 accept that you didn't have any previous experience or
10 qualifications in this field. Did you ever think that
11 students might be reluctant to come forward so therefore
12 did you ever consider that if an occasion warranted it,
13 that you would make the first step and engage a student who
14 might have been upset about Dennis McKenna's behaviour, and
15 asking them, "Look, is there something you want to tell
16 me?"
17 A. No. Well, quite often I'd sit up there and we'd talk,
18 and no one ever sort of approached me about anything like
19 that, yes.
20
21 Q. I know that. I'm talking about whether you - in those
22 discussions, what would you ask? Would you ever ask the
23 students that you were looking after, "Has anybody got any
24 complaints to make?"
25 A. No, I didn't.
26
27 Q. No. And specifically any complaints about Dennis
28 McKenna?
29 A. No.
30
31 Q. No. And, again, might that be because of the
32 potential repercussions --
33 A. It could be.
34
35 Q. -- of what would happen for you? Were you aware from
36 your own observations that your brother-in-law Dennis would
37 be responsible for spreading rumours and gossip about
38 students?
39 A. No.
40
41 Q. Did you ever see or notice or observe or find out that
42 he would orchestrate ways in which a particular student
43 would be excluded from his or her peers?
44 A. No.
45
46 Q. We've heard evidence from a number of ex-students how
47 it would appear that he would run the hostel by this - this

1 doctrine of - you can call it this divide and conquer. The
2 evidence we keep hearing is that students would say
3 anything about anyone if it would help them stay in Dennis
4 McKenna's good books.
5 A. No.
6
7 Q. You didn't notice that happening?
8 A. No.
9
10 Q. But was it the case that that could well apply to you
11 and how you operated within the hostel, and to the extent
12 that, well - would it be right in saying it would always be
13 better staying in this man's good books, rather than his
14 bad books?
15 A. Yes.
16
17 Q. And is that the policy that you adopted in all
18 the years that you worked under him?
19 A. Yes.
20
21 Q. Now, on the question of policy, can you recall what
22 the system was in place for students if they wanted to
23 write letters and post them to either family or friends?
24 A. I think they just left them in the office and we took
25 them down and posted them for them.
26
27 Q. Yes. Were you aware in the time that you were there,
28 of a rule that the students apparently had to abide by,
29 that the letters, when they were placed in the envelope,
30 were not to be sealed, the envelopes were not to be sealed?
31 A. No, I weren't aware of that, no.
32
33 Q. Not aware of that?
34 A. No.
35
36 Q. Would the letters be handed to you, or did they have
37 to go to Dennis McKenna?
38 A. I think they had a male - I'm not sure, but I think
39 they had a basket in the office that they put them in. I'm
40 not sure.
41
42 Q. That's Dennis's office?
43 A. Yes.
44
45 Q. Mrs McKenna, I gather you can recall the occasion when
46 you first found out that Dennis had been charged with
47 sexual abuse of first one boy and then several boys, going

1 back now to 19 - when he was charged, 1990 and early 1991?
2 A. Mm.
3
4 Q. Can you recall that?
5 A. Yes.
6
7 Q. Can I ask you can you recall what your reaction was
8 when you first heard that?
9 A. Disbelief. We didn't believe any of it.
10
11 Q. You didn't believe any of it?
12 A. No.
13
14 Q. And why was that?
15 A. I'm not sure, but he used to tell us - like, he could
16 talk to you and hoodwink you into anything, like, into
17 believing stuff.
18
19 Q. Yes.
20 A. And I think a lot of the family was the same, no one
21 could believe that first time.
22
23 Q. So this hoodwinking - is that one possible explanation
24 as to - as to why - I know you said you never saw any
25 evidence or rumour or gossip of sexual offending, but I'm
26 talking about the public ridiculing of students. His
27 ability to hoodwink, is that one explanation as to why you
28 were reluctant to say anything about it?
29 A. I suppose you could say that, yes.
30
31 Q. You mentioned earlier on in your evidence about the
32 discipline --
33 A. Yes.
34
35 Q. -- that he had of students. Can you describe what
36 sort of discipline he had?
37 A. He was very strict in the way of - he didn't like the
38 boys mixing much with girls and things.
39
40 Q. Yes.
41 A. Yes. And - and I suppose with town students, he
42 didn't - they say he was strict with them, but he used to
43 let them come over for lunch and things like that --
44
45 Q. Okay.
46 A. -- town students and stuff.
47

1 Q. How about just knowing what you can recall, rather
2 than what you've read?
3 A. I suppose that he was pretty hard on some kids more
4 than others, I suppose.
5
6 Q. Is that what you observed?
7 A. Yes, I think he was.
8
9 Q. And did you see that there was a reason for that, or
10 was it - it seemed that it wasn't appropriate?
11 A. I thought he - at the time I thought he had reason to
12 do it, I suppose, yes.
13
14 Q. Can you recall any examples of that, Mrs McKenna?
15 A. No.
16
17 Q. So what did you notice about that treatment towards
18 the student in that - in those instances?
19 A. I suppose he gave more special privileges than others,
20 I suppose.
21
22 Q. And we've heard about those, and the times he'd allow
23 them to watch television in his unit.
24 A. Yes, yes.
25
26 Q. Yes.
27 A. Yes, and stay up later.
28
29 Q. Any other special privileges?
30 A. No, not that I recall. Probably going on trips with
31 him or something.
32
33 Q. I was just about to ask you that.
34 A. Yes.
35
36 Q. That was another example. Tell us about those. What
37 was your knowledge of it, rather than what you - you've
38 heard or read in the reports?
39 A. Just when he come to Perth to get a - to pick up
40 movies or something to show in the cinema or something,
41 he'd bring probably a couple of boys with him, or something
42 like that, as we did when we came to Perth, we'd bring a
43 couple of girls with us --
44
45 Q. Right. Okay.
46 A. -- a lot of the times.
47

1 Q. When you say "we", you're referring to yourself and
2 your husband?
3 A. Yes.
4
5 Q. Okay. Were there ever occasions that you saw where he
6 would just take one boy?
7 A. Whether we would?
8
9 Q. No, whether Dennis McKenna - Dennis would take just
10 one boy?
11 A. He probably did. He probably did on some occasions,
12 yes.
13
14 Q. And where did you and Wayne stay when you would take
15 girls to Perth?
16 A. We didn't actually always stay overnight, where we
17 come back again.
18
19 Q. Okay.
20 A. Usually just day trips and things.
21
22 Q. And the times that you would stay overnight?
23 A. I'm not sure where he did stay.
24
25 Q. Did you stay at Doug and Mary's house?
26 A. No, we never stayed there; no.
27
28 Q. Do you remember where they lived - apart from when
29 they were at Katanning - where they lived near the Perth
30 metropolitan area around this time?
31 A. They lived all over the place - quite a few places.
32 But they were at Hoyton Place at one time.
33
34 Q. Is that in Gosnells?
35 A. No. Down at Parmelia. They were in Sail Street.
36 They were in Gosnells, yes. They lived in quite a few
37 places.
38
39 Q. Can you recall what place they lived at the longest?
40 I'm talking about the mid '70s through to 1990. Was there
41 a particular place they stayed some time?
42 A. Long time probably Hoyton Place in Parmelia. They
43 were there for quite a while.
44
45 Q. Can you recall how many bedrooms that place had?
46 A. That had three.
47

1 Q. From your recollection of all the places they stayed
2 at, if there was a student or students that came either
3 with you and Wayne or just came with Dennis --
4 A. Yes.
5
6 Q. -- from your recollection of those places were there
7 always enough bedrooms for those students to be able to
8 sleep in by themselves? I suppose there would have to be
9 at least three bedrooms?
10 A. Yes, yep.
11
12 Q. Is that your recollection, these places always had at
13 least three bedrooms?
14 A. Except if they came on camps. But up to Perth, yes.
15
16 Q. Up to Perth I'm talking about.
17 A. Yes. Yes.
18
19 Q. I know hindsight is a wonderful thing, Mrs McKenna,
20 but do you think that you might have been able to do
21 something to prevent what happened at the hostel for so
22 many years?
23 A. I don't think we would have been able to do anything,
24 unless the kids actually approached us. But they didn't
25 because we were McKennas, and they probably thought they
26 couldn't. That's what I feel.
27
28 MR URQUHART: Thank you, Mrs McKenna.
29
30 HIS HONOUR: I have one question.
31
32 Q. You mentioned at one stage your husband approached a
33 board member about Student S?
34 A. Yes.
35
36 Q. Did your husband discuss that with you at the time?
37 A. No, he didn't. The first I heard of it was all
38 brought up through this.
39
40 HIS HONOUR: Nothing for you, Mr Jenkin?
41
42 MR JENKIN: No, thank you, sir.
43
44 HIS HONOUR: Ms Morgan?
45
46 MS MORGAN: Thank you.
47

1 <CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS MORGAN:

2

3 MS MORGAN: Q. I just wanted to clarify, when you went
4 down to Albany, after you returned to Katanning did you
5 move back into the warden's house with Wayne?

6 A. No. We moved into the flat up in the girls' wing.

7

8 Q. Sorry, Wendy and Neil stayed in the house for the rest
9 of the time that you were there?

10 A. Yes, they did. Yeah. I think they eventually moved
11 over - when we left they eventually moved over to the
12 hostel in the flat in the girls' wing then.

13

14 Q. In an evening after you finished supervising and you
15 returned to the house, around about what time in the
16 evening would that be that you left the girls' dorm?

17 A. It could be around 10 o'clock.

18

19 Q. After 10 o'clock were the dorms locked off? Did
20 anyone else have access to them, to the girls' dorm?

21 A. No. They usually locked the doors at the end of the
22 passages when I was there.

23

24 Q. Mr Urquhart asked about the PA announcements and the
25 ridiculing over the PA. You say that you thought at the
26 time that a lot of it was just joking. It was mentioned
27 about the instance of the female student who's name was
28 called and told "Nice legs. Pity about the face". Do you
29 remember any other instances which you would have assumed
30 were jokes at the time but looking perhaps now realise --

31 A. No, sorry.

32

33 Q. Are you aware of any trips that Dennis took with
34 students to Perth where they did stay at the Gosnells house
35 of Douglas and Mary?

36 A. No. No in the Gosnells house, no. At Parmelia they
37 stayed in camp - they camped on the lawn one time with
38 tents out the back.

39

40 Q. You also said after hearing evidence from the Inquiry
41 you have formed a view that Mr Philpott is somewhat at
42 fault because of his failure to follow-up on complaints.

43 You have also said, though, that you and Wayne would
44 probably be too intimidated to make complaints of your own.
45 If the complaints aren't being made to Mr Philpott how can
46 he follow them up properly?

47 A. I'm not sure.

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Q. If the staff at the hostel were intimidated to make complaints of their own about misconduct of any type, would it be the case that if someone such as Mr Philpott came to ask you to give any evidence about anything you'd noticed about any kind of misconduct that you would have been too intimidated to back up any claims and that you perhaps would defend Dennis?

A. No. Not if we saw something that was not appropriate.

MS MORGAN: Thank you.

HIS HONOUR: Nothing, Mr Urquhart?

MR URQUHART: No, thank you, sir.

HIS HONOUR: Q. Do you want to add anything at all? Is there anything you wish to say that has not been covered?

A. Just that we're very sorry to what's happened to most of the people down there at Katanning. We're very sorry, and it's been hard on us as well.

HIS HONOUR: Very well. That completes your evidence. You are free to leave.

THE WITNESS: Thank you.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

HIS HONOUR: Do you want to take a break at this stage?

MR URQUHART: Only if you are minded to, your Honour.

HIS HONOUR: I am happy to continue. Whatever you prefer.

MR URQUHART: I don't mind. We will continue.

HIS HONOUR: We will take a quick break now.

SHORT ADJOURNMENT

HIS HONOUR: Yes, Mr Urquhart?

MR URQUHART: Thank you, sir. Wayne McKenna is the next witness. He also will take the oath.

1 <WAYNE LESLIE McKENNA, sworn:
2
3 <EXAMINATION-IN-CHIEF BY MR URQUHART:
4
5 MR URQUHART: Q. Mr McKenna, do you have a middle name?
6 A. Leslie.
7
8 Q. Is that spelt L-E-S --
9 A. L-I-E.
10
11 Q. L-I-E. Thank you. How old you are, Mr McKenna?
12 A. Sixty-three at the end of the month.
13
14 Q. You reside in the Perth metropolitan area?
15 A. Yes.
16
17 Q. You are married to Robyn McKenna?
18 A. Yep.
19
20 Q. You got married to her, as I understand it, in 1976?
21 A. Yes.
22
23 Q. You've got three children who were born in 1976, 1984
24 and 1986; does that sound about right?
25 A. Yep.
26
27 Q. You have a brother called Dennis McKenna?
28 A. Mmm-hmm.
29
30 Q. You also have four other brothers?
31 A. Mmm-hmm.
32
33 Q. Dennis McKenna, was he the eldest?
34 A. Oldest, yes.
35
36 Q. In your family who came second?
37 A. Graham.
38
39 Q. You were third?
40 A. Myself.
41
42 Q. Yes?
43 A. Brian, Neil and Troy.
44
45 Q. What's the age difference between the youngest and the
46 eldest?
47 A. Dennis would have to be 67 and the youngest would be

1 touching 50.
2
3 Q. As you were growing up what was your relationship with
4 your eldest brother, Dennis?
5 A. I think you are probably not interested, but the thing
6 is our family struggled, like I think a lot of families
7 did, when all your dad could do was labour. There was no
8 Centrelink, no healthcare card, and all this sort of stuff.
9 We had hassles with, you know, probably bails, money
10 problems. I think dad must have felt it hard. He probably
11 did have a couple of affairs and disappeared occasionally,
12 and so Dennis I think decided, he being the oldest, he'd
13 sort of keep an eye on things. He left school early to get
14 a job and make money and support the family. But of course
15 dad would come back. But he still kept a finger on the
16 pulse.
17
18 But of course we all pass it down. We always look
19 after our younger brother, you know what I mean.
20
21 Q. Was it also the case as you grew up you moved
22 regularly?
23 A. Yeah.
24
25 Q. From house to house?
26 A. Very often. Very often, yep.
27
28 Q. Was this always rental accommodation?
29 A. Yes, yep.
30
31 Q. You mentioned there how your father would go off for a
32 time?
33 A. Yep.
34
35 Q. Was that for not just work but he would also just
36 leave the family?
37 A. Yes. Have affairs.
38
39 Q. Your relationship, though, with your older brother?
40 You personally? Did you get on well?
41 A. Yeah, no, we all got on well together. I mean, like
42 chooks in the chook yard really. I mean, you didn't like
43 something someone said or did but you still put up with
44 them because they're family - not that it is going to this
45 situation, but as a kid I'm talking about. If there was
46 any way I could help him we couldn't, because we were still
47 at school. But we naturally knew when we got to 14 we left

1 school to go and get work.
2
3 Q. Did you all leave school at that age?
4 A. Fourteen, yep.
5
6 Q. The end of year 9 or end of year 10?
7 A. End of year 9.
8
9 Q. So you all left at the end of the second year?
10 A. Pretty well except the last one.
11
12 Q. Except Troy, he went all the way through, didn't he?
13 A. Yeah, that's right.
14
15 Q. Regarding yourself then, Mr McKenna, you left school
16 at the end of year 9?
17 A. Yeah.
18
19 Q. You got various jobs; is that right?
20 A. That's right.
21
22 Q. In 1976 you would have been about 26?
23 A. Yes.
24
25 Q. Is that right?
26 A. Yep.
27
28 Q. You got married in 1976 but I understand you lost your
29 job shortly after that; is that right?
30 A. Well, basically. But, no, I got offered the job at
31 the hostel.
32
33 Q. But before that you were unemployed?
34 A. No. I was working at the Shire, South Bar Shire.
35
36 Q. You were working at the Shire?
37 A. Yeah, I lived in a flat in Vic Park, yep.
38
39 Q. Your first child had just been born; is that right?
40 A. Yes. Yes, that's right.
41
42 Q. So how did it come about that you got the job at the
43 Katanning hostel?
44 A. Well, we naturally knew where Dennis went. I think I
45 went up a couple of times before Christmas just to go away
46 on a weekend and he said, "We needed someone to start".
47 And I said, "We really can't, not with little bubs around".

1 But we went up and watched a couple of football games. We
2 thought, "This would be nice". A house was provided. So
3 we decided to leave at the end of that year, '76, and go
4 up. My little girl was only five or six months old.

5

6 Q. So your brother offered you a job?

7 A. Yes. And naturally I didn't have any qualifications,
8 no.

9

10 Q. So you left your job with the Shire?

11 A. Yep.

12

13 Q. Did that job also extend to your wife?

14 A. Yes.

15

16 Q. What did you understand that you both would be doing?

17 A. Well, you can imagine starting from, naturally, first
18 thing in the morning and getting there at 7 o'clock,
19 turning lights on, going through, making sure the kids -
20 just format like you would in a family. Make sure everyone
21 is up. If anyone is sick you then tend to it and see what
22 happened. All went to the kitchen for breakfast. Go back
23 and check their attire, beds were made and off to school.

24

25 And then at lunchtime make sure lunch was there. Hand
26 it out. After school help them with sport, if you had to.
27 Watch them down at the rec shed, in the pool if it was
28 summer. If they were studying, "Are you okay? Are you
29 okay?" If they are sick, "What happened? Get hit on the
30 head? You need a band-aid?" You know, you went back to
31 them to back up anything and put lights out at night time.

32

33 Q. The records that the Inquiry has obtained is that you
34 and your wife started there at the hostel on 29 January of
35 1977, does that sound about right? Just before --

36 A. Yeah, that would be right. About a week before school
37 goes back, yep.

38

39 Q. Were you given any training as to what you were
40 supposed to do --

41 A. No.

42

43 Q. -- or any guidelines or any handbook or anything like
44 that?

45 A. No. I'm afraid not. I'm afraid not, sir. Just a
46 matter of commonsense.

47

1 Q. I gather you weren't subjected to a formal interview
2 for the job?
3 A. No.
4
5 Q. Anything like that?
6 A. No.
7
8 Q. Did your mum and dad move to Katanning at some stage
9 shortly after you began working there?
10 A. Possibly a couple of years later. The fact was they
11 were getting on a bit and they needed estate housing, as
12 you could be aware. One came up in the country. They got
13 one in Katanning, then probably after two years their name
14 came back at the metro area, and they came back to the
15 metropolitan area.
16
17 Q. Whilst at Katanning did they work at all; can you
18 recall?
19 A. The wife did mention to me something outside, she did
20 bring something to my attention. Dennis decided that they
21 needed a fruit and veggie shop there - would be cheaper
22 than the local guy. So dad used to cruise back and forward
23 to the market with an old Holden and a trailer and just put
24 the fruit and veggies down at the shop. That's about all
25 they had.
26
27 Q. So your wife Robyn has reminded you of that?
28 A. Yes, yes.
29
30 Q. But you can recall that now?
31 A. Yes. Vividly.
32
33 Q. Just for the record, you remained outside whilst your
34 wife gave evidence this morning?
35 A. Yeah, yeah.
36
37 Q. Do you know who owned this fruit and vegetable shop?
38 A. Well Dennis had control of it.
39
40 Q. Dennis had control of it?
41 A. Yeah, yeah.
42
43 Q. Your mum and dad would both work there?
44 A. Yes.
45
46 Q. Who got the profits of that store?
47 A. Well, I think after he probably slung mum and dad some

1 money I presume he did.
2
3 Q. You mentioned how your dad got fruit and vegetables
4 from --
5 A. Markets.
6
7 Q. -- up here in Perth?
8 A. Yep.
9
10 Q. Did it sell anything else, that stall?
11 A. No.
12
13 Q. Cool drinks, stuff like that?
14 A. Oh, you know, toffee apples. I think they might have
15 brought up trays of crayfish or something, you know what I
16 mean, something like that.
17
18 Q. I see.
19 A. No cool drinks, I don't think. But I never really
20 went down there.
21
22 Q. Was it the case that you and your wife lived in the
23 warden's house?
24 A. Yes.
25
26 Q. There at Katanning?
27 A. Yep.
28
29 Q. Three-bedroom place?
30 A. Yes.
31
32 Q. It was on site?
33 A. Yes.
34
35 Q. Your brother Dennis, he lived at a unit --
36 A. Inside the building.
37
38 Q. Inside the boys' dormitory, is that right?
39 A. Yes.
40
41 Q. Can I ask you this, am I right in saying that there
42 was only one door, apart from the fire exit, to get into
43 that building? Is that your recollection?
44 A. One door to get into his building or the whole
45 building?
46
47 Q. No, the boys' dormitory?

1 A. There was only one entrance into the dormitories and
2 then the exit doors on the end of the passages.
3
4 Q. You say there were exit doors at the end of the
5 passages as well?
6 A. Yes.
7
8 Q. Who had the keys to those doors?
9 A. They may have been on a hook in the office.
10
11 Q. Did you ever have the keys?
12 A. No.
13
14 Q. At night time?
15 A. No.
16
17 Q. Were you aware that those doors were locked at night
18 time?
19 A. Yes.
20
21 Q. So you had no way of getting in unless you banged on
22 the door?
23 A. That's right. I'd have to bang on the door quite a
24 lot in the mornings too. Came on duty and no-one would
25 open the door.
26
27 Q. Who would end up opening the door?
28 A. Well, I'd have to go to Dennis, or I would have to go
29 right round the back of the kitchen and come in with the
30 cook. The cook would be there earlier at a separate
31 entrance.
32
33 Q. At some stage did you and Robyn move to Albany to work
34 at Amity House?
35 A. Yes, we did; yeah.
36
37 Q. Can you recall when that was?
38 A. That would have been the end of '77. We were only
39 there about a year. A couple of old people retired from
40 Albany. The Authority rang us up and said they were
41 looking for someone who'd retired, are we willing to go
42 there. We said "Yep, but I'd like to see the place, in
43 respect of the people". And two board members come up and
44 interviewed us out on the back grass. And we went down and
45 looked at the place and looked at the accommodation. Found
46 out, you know, 26 kids, I think. We thought, not to be
47 rude, but that would be a nice cushy little job.

1
2 Q. So you said someone from the Authority contacted you?
3 A. Yes.
4
5 Q. It want Dennis who mentioned it to you first?
6 A. Well, he did mention it and said "Well, Colin will
7 have to ring you up." You know what I mean, it had to come
8 through him.
9
10 Q. And Colin you're saying is?
11 A. Philpott, chair of the hostels authority.
12
13 Q. You spoke to Colin?
14 A. Yes.
15
16 Q. You say you met with?
17 A. The two people. Arthur Richards was the principal of
18 the high school and another bord member. I can't remember
19 his name at the moment. Both came up and interviewed me at
20 Katanning.
21
22 Q. Were you interviewed at all by Colin Philpott?
23 A. No.
24
25 Q. You only spoke to him over the phone?
26 A. That's right, yep.
27
28 Q. Might sound like a stupid question, but was he aware
29 of who you were, your full name?
30 A. Yeah.
31
32 Q. Can you recall whether he knew you were the brother of
33 Dennis?
34 A. Yes.
35
36 Q. He knew that?
37 A. Yes. And I'd only been there one year, of course, and
38 I didn't have any qualifications, I presume.
39
40 Q. I was going to ask you about that. You didn't have
41 any qualifications?
42 A. No. No.
43
44 Q. Yourself?
45 A. No, well, you naturally get asked what you do in a
46 certain situation, you know what I mean, to see if you had
47 reasonable common sense. If you thought you could handle

1 it you might as well do it.
2
3 Q. You say you worked at Albany for about a year?
4 A. A year-and-a-half. A year-and-a-half.
5
6 Q. Did you know how long you were going to be there for?
7 A. I was prepared to stick it out - I'm not being rude -
8 but the wife felt isolated. She did at Katanning, but the
9 kids were really good at Katanning. Albany was a different
10 kettle of fish. There was no uniform, no regime, and there
11 were some trade kids as well that had nothing to do with
12 the hostel. They used to board there and they were
13 troublesome.
14
15 Q. Whose decision was it for you to move back to
16 Katanning?
17 A. Both of us, really. After chatting with her I said,
18 "Okay, we're off". And Dennis said, "You can come back
19 here, if you like".
20
21 Q. You didn't get the call from Dennis to return?
22 A. Well, who called who first is very hard. But I
23 presume the discussion came up that we weren't too happy at
24 Albany, you know what I mean. And he suggested, "If you
25 like, I'll tee it up with everyone. They can salary
26 replace you after Easter. You can come up". Which is this
27 year or next year, whenever it was. So we decided to go
28 back.
29
30 Q. Did you leave on good terms?
31 A. Yeah, yeah.
32
33 Q. In Albany?
34 A. Yes, we did. I spoke to the old principal about three
35 months ago about something else which had arisen, and I've
36 got his number and got my backing.
37
38 Q. Who was that?
39 A. Arthur Richards. He lives out at --
40
41 Q. One of the people who conducted the interview?
42 A. Yes. He was chairman.
43
44 Q. Do you know if anybody replaced you and your wife's
45 positions in Katanning?
46 A. Oh, at Katanning?
47

1 Q. Yes.
2 A. No, I don't know who did take our place. I really
3 don't.
4
5 Q. Someone would have had to?
6 A. Yeah, that's right, because it's like ships in the
7 night. I remember a girl that came up - parent a
8 politician who worked there. I'm not sure whether she took
9 over from us and then she was still there when we came
10 back, you know what I mean. But she was nervous and then
11 left.
12
13 Then there was someone else come over from Bunbury, a
14 daughter of a bloke that had a car yard.
15
16 Q. Can you recall were they relatives of yours who filled
17 your positions at that time?
18 A. Yes. Probably up later this afternoon. Another story
19 was, the way Dennis looked after our family, Graham's truck
20 driving down here, had his truck pranged, wiped off. Lost
21 his income. We found there was a driving job at
22 Broomehill. So he went out there to work at the Shire and
23 his wife, my sister-in-law --
24
25 Q. Is that Christine?
26 A. Christine, yes. I'm pretty sure she was offered a job
27 at the laundry. She might have filled in for Robyn when
28 she left. But of course then she went back to the laundry,
29 or left again, but she was always someone to fall back on,
30 I think.
31
32 Q. Did that happen at the time that you were down in
33 Albany or later?
34 A. No. It must have been around that time, yep. I am
35 sure they were there when we came back again, so yeah, they
36 must have come as we left.
37
38 Q. Do you know where they were living when you came back?
39 A. Broomehill. Yep.
40
41 Q. In Broomehill?
42 A. Yeah.
43
44 Q. Do you recall whether Graham worked for the hostel,
45 not just then but at any stage?
46 A. No, he didn't. But apparently I think he helped drive
47 a sports group somewhere in a bus occasionally. Sometimes

1 netball goes somewhere, football goes somewhere else.
2 Myself and Dennis are the only two licences. I think he
3 may have come across to help take a group somewhere.
4
5 Q. Can you recall when it was that you and your wife
6 finished working at the hostel?
7 A. Yes, it was at the end of 1984. My son was born in
8 February and the little girl René became a diabetic when
9 she was about four, on insulin, and that was a full-time
10 job for me to handle.
11
12 Q. Yes, I can understand that. So you're saying end
13 of --
14 A. When the son came, we thought, you know, this is it.
15 We will go back and look after our own family.
16
17 Q. Your son was born 7 February 1984?
18 A. Yep.
19
20 Q. Was it after that --
21 A. Yeah, we left at the end of that year at Christmas
22 time.
23
24 Q. End of '84?
25 A. So the wife could look after the kids at home, yep.
26
27 Q. Do you know who took over your job?
28 A. Yes.
29
30 Q. Who was that?
31 A. A sister-in-law and a brother.
32
33 Q. And who was that? Names?
34 A. Neil and Wendy. When we actually came up - they got
35 married in '82, I think. He came up with mum and dad,
36 worked down the road as well. Met Wendy, who was a
37 farmer's daughter, and got married at Albany in '82ish or
38 '81. But she was there two years before we left, which is
39 towards the end of '82.
40
41 Q. What was her job there?
42 A. Supervising the girls then with my wife Robyn.
43
44 Q. But your brother, Neil, wasn't working there?
45 A. Neil, he was still working down town. He only - he
46 only helped out, I think, when I left. I mean, one of the
47 other people might be able to help me out with that. He

1 might have helped out when I left at the end of '84. But I
2 knew year 12 students who had left who hadn't found
3 accommodation were also offered employment. There were
4 about three of those kids over that period of time helping
5 out as well.

6

7 Q. Who offered them employment?

8 A. Dennis.

9

10 Q. Dennis?

11 A. Yeah.

12

13 Q. Was Dennis responsible for the --

14 A. Hiring and firing.

15

16 Q. -- hiring and firing?

17 A. Yep, yep.

18

19 Q. You've got no doubt about that?

20 A. That's right.

21

22 Q. Do you know whether the board, the hostel board - were
23 you aware of the hostel board?

24 A. I was, yeah.

25

26 Q. Were you aware whether they had any involvement to
27 play in this?

28 A. They should have really had - what's the word -
29 control of who was put on and off, but naturally they let
30 work in his hands - let him handle everything. But he
31 wasn't making mistakes so, you know, let's go with what
32 we've got.

33

34 Q. Are you stating that from what you've read about the
35 evidence that has been led at the Inquiry or was that your
36 impression --

37 A. I - what --

38

39 Q. No, let me finish. Was that your impression when you
40 were working there? You can see the distinction?

41 A. Yes, I can. I could, naturally, think when you are 27
42 plus you're thinking is this the protocol? You know, who
43 actually puts them on? But I presume a company lets a
44 manager handle it, so I thought, well, the board, they are
45 all busy farmers, they are going to let their manager do
46 it. I didn't see anything wrong with it. But I can see
47 repercussions.

1
2 Q. That was your view back then?
3 A. Yes.
4
5 Q. When all the family members kept on being employed?
6 A. That's right. Exactly.
7
8 Q. So you said there that the board just seemed to let
9 your brother do that?
10 A. Mmm-hmm.
11
12 Q. Again, I'm saying from your recollection rather than
13 from what you've read or heard about the evidence of the
14 Inquiry?
15 A. Yeah, yeah.
16
17 Q. From your knowledge did that extend beyond just the
18 hiring and firing of staff, that the board would just
19 allow Dennis to do what - pretty much what he wanted?
20 A. Yes, yes.
21
22 Q. That was --
23 A. That would be my assumption.
24
25 Q. Right. And what was that based on? Based on things
26 he said to you?
27 A. Based on being there and experiencing those
28 situations, do you know what I mean? Someone ringing up,
29 or interviewing a person for a job - do you know what I
30 mean? Yes.
31
32 Q. I'm saying beyond the jobs though.
33 A. Yes, yes.
34
35 Q. For example, expenditure.
36 A. Decision making.
37
38 Q. Decision making.
39 A. That's right; "let's get a quote for a pool", let's
40 get the rec shed up". That's right, do fundraisers, you
41 know, when they would go downtown look at a new bus, "How
42 much they are?", do you know what I mean? I don't know
43 whether he rung up a Board member and said, "Look, we'll
44 need a new bus." They may there have said, "Yes, go and
45 get a price", do you know what I mean?
46
47 Q. Right.

1 A. I don't think he would have really gone out and said,
2 "Give me a cheque for a new bus", off his own bat, off his
3 own bat. They would have been aware he was probably going
4 to look at a bus or build a shed, but he handled
5 everything.
6
7 Q. Did he ever say to you about what sort of control he
8 had over the Board? This is at the time that you were
9 working with him.
10 A. No, no, no. He never insinuated he had control of
11 anyone. I'm a pretty perceptive person - sorry, but didn't
12 pick anything up there.
13
14 Q. Now, what was your relationship like with your brother
15 Dennis at the time, all those years that you were working
16 at the hostel? I understand that you had that break --
17 A. Yes.
18
19 Q. -- but apart from that, from 1977 through to I think
20 you've said --
21 A. '84.
22
23 Q. --'84 --
24 A. Mm-hmm.
25
26 Q. -- and was it you and your wife were working there?
27 A. Relationship?
28
29 Q. What sort of relationship did you have with him?
30 A. I'm only thinking now because I've got to disassociate
31 brothers working together, to a staff and a boss. You can
32 imagine there is a little bit of a problem with that
33 area --
34
35 Q. Yes.
36 A. -- do you know what I mean? I would probably approach
37 him as a brother on a few occasions, but can you - can you
38 say that is also the staff approaching a manager? I think
39 I could have approached him with a lot of other different
40 things than a normal person would to a boss - do you know
41 what I mean? "You do it my way or you're out the door." I
42 think I could have got away with a little bit more, or
43 approached him a bit better.
44
45 Q. And - well, did you approach him?
46 A. Yes, I did, but not on this situation.
47

1 Q. So what did you - when did you - what did you approach
2 about --
3 A. Probably the way he spoke to a few kids, the way he
4 handles things. He was very rude, liked everything his own
5 way - if you are looking for a perception on the way I read
6 things - but manipulative. You know, I didn't like a lot
7 of the things he did and, of course, I'm afraid I would be
8 like a lot of other kids, I suppose; well, look behind me,
9 I'm just getting out of here, I'm going down the rec shed,
10 do you know what I mean? You disappear for a while and
11 cool down or let him cool down, though he never did really.
12
13 Q. So you would approach him on occasions regarding
14 behaviour of his that you were concerned about?
15 A. Yes, yes.
16
17 Q. Like, for example, the way he spoke to kids?
18 A. Yes, that's right, ridiculed, his discipline actions
19 --
20
21 Q. Yes.
22 A. -- yes, yes.
23
24 Q. So --
25 A. Yes.
26
27 Q. -- what would he do? What would his reaction be when
28 you approached him with those sorts of things?
29 A. Pretty well tell me that he was the boss, that's the
30 way he's running it, stiff cheese - do you know what I
31 mean? "Take it or leave it, I'll do what I want to do, I'm
32 the boss."
33
34 HIS HONOUR: Q. You said he was a manipulator. What did
35 he manipulate?
36 A. He'd do certain things, no matter what. I'll use an
37 example, "to get you to toe the line". If it was a kid's
38 situation, I presume, you know, "If you don't stay here
39 this weekend, you won't be playing sport", or, you know,
40 "You'll be put on toast duty", do you know what I mean?
41 "If you don't play sport, you're not going to do this,
42 you're not allowed home on the weekend", whatever.
43
44 Q. Did you ever think he went beyond what a warden should
45 be doing in those instances?
46 A. Well, there's a case we're so not educated. Not
47 working any other hostel, or anything of those sort of

1 situations, so I had nothing to compare it to - do you know
2 what I mean?
3
4 Q. But you were concerned enough on some occasions --
5 A. Yes.
6
7 Q. -- to raise it with him?
8 A. Yes, that's right; yes, yes.
9
10 Q. And obviously I gather you raised it with him because
11 you thought it was behaviour that wasn't appropriate?
12 A. That's right, that's right. I like talking to people
13 on the same level, not down to people.
14
15 Q. So what would you say to him in these instances?
16 A. "Do you think we could have handled this a bit better
17 with that girl or that boy, is, you know, quite upset about
18 it, and are laying on their beds." He might just replied
19 like, "Well, they'll have to get over it. I've told them,
20 that's it, that's the way it is. Don't like it here, go
21 somewhere else."
22
23 Q. So he never said to you, "You're right" --
24 A. No, no.
25
26 Q. -- "Wayne, I'll adjust my behaviour"?
27 A. No, no.
28
29 Q. And it sounds like he would just repeat it --
30 A. That's right, yes.
31
32 Q. -- for the entire time that you were there?
33 A. Pretty well, sir, yes.
34
35 Q. Okay. So you gave some examples there of how he spoke
36 to kids. He was very rude. Can you recall what --
37 A. He said?
38
39 Q. What instances they were?
40 A. Well, there was embarrassing students at - when we had
41 meal times, they'd all be seated where half - they take
42 their meal. Some were saying grace, and I think he'd
43 pretty well say something then, and as for situations - I
44 don't know. He might have ridiculed girls about trying to
45 sneak off with boys or pairing up at certain times and
46 things like that, and make them be a fool. And you could
47 tell where they were sitting on the table - do you know

1 what I mean - the way he embarrassed them. He may have
2 called someone an onion. I don't know what that situation
3 was, or someone might as well stand over in the corner and
4 be used as a mop. You know, that pretty useless sort of
5 attitude - do you know what I mean?
6

7 Q. Yes.

8 A. I don't really know what that related to either,
9 really, I can't - you know.

10 Q. Well, about the mop --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. No. Sir, to help you out here --

13 A. Well, I think --

14 Q. -- was that an occasion where he said publicly to a
15 girl, if you turn her upside down, you could use her as a
16 mop?
17

18 A. Something along those lines, yes, yes, that's right.
19 Yes, yes, something like that.

20 Q. And you recall --

21 A. And I remember while this girl - may have had a back,
22 I might have had a side view if I'm standing behind the
23 breakfast bar, I couldn't probably get a response, but I
24 don't think she was very happy - do you know what I mean -
25 or embarrassed, and her friends at the table looked like
26 they were shocked. There may have been a bit of laughter,
27 but, I mean, you can't have 100 people all crying and 100
28 people laughing, someone's - they've all got their own
29 opinions.
30

31 Q. Well, there --

32 A. Some might have been on Dennis's side and thought that
33 was funny and laughed, but they might have realised later
34 that was a silly thing to say and, well, you can't take it
35 back.
36

37 Q. Can you recall occasions where he would call up a
38 student in front of the others in the dining room and that
39 student be subject to ridicule?
40

41 A. Yes, that's right, that girl would have been one of
42 them.

43 Q. Yes.

44 A. The onion - either it was a mop - the mop girl would
45

1 have been, yes.
2
3 Q. And as you - did you see how the public ridiculing
4 would take place?
5 A. Yes, yes.
6
7 Q. And what would happen?
8 A. As much as I explained, I think.
9
10 Q. But who would be ridiculing the student? Would it be
11 other students? Would it be staff members?
12 A. No. What, do you mean to follow on from that
13 situation?
14
15 Q. Yes.
16 A. No one carried it on. No other staff member carried
17 it on and ridiculed that girl; you know, we probably
18 sympathised with them, tried to change the situation,
19 explain, you know, "You went about it wrong", and I think
20 you could have - I think you could have done that, and I
21 will speak to him for you; but, you know, otherwise just
22 keep out the way. That's the way I, or the wife, I hope,
23 would have handled it.
24
25 Q. All right. You mentioned how you would tell the
26 student that you would speak to --
27 A. Dennis.
28
29 Q. -- Dennis --
30 A. Yes.
31
32 Q. -- but I gather --
33 A. Still be.
34
35 Q. -- this would be occasions after you've already spoken
36 to him about such instances --
37 A. Something else, that's right.
38
39 Q. -- he was just going to ignore you?
40 A. Well, that's right. And you would be on deaf ears.
41
42 Q. Well, did it reach a point where this had taken place
43 over a number of years; where you thought you should take
44 the matter further?
45 A. No, I think - not being rude, but I think over that
46 space you've got eight-year-olds there, and the amount of
47 students came through, I don't think it was a great. There

1 wasn't a ridicule once a day or once a week, you know. It
2 might have only been three or four a year probably, and you
3 think of the percentages, that probably wasn't too bad.
4

5 Q. Well, Mr McKenna, we've heard accounts, and as I
6 understand it you've only been following the reports in the
7 newspaper or in the television news; is that right?
8 A. Yes.
9

10 Q. You haven't gone online and read the --
11 A. I haven't.
12

13 Q. -- transcript of the evidence that's been given --
14 A. No.
15

16 Q. -- at the hearing?
17 A. No, I haven't, no, because I'm not - what's the word,
18 computer literate.
19

20 Q. Fine. We've heard accounts from a number of
21 ex-students of repeated bullying, intimidating,
22 victimisation, and public humiliation by your brother, and
23 that it just wasn't the isolated occurrence, it seemed to
24 be a regular feature. That's not your recollection of the
25 matter?
26 A. Gee, mate, I - the strange thing was, as we all say,
27 looking back at it now, I can see the situations. I don't
28 think he was a complete beast the whole time I was there,
29 you know. There were times when we had some good times,
30 went on camps and everything else, but getting - say I
31 never suspected a thing, otherwise I would have said
32 something, and I can see why no one would come to say
33 anything to me. There's no way I picked anything up so --
34

35 Q. Because you were his brother?
36 A. That's right, but I didn't pick up anything, you know,
37 and --
38

39 Q. Nothing at all?
40 A. And I never picked up anything from a kid.
41

42 Q. You never heard any gossip?
43 A. No. I was really, really honestly true.
44

45 Q. Rumour?
46 A. I don't know what I can say to anyone to prove it
47 otherwise, you know. I can swear on my kid's life.

1
2 Q. But had you heard something about that, you had heard
3 gossip or innuendo --
4 A. Yes.
5
6 Q. -- of inappropriate behaviour by your brother --
7 A. That's right, I would have --
8
9 Q. -- would --
10 A. -- definitely said something.
11
12 Q. To whom?
13 A. If not him, I would have rung up their parents,
14 because this is where the trouble is - the kids don't know
15 the protocol probably - at least rung up their parents,
16 told them, and I would have sat there with the kid in my
17 house over the road, in the flat, until they came and got
18 him, and probably would have rung a Board member to have
19 him taken out, and the format would be someone would stand
20 in until something's done, you know. There must be a
21 routine to carry, and that's what I'd do. And I think that
22 kids should have probably gone to their parents, but it is
23 a bit hard, and it would be hard to go to the staff, so
24 it's not a very good situation, but in my situation, being
25 older, I naturally would have got that kid or rung the
26 parents.
27
28 Q. So are you talking about an example where there would
29 be an allegation of improper sexual conduct by your brother
30 or --
31 A. If I heard that, yes.
32
33 Q. Well, what about if you heard him victimising a
34 student, bullying a student, ostracising a student?
35 A. I'd - it depend to what extent, but I think if it's
36 any more than a slight discipline, I - I probably should
37 have acted on the onion and the mop system, I presume, but
38 I would have spoken to him. I thought, "That's as far as
39 I'll take it" you know, "any higher than that I probably
40 would have got the student to ring up the parent because on
41 the situation they were probably half laughing, half not
42 too laughing, and thinking which way I want to take this",
43 do you know what I mean?
44
45 Q. But might you not have been concerned about the
46 ramifications for you if you were to do that?
47 A. No, no. I'm always one I'm afraid, sorry, but I call

1 a spade a spade, and I'll suffer my consequences, because I
2 have no - I'll take my own feelings.
3
4 Q. But the person you're taking on is not just your boss,
5 but your older brother?
6 A. Yes, well, that's too bad.
7
8 Q. And you've said that as far as you believed, he could
9 hire and fire at will?
10 A. That's right, that's right. No, I was just as likely
11 to pack up the wife and go back to Perth, no problems at
12 all.
13
14 Q. Even though you were on a pretty good wicket --
15 A. Yes.
16
17 Q. -- there in Katanning?
18 A. That's right.
19
20 Q. Because you both had a job?
21 A. That's right.
22
23 Q. You had a three bedroom house?
24 A. Everything's provided - food provided, and that's
25 right. It wasn't good money, only \$4,000 a year --
26
27 Q. Right.
28 A. -- wages.
29
30 Q. But with everything else --
31 A. That's right.
32
33 Q. -- thrown in?
34 A. Exactly, that's right.
35
36 Q. Was it pretty good --
37 A. It wasn't bad.
38
39 Q. It was a pretty good life for you?
40 A. It wasn't bad, yes. And, of course, I'm not being
41 anything different, but I enjoyed the kids' company. We
42 used to go on great camps. I remember a couple of them.
43 You know, you'd have to get your canoe and take off pretty
44 quick, otherwise they'd bomb your canoe and tip you out,
45 throw you in the pools. I remember a fire at the back of
46 the rec shed, and throwing the aerosol cans on. That was
47 good fun. I had some good memories.

1
2 Q. Okay. You see, were you intimidated at all by your
3 brother --
4 A. No.
5
6 Q. -- in the years that you were there?
7 A. Not intimidated by - not intimidated by anyone, sir.
8 I've chucked in jobs since I've been, because of my
9 standing and my beliefs. I won't put up with being
10 victimised myself.
11
12 Q. Would you agree with me at least, that your brother
13 had a tendency to intimidate others?
14 A. Yes, yes.
15
16 Q. Would you agree with that?
17 A. I would, but I couldn't give you an example.
18
19 Q. Not just the students, but also fellow staff members?
20 A. Yes, yes. Fellow staff members, and probably even the
21 teachers that came across to help you study, but even
22 likely we wouldn't put them back on again.
23
24 Q. Well, we've heard a description that's been given of
25 him already as being a Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde character?
26 A. That would be about right. That would be about right.
27
28 Q. Did he have that sort of characteristic before you
29 worked with him?
30 A. I don't think there was anything he did prior to that
31 that I could compare to this situation. I mean, he worked
32 in a clothing shop and hung around with someone else, going
33 surfing and stuff, which wasn't my cup of tea. I mean, I
34 was still working and I had a car and I was off doing my
35 own thing - do you know what I mean; so I can't - I didn't
36 have anything with his social life prior to working
37 basically.
38
39 Q. Well, when you observed this characteristic of him,
40 when I say "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" --
41 A. Yes, yes.
42
43 Q. -- pleasant one moment --
44 A. That's right.
45
46 Q. -- and in a rage the next?
47 A. No, I didn't see that at home.

1
2 Q. But you saw it in this working environment?
3 A. Yes, yes.
4
5 Q. Did that surprise you?
6 A. I could probably think and answer myself it's
7 surprising, but I could probably answer myself and
8 thinking, "Well, he does have a bit of responsibility, I
9 suppose I can put up with him snapping", do you know what I
10 mean, like a father or mother does in a house with three or
11 four kids.
12
13 Q. Okay. Can we just go back a bit?
14 A. Yes.
15
16 Q. I want to ask you this - when Dennis first arrived in
17 Katanning --
18 A. Yes.
19
20 Q. -- he stated to a number of people that his fiancée
21 had been tragically killed, it would seem, either in a car
22 accident --
23 A. Car accident or aeroplane.
24
25 Q. -- yes, or another account we heard is that she died
26 of cancer. In any event, it was a tragic death. Was he
27 ever engaged --
28 A. No, no.
29
30 Q. -- to anyone?
31 A. No.
32
33 Q. You can state that?
34 A. No marriage, definitely.
35
36 Q. You can state that categorically?
37 A. Yes, swear to it.
38
39 Q. Can you ever recall him having a relationship with a
40 female?
41 A. No, can't recall it at all.
42
43 Q. He also seemed to give an account that he went into
44 the priesthood to study to be a priest for a year.
45 A. He was thinking about it. He said, "I wouldn't mind
46 doing this, I wouldn't mind doing that", but this is where
47 he could have also manipulated people in thinking, "Well,

1 we've got to do the right thing here, otherwise he's going
2 to disappear and go and take another job", do you know what
3 I mean?
4
5 Q. Yes. So this manipulating side --
6 A. I can't think it went any further to probably
7 suggesting it to probably mum or dad or an uncle or an
8 aunty. I don't think he actually went to knock on the door
9 and say, "Where's your application form?"
10
11 Q. Yes, so it never went so far as --
12 A. No.
13
14 Q. -- actually entering --
15 A. No, no.
16
17 Q. -- the seminary or anything like that?
18 A. No.
19
20 Q. This manipulating behaviour that he had, did you ever
21 observe that before you went to Katanning?
22 A. No, not really, no. Like I say, our life at home was
23 totally different to there, you know, because our life at
24 home was not dog eat dog, it wasn't that. It was survive.
25 We had to survive together and, you know, eat boiled wheat
26 instead of cereal for breakfast, you know.
27
28 Q. Okay. You see, Mr McKenna, with respect to the
29 evidence that's been given at the Inquiry - and you may
30 well have come across this, you reading the newspaper and
31 seeing TV reports - but we've heard from a number of
32 witnesses who were ex-students at the hostel, including
33 some who were there when you were there --
34 A. Yes.
35
36 Q. -- with your wife, that they would regularly see your
37 brother Dennis holding the hands of boys, they'd see boys
38 sitting on his lap, for example, particularly in his
39 office. They would see him placing his hand down the front
40 of boys' shirts, and that sort of --
41 A. Yes.
42
43 Q. -- contact --
44 A. Yes.
45
46 Q. -- not contact of a sexual nature --
47 A. No.

1
2 Q. -- but that sort of contact.
3 A. Yes, yes.
4
5 Q. Now, given the regularity that we've heard of this
6 taking place --
7 A. Yes.
8
9 Q. -- from students from different years --
10 A. Yes.
11
12 Q. -- who were there at the hostel --
13 A. I know what you mean.
14
15 Q. -- I'm going to suggest to you, you must have seen
16 something like that in your time there.
17 A. If you want to put a title on it. I saw nothing that
18 may have even looked like it was leading to anything sexual
19 - do you know what I mean?
20
21 Q. Okay.
22 A. Hand down a shirt - I don't know what the scenario
23 was, why that was done, if it was --
24
25 Q. Would you --
26 A. -- if I did see it.
27
28 Q. Well, did you see anything like that?
29 A. Would you believe, and I don't see why, unless someone
30 really takes offence to something, why they remember a
31 certain situation. Now, I - if I - if that did happen, I
32 don't think there was anything why I would have twigged
33 there's something wrong with this, or I am sure I would
34 have remembered it, but if I thought if they were wrestling
35 by a pool, done it, I wouldn't have seen any reason, and
36 that's why it's not locked away in my head. I'm sorry, but
37 that's the way I look at it.
38
39 Q. No, it's nothing like that.
40 A. No, that's cool, but --
41
42 Q. It's the --
43 A. I have seen a kid sitting on his knee, on his chair
44 behind a desk, if not once, who knows, it might have been
45 two, it might have been three times. Whether it was the
46 same kid, two separate kids, I'm not sure, but the
47 situation where he may have said, "So you want to be the

1 boss, do you, well come and sit down here?", you know.
2 That might have been the scenario, I don't know.
3
4 Q. All right. So --
5 A. But there were other students sitting there as well,
6 because I think there was about six white chairs in the
7 office as well.
8
9 Q. Okay. Well, just --
10 A. So he wasn't on his own there with them.
11
12 Q. Okay. Well, just staying with that then for a moment.
13 A. Yes, yes.
14
15 Q. So you said there were occasions when you saw that?
16 A. Yes, yes.
17
18 Q. And we're not talking about little toddlers here --
19 A. No, no, no.
20
21 Q. -- we're talking about --
22 A. 12-13-year-old students.
23
24 Q. Well, at least that age.
25 A. Yes, oh, yes, yes.
26
27 Q. Now, can you recall on those occasions that you saw
28 that, the age or approximate age of these students?
29 A. Yes, well, they would have been 12 to 14.
30
31 Q. So --
32 A. Because naturally I'm thinking, "No, hang on", a
33 little kid - I mean, if you are a little kid, you're going
34 to pick them up and hold them like a baby. If it's an
35 older kid there's no way at 16 to pushing 17-year-old kid's
36 going to sit on his lap.
37
38 Q. All right. Well, a 14-year-old sitting on a man's
39 lap?
40 A. Well, to be intimidated by him, probably, but a kid
41 doesn't know the difference, does he?
42
43 Q. Yes, but did you know the difference, Mr McKenna?
44 A. I'm not sure. I'm not thinking of any defence, I'm
45 trying to think of a word for you.
46
47 Q. Well --

1 A. You could probably say, like I said, about the -
2 depends on the intent. I wouldn't have seen anything wrong
3 with it because I didn't see any intent. I didn't - if I
4 saw positioning or holding them in a certain way, then I
5 would have and, of course, but he would have - but he would
6 have been aware that you can't do certain things in front
7 of another adult. Just having him sit there sideways is
8 fine, you know, "I better not straighten them, I better
9 not" - because then you would twig, you really would.

10

11 Q. I'm going to suggest something --

12 A. Yes.

13

14 Q. -- ought to have twigged for you when you saw this not
15 just once --

16 A. Yes.

17

18 Q. -- but on several occasions --

19 A. Yes.

20

21 Q. -- and that would involve boys as old as 14?

22 A. Mm-hmm.

23

24 Q. -- sitting on a man who would be in his 30s --

25 A. Yes.

26

27 Q. -- on their lap for --

28 A. Yes.

29

30 Q. -- for no apparent reason - like, for example, if they
31 were doing a production or something --

32 A. That's right.

33

34 Q. -- or a play or something like that, it was just in an
35 office setting.

36 A. Yes, that's right.

37

38 Q. It never caused you any concern at all to see that?

39 A. Well, you could say, you know, I was concerned, but
40 like I said, as long as it didn't go any further than that.
41 As far as I was concerned, I didn't thought - think it went
42 any further than that.

43

44 Q. Well --

45 A. But nothing else happened again where I could tie
46 things up either, and there were other students there
47 giggling, and I'm thinking --

1
2 Q. Sir, did what you do about it?
3 A. Well, I would have - I would have suggested, like I
4 said before, "What was he doing there?", or, you know, "Oh,
5 he's come around to look at something, the dates. I'm
6 showing him the dates." "Well, here, sit there, you can
7 see it better", and I'm sure he would have said something
8 like, you know.
9
10 Q. Well, did you --
11 A. -- is it - I am sure I would have done.
12
13 Q. Did you?
14 A. I would have, but I wouldn't have probably raised - I
15 would have talked normal, say, "Couldn't you have done that
16 at home?", "Isn't there a diary", or, "Isn't there a
17 calendar on the wall?" - do you know what I mean. Look, at
18 a different scenario.
19
20 Q. Well, can you recall raising it with your brother?
21 A. Yes, yes, I would have said something, but I wouldn't
22 have made a big deal of it.
23
24 Q. So what would have you said?
25 A. Much like I just said a minute ago, "What was Joe
26 Bloggs doing there", or he would have seen me looking and
27 probably would have said, "Oh, he's come to look at the
28 calendar, I'm showing him when we're starting our next
29 football fixture" or something or other, you know; "Okay,
30 but doesn't he know it's July, I mean everyone else knows
31 July." It's just turned the other way - do you know what I
32 mean"? It doesn't look good for the other kids, or there's
33 a - "Can't you have a football meeting and point out the
34 dates?" This actually is a football - "because that's what
35 you're on about, do you know what I mean?" If you want to
36 say - why do you want to press a button for? Do you set
37 the alarm off; saying "Lunch is on", "You want to be the
38 boss here? Well, take my chair, sit on that." Then I
39 would have said, "No, hang on, if you want to see who is
40 the boss, get up out of the chair, don't sit in the chair.
41 Don't sit on - to sit on your knee to read something, if
42 you're not high enough", I don't know.
43
44 Q. Are you just saying what you think happened, or is
45 this your recollection of what happened when you raised
46 this with your brother?
47 A. When I raised it with me brother, that's what I would

1 have said.
2
3 Q. Yes. And his response?
4 A. "There's nothing in it, don't bother with it."
5
6 Q. Pretty much like you would say to you regarding the
7 other matters --
8 A. Every other matter.
9
10 Q. -- that were raised with him?
11 A. That's right, yes. That's right. As if to say, "It's
12 my concern, you get on with something else."
13
14 Q. Were your concerns ever heightened by the fact that
15 you never saw your older brother in any sort of
16 relationship with a female?
17 A. Would you believe I can honestly say I was probably
18 waiting for somewhere along the line for him to show up
19 somewhere, at a family do or whatever, with a partner of
20 any description, and even a male, and it never happened,
21 but the door was always there, the thought was always
22 there, "Is this going to happen one day, when's this going
23 to come out?"
24
25 Q. Well, did that thought come more to the front of your
26 mind when you saw him in this position with boys aged
27 between 12 and 14?
28 A. Not really, because I think - not really, no, because
29 the strange thing is - look, my grandfather - well, my
30 grandmother died 40 years before my grandfather did, and he
31 never settled for anyone else either, so I'm thinking,
32 "That's just his wife. Okay, he's happy with the kids,
33 he's in his environment", even whether it's a person
34 running a flower shop, or it's someone being a builder,
35 working by himself with no labourers, that's what he wants,
36 that's fine, but --
37
38 Q. You see --
39 A. -- he never had a relationship. That's the way he's
40 of. As far as I'm concerned, priests were doing the same
41 thing, they were one just to god, and --
42
43 Q. You see, Mr McKenna --
44 A. -- I didn't see anything wrong with it.
45
46 Q. -- you were placed in a better position than other
47 staff members there --

1 A. Exactly.
2
3 Q. -- because of the fact that you were this man's
4 brother?
5 A. That's right, and I was there for six and a
6 half years, which makes me the scapegoat.
7
8 Q. Well, I know hindsight's a wonderful thing --
9 A. Yes.
10
11 Q. But I'm just asking you whether --
12 A. But don't forget, yes, I know, I could have very
13 easily have done it, but to tell you the truth, like I
14 said, through the run-ins with him, and not happy with a
15 couple of certain situations, and there was so many kids in
16 the hostel, just the two of us males put in the one spot -
17 I always made myself separate from where he was. If he was
18 in the dining room sitting down with a cup of coffee with
19 someone or another couple of kids, I'd go and watch the rec
20 shed or look at the other dorms.
21
22 Q. Why is that?
23 A. Because there might be a kid that needs attention
24 somewhere for goodness knows what - do you know what I
25 mean? Who knows - bad day at school, parent rang up - do
26 you know what I mean; relationships. I'd just wander down
27 the rec shed, and plus I also get claustrophobic, I can't -
28 you know, I've got to work outside. I'd go down the rec
29 shed, or stand by the pool. In the end I would go down the
30 shops, jump in a bus, go down the shops.
31
32 Q. On these occasions that you saw your brother with boys
33 on his lap, is that what you went and did?
34 A. No, no. It wasn't long after it broke up, otherwise
35 I'd double-check. You know, it would be broken up, it
36 would be finished in 30 seconds, a minute or five minutes.
37
38 Q. Did you ever think to speak to these boys about that?
39 A. No, I never spoke anything about that, but --
40
41 Q. And then maybe say?
42 A. -- you could probably say I made sure I went past that
43 way, like I would if a kid was sick, and I'd go and check
44 if they were still laying in bed two hours later. If I saw
45 Wayne McKenna sitting on Dennis's knee and thought there
46 was anything in it, or if the kid looked embarrassed or
47 red, I'm thinking, "Something's happening here", I would

1 probably walk past. If he's gone to the dorm, if he's gone
2 to the rec shed, I would go and survey the situation and
3 look at his movements, what was happening, and if he looked
4 troubled, if he looked troubled, I would have asked
5 someone, "Did he - what was going on there, what did he
6 say? What's going - is he okay? Did he say anything to
7 you. Then I'd - I'd front him.
8

9 Q. We've heard an account from one ex-student, Mr McKenna
10 - page 361, sir - that when she observed your brother
11 Dennis doing these sorts of things with boys, such as
12 holding their hands, boys on his lap, hands down the front
13 of his shirt, boys' shirts, that she recalls you being
14 present on those occasions. All right?

15 A. Yes. Well, we've got the sitting on the lap, I
16 believe in front of his chair - that's fine, yes, that's
17 fine, but I'm not sure about the hand in the shirt.
18

19 Q. Holding hands with boys?

20 A. Not holding hands, no. I mean, gees, you only hold
21 someone's hand to walk across the road, and it was a pretty
22 dead-end street.
23

24 Q. Did you ever notice that when the children - the
25 children that you saw hanging around your brother were
26 always boys?

27 A. Yes, yes. And always probably the same few. You
28 know, one year someone leaves, that place would be filled
29 up by someone else.
30

31 Q. Again, did that --

32 A. Ring a bell, no.
33

34 Q. -- cause you any concern?

35 A. No. Because whether someone hung around me, did he
36 get concerned? No. We were there to look after the boys
37 and the ladies looked after the girls. That was our
38 situation.
39

40 Q. Do you recall hearing announcements over the PA,
41 either by your brother or by other students, that were for
42 the purpose of ridiculing other students or a student?

43 A. Yes. I'm sure that was happening on a couple of
44 occasions. I'm not sure whether - he may have. He
45 probably did say to someone, "We'll call out on the PA
46 that".
47

1 Let's just say the scenario is what you're probably
2 looking for, someone had been seen in the shower and he's
3 not as big as he used to be, you know. Just embarrass his
4 mates. They'd probably turn the girls' end off, just turn
5 the boys' end on. If you're looking for a scenario as to
6 ridiculing people. That wasn't the situation. That wasn't
7 the words, but that is the sort of thing what happened, you
8 know what I mean. Or, like, someone fell over at football
9 today and his bum was showing out of his shorts, you know
10 what I mean, that sort of thing.

11

12 Q. He would make those announcements, your brother?

13 A. He would do that, or probably get another boy to
14 probably say it over the PA. But they were all chuckling
15 and carrying on like it was funny, when of course the kids
16 get as embarrassed as shit.

17

18 Q. Yes, well, they would, wouldn't they?

19 A. Well, of course they would, that's right.

20

21 Q. Particularly if there are snide remarks about --

22 A. Well, that's right.

23

24 Q. -- size of their anatomy?

25 A. Yeah, I know. That's right. I don't know why he did
26 it.

27

28 Q. He did it in order to humiliate that particular
29 student?

30 A. Yeah.

31

32 Q. Well, that's obvious, is it?

33 A. For some reason that kid wasn't coming on side, I
34 presume, you know what I mean. That's the way he's doing
35 it. I'm thinking, why did he do this? And I'd say
36 something.

37

38 Q. Did you say something to him?

39 A. Of course I would, yeah. Of course I would. I really
40 would.

41

42 Q. And again he would just brush it off?

43 A. Yeah. That's right. They're probably just having
44 fun. The kids were laughing, listening to him. You would
45 hear a bit of laughter, but of course you don't always come
46 to the junior end.

47

1 Q. Would you speak to the boy who was the subject of this
2 laughter?
3 A. Honestly, and I am sure one of these people must say,
4 I'd probably go past, like I said a minute ago, just to
5 see, look, how long is this kid going to be crying, or a
6 little bit red, how's he taking it. I'm sure I would have
7 said, "You okay?" "You all right?" "They'll be all right
8 in a minute".
9
10 Q. Mr McKenna, did it ever reach a point where you
11 thought it was now appropriate to raise this --
12 A. No.
13
14 Q. -- behaviour by your brother to someone other than
15 your brother?
16 A. No, I didn't.
17
18 Q. It never crossed your mind to raise it with the hostel
19 board?
20 A. No. I only raised it for something else. I'll tell
21 you later, if you want.
22
23 Q. Yes, I know about that.
24 A. Yeah, yeah.
25
26 Q. But this other behaviour of your brother's?
27 A. No. Not really.
28
29 Q. Can I ask why not?
30 A. I think possibly if I - well, I would have spoken to
31 someone else, whether it was the wife or another female. I
32 would have asked, "How's the girl responding? Have they
33 gone and seen how things are happening up there?"
34 Everything seems good. For the boys I would have noticed,
35 probably. And the boys are very - the boys were very
36 strong, I'm afraid. Especially country boys. Country guys
37 are great. They - they cover things up so well. So I'm
38 afraid I think they might have covered it too good for me
39 to really think "well, I'd better do something", you know
40 what I mean.
41
42 Q. That would be the attitude to take, wouldn't it, by
43 these boys, to pretend that it wasn't --
44 A. Not the attitude I would take. The attitude they
45 would take, that's right.
46
47 Q. You would realise that, wouldn't you, they would

1 pretend that it wasn't affecting them, that they would put
2 on this bravado?
3 A. I didn't expect that. But I could see it now, is what
4 I'm saying. It didn't last long. The young men who were
5 driving tractors and doing heavy work, do you know what I
6 am saying?
7
8 Q. I am going to suggest to you your brother, to your
9 knowledge --
10 A. Yep.
11
12 Q. -- would often make these sort of humiliating jokes --
13 A. Yes, yes.
14
15 Q. -- about --
16 A. Anyone.
17
18 Q. -- boys' groins, about their penises?
19 A. Not often. Not often, no.
20
21 Q. But he would do that, wouldn't he?
22 A. Not often.
23
24 Q. But he did it, didn't he?
25 A. He did.
26
27 Q. He'd have nicknames for them?
28 A. Yes.
29
30 Q. And some of them were particularly humiliating?
31 A. One I know of, yes.
32
33 Q. He would announce that to groups and publicly and over
34 the PA?
35 A. Yes.
36
37 Q. Appropriate behaviour for a warden?
38 A. No. But I don't know how that kid got that nickname.
39 I think he came there with that nickname.
40
41 Q. But your brother made sure that those --
42 A. Someone else heard that is his nickname, that's right.
43 Yeah, yeah.
44
45 Q. Your brother made sure that everybody else knew about
46 it?
47 A. Yeah. I don't know how that person relayed to other

1 students or Dennis, or even to me, that he didn't want to
2 be called that again. I can't remember anything coming
3 back, you know what I mean. Call me dumb, but no-one told
4 me. Everyone was in the gym, like I said, like you're in a
5 school group and disperse.
6
7 Q. Was it the case that your inaction might have been
8 because you were fearful you might lose your job?
9 A. No, no.
10
11 Q. But you didn't seem to take much action beyond
12 speaking to your brother about it, who would just ignore
13 your concerns?
14 A. He did ignore my concerns, yeah, that's right.
15
16 Q. Mr McKenna, you were obviously concerned about his
17 behaviour enough to raise it with him?
18 A. Yeah.
19
20 Q. You would also hope that he would redress his
21 behaviour?
22 A. Yes.
23
24 Q. And behave more appropriately?
25 A. Yeah, okay.
26
27 Q. He never did in the entire time that you were there.
28 You never went that next step of taking it further?
29 A. No.
30
31 Q. I am going to suggest to you that it would be easy for
32 you to either contact the hostel board --
33 A. Yes.
34
35 Q. -- or someone at the Authority?
36 A. Yeah.
37
38 Q. And you didn't?
39 A. No.
40
41 Q. I am going to give you an opportunity to explain why?
42 A. Well, all right. I think each situation - I mean,
43 when you say how many have you got, you do something about
44 it. That is the problem I would probably have to face.
45 That's the problem I think everyone's going to have to
46 face. Like I said, 120 kids per year over eight years,
47 that's a lot of kids. So those incidents probably aren't

1 that bad. I don't think I really should have called
2 someone in to get him sacked or replaced, or even I would
3 pack my bags and go, the same situation. I am not giving
4 you examples for companies, but how many people in a bank
5 make a mistake adding up in the same day? Are you going to
6 sack them at the end of the week.

7
8 Q. So you are saying that it hadn't reached the point
9 where you feel --

10 A. No.

11
12 Q. -- you needed to take it that step further?

13 A. No. Because they all just stayed that little level
14 where I think there was still a bit of humour in there, and
15 I thought everyone was handling it quite well. But it is
16 not as if the touching and feeling got bigger and bigger,
17 if that's what you are looking for. But that's the way I
18 look at it. The sitting on the lap didn't go any further.
19 Someone leaning against his feet on the lounge room floor
20 didn't get any worse. Those situation, patting someone on
21 the shoulder - whether you are saying patting on the
22 shoulder, sitting on the lap, sitting by the thing is three
23 strikes and you're out - I didn't see it that way.

24
25 Q. Mr McKenna, did you ever have a student sit on your
26 lap?

27 A. Good point. No.

28
29 Q. Why not?

30 A. If I did, there was nothing in it, so I'm not banking
31 it in there, you know what I'm saying.

32
33 Q. You would never invite a student to sit on your lap,
34 would you?

35 A. I am a humorous person. I probably could have done,
36 would you believe. But it was taken in humour and no-one
37 did. But I wouldn't have done it, no, because of the
38 situation I was in. No, that would be the wrong thing to
39 do.

40
41 Q. Hold boys' hands?

42 A. No.

43
44 Q. Place your hand down the front of their shirts?

45 A. No. And - no.

46
47 Q. Have a boy rest their head in your lap?

1 A. I didn't see that.
2
3 Q. No, no. But you would never do that, you would?
4 A. No, no, no.
5
6 Q. Because all those examples, except in an isolated
7 situation where it might be a play or something like
8 that --
9 A. Yep, yep, yep.
10
11 Q. -- or a practical joke or something like that?
12 A. That would literally be in a play.
13
14 Q. It would all be inappropriate, wouldn't it?
15 A. Yes.
16
17 Q. Were you aware at your time there that your brother,
18 Dennis, would have favourites?
19 A. Yep, yep.
20
21 Q. Would they always be boys rather than girls?
22 A. Ninety-nine percent would be, yes.
23
24 Q. How did you know that these boys - and I'll
25 concentrate on the boys - were his favourites?
26 A. Yeah, how did I know they were his favourites?
27
28 Q. Yes.
29 A. Because he would always allocate them something to do.
30 It is just like a prefect in a school or the captain of a
31 football team, they are held in a higher esteem than anyone
32 else.
33
34 Q. What benefits did they get, that you observed?
35 A. I presume - a lot of the kids could do it, as they
36 would probably admit - but, like, go to the kitchen and get
37 a snack whenever you wanted to. Any student could do that.
38 But they could do it, of course, as well. And it wouldn't
39 be questioned. If they wanted to go down town and it
40 wasn't a town day, they could probably go down town. They
41 want to sit up longer than anyone else, they probably
42 could.
43
44 Q. What did you do know about that, them being able to
45 stay up longer?
46 A. Well, 15 minutes either way - if I was to knock off at
47 10.30, or lights out at 10 o'clock - they'd probably read,

1 9, 9.30, I would see you at 10. I would go home at 10.30.
2 If they want to stay up longer they were allowed to stay up
3 longer. And I was told, you know, "They'll turn the lights
4 off themselves if you just go home and come back in the
5 morning".
6
7 Q. Did you know where his favourite students would go
8 after lights out for the rest of the students?
9 A. I did - I don't know whether you were saying they were
10 in bed? I presume they were there. But I would often go
11 home and they'd be sitting in his flat.
12
13 Q. Yes?
14 A. If that is what you are looking for.
15
16 Q. Would they be predominantly or almost exclusively
17 boys?
18 A. Yes.
19
20 Q. And what would they be doing in his flat?
21 A. There may - there has been an occasion, I would
22 probably admit, there might be one or two girls. But don't
23 forget now, he'd have to get the girls on his side, so he
24 would naturally pick - they would have gone as well pretty
25 soon after I did. And then the door - I think they would
26 then be locked.
27
28 Q. What would they be doing on the occasions you saw
29 that?
30 A. Well, looked like they were supposed to have supper
31 now, just watch TV - Channel 2 I think was the only one
32 around. And probably have some cakes and coffee, bottles
33 of coke.
34
35 Q. Do you recall whether your brother, in the days that
36 you were there, had the means of playing films or videos to
37 students in his unit?
38 A. It was late in the '80s there wasn't - videos came out
39 late. But he did have a video machine in there hooked up
40 with TV. I'm not aware of him playing anything explicit on
41 the video there. But a bloke called Greg, who used to be
42 in the band - he used to come and play down in the rec shed
43 - started a video shop. You had to pay X amount of dollars
44 to be a member, then X amount to borrow. That was late in
45 the '80s before I left. Everyone must know when videos
46 came out.
47

1 Q. Late in the '80s before you left - that would be early
2 '80s?
3 A. Before I left in the late '80s video machines --
4
5 Q. You left in '84?
6 A. Yeah, yeah.
7
8 Q. He had a video machine in his unit?
9 A. Flat, yeah.
10
11 Q. Before you left?
12 A. That's right. Yes. And video just started coming out
13 and there was a guy down the road, I think he was going for
14 about two years before.
15
16 Q. Are you aware that he would have students in his unit
17 to watch or just stay with videos, movies?
18 A. Yeah, yeah. As to what, you know - I presume, I mean,
19 I never went down there. I never saw what people had in
20 the video shops.
21
22 Q. So you were never aware at the time that he would
23 shown pornographic films?
24 A. Never aware, honestly.
25
26 Q. And videos to students?
27 A. No.
28
29 Q. And supply them with alcohol?
30 A. Supply them with alcohol is a very dicey situation. I
31 think - I think one year at - there was a building down the
32 back. I don't think it was hooked up yet. A temporary
33 building at the back. It was a rec shed there somewhere.
34 I think it might have been classed as a year 12 going away.
35 Certain couple of kids, they know who they were that were
36 there. And I think I might have bought some prawns
37 earlier, some crayfish or something, and they had some
38 salad and they were going to have something there. And I -
39 I think some liquor was put on there. Something had coke.
40
41 Q. Some alcohol was provided to those students --
42 A. Yeah.
43
44 Q. -- year 12 students who were celebrating their end of
45 year exams?
46 A. That's right, yeah. I roamed around there for a
47 little while until I clocked off at about 11. Because I

1 know some town girls came across and I've met a couple
2 since and --
3
4 Q. I am not interested in that.
5 A. Yeah, no, that's cool.
6
7 Q. I'm interested in the supply of alcohol by your
8 brother to students much younger than that in years 9, 10.
9 A. No, no.
10
11 Q. In the confines and privacy of his unit?
12 A. Yeah, no. I've only picked that up in the paper
13 since. I'm writing that off because I haven't really seen
14 it. I only remember year 12.
15
16 Q. Would your brother, Dennis, drink alcohol himself?
17 A. No, no.
18
19 Q. He didn't?
20 A. Never.
21
22 Q. Now, if you had been aware that he was supplying
23 alcohol to teenage boys at that stage?
24 A. I definitely would have done something. Definitely
25 would have done something. I would have rung up the board
26 and probably wouldn't have got anywhere. But I think I
27 would have followed it up with a couple of kids' parents
28 and see if they could push the board a bit.
29
30 Q. Why would you say that you wouldn't have got anywhere
31 with the board?
32 A. My opinion is I think he was - what's the word? - I
33 think he picked his board members. That's my opinion.
34
35 Q. Is it your understanding that he had some sort of
36 influence in selecting the board members?
37 A. Who was on the board, yes.
38
39 Q. How did you draw that conclusion?
40 A. Naturally we all - we all meet all parents. Someone
41 asked me if I met a certain parent. I said I did, but not
42 the situation you're talking about. We met all parents.
43 And I'm not saying somebody is good and bad. Everyone is
44 the same. Some people had hard times. You knew that hard
45 time, you came across they were grumpy or whatever. I
46 think you could probably pick this bloke thinks I'm the
47 answer. So we need someone. Someone is leaving, we need a

1 treasurer. I'll ask him if he will come and be the
2 treasurer. You know what I mean? He will say yes to
3 anything I want. That would be easy to do. I'm sure any
4 parent - any of the parents would have gone along with what
5 he wanted.

6
7 Q. The time that you spent there, was it your impression
8 that he did have an extremely high reputation amongst the
9 community?

10 A. Yeah, certainly did. And I don't mind saying we did a
11 lot for the town, and I don't think - my opinion is I don't
12 think he did it to manipulate them. That's a different
13 story. But as far as I'm concerned, there was a lot of
14 kids there. Some kids are saying on Facebook - kids are
15 saying, which I don't take it, I'm very upset about that -
16 it's like Gestapo doing something, like, you know - what do
17 you call it? - trash duty or punishment. We had to do
18 something to keep them occupied, like weed a garden, put
19 some plants in. We'd have a barbecue, put on watermelon,
20 you know what I mean. We will go and clean the streets or
21 clean the cemetery, that wasn't Gestapo stuff, mate. That
22 was keeping them occupied. The town people appreciated our
23 kids and they thought our kids were great. And the kids
24 were great doing it. And they were all happy.

25
26 No-one had to do it if they didn't want to. They
27 didn't want to go and sit up in their room. Of course we'd
28 say, "stay in your room". We didn't want them to wonder
29 down and help themselves to the kitchen, you know what I
30 mean.

31
32 And some people didn't like it. I've seen where
33 they've kicked up about it since, but that's one percent.
34 We took another 99 through. We must have had some good
35 times.

36
37 Q. So you regard your brother as being good for the
38 hostel and good for the community?

39 A. That's what he projected, yes.

40
41 Q. Is that what you thought he was?

42 A. Yes. Apart from that - well, put a percentage on it.

43
44 Q. Might that be a reason why you were prepared to not
45 pursue any matters that you might have pursued further?

46 A. I wouldn't have covered up any more than I said -
47 sitting on his seat, doing that there - I wouldn't have,

1 no. I wouldn't have allowed that to happen for --
2
3 Q. No, I am just talking about those matters that you did
4 observe that we've gone through. Was it the fact that your
5 brother had such a good reputation --
6 A. No, no. I disregard that. No, I'm sorry. I can't
7 accept that. The situation - I would have handled the
8 situation as it was. It didn't get any worse. Whether we
9 were all sitting in a bunker and, you know, no-one doing
10 anything, I didn't see what he'd done to the kids any more
11 serious to complain. And even if he was All Almighty I
12 still would have shot him down in flames, I'm afraid.
13
14 Q. We've heard evidence from a number of boys who have
15 been to the hostel over a number of years, including when
16 you were there, that your brother would just come in and
17 watch them shower?
18 A. Well, I'm afraid to say I'm a culprit of that as well,
19 sir. But I never saw him in there doing it. But don't
20 forget their dorm, there's no privacy for them either,
21 which is a pain in the arse - back of a wardrobe and a bed
22 and a little curtain hanging across. I would have to
23 patrol that as well. I'd be discrete which way I looked.
24 But of course --
25
26 Q. Why did you go in to do that?
27 A. Well, I'm saying from the dormitory when - I'd have to
28 also make sure - it's time to go to school - there's no-one
29 hiding in the showers, no-one hiding in the toilet, not in
30 their wardrobe, just to make sure they're all out. If
31 someone is sick laying in bed you see them. But if you
32 hear the water running "oh, sorry", there's someone still
33 there, you know. Otherwise someone left the tap on.
34 That's the only reason I'd go in there.
35
36 Q. The instances in which your brother would do it, he
37 would just walk in for no reason, or the reason that he had
38 --
39 A. Yeah, I know what you are saying.
40
41 Q. -- wasn't a sufficient one?
42 A. No, well, we all know why, don't we.
43
44 Q. You never heard anything about that?
45 A. No-one came and told me. What are you going to say,
46 "Dennis is just looking at me in the shower"? No-one told
47 me that.

1
2 Q. Had you been aware --
3 A. I'm sure they must have said - if I can't remember
4 they can. I would have walked in on one of these boys
5 here.
6
7 Q. Had you been aware that he was doing that regularly?
8 A. No, I wasn't aware of it.
9
10 Q. What would you have done, though, if you had become
11 aware of it?
12 A. Jeez, I would have probably tried to make a suggestion
13 to him "let's change our scenario, our system. We can't be
14 doing this all the time", you know what I mean. Is there a
15 buzzer system we say "right taps off"? (Indicating) Do you
16 know what I mean?
17
18 Q. He would have said to you, I gather, if that was the
19 case, "No, that's not necessary, Wayne"?
20 A. He may have even come along on board sometimes. He
21 would say, "Let's flick the switch twice" or something, you
22 know. He may have come on board a couple of occasions.
23 Going to bed the same thing, turn it off. Got a warning.
24 Off you go.
25
26 Q. Would you except there would be no excuse for him to
27 take photographs of boys in the shower?
28 A. That's a definite no no.
29
30 Q. So am I right then in saying that no boy in all the
31 time that you were there ever complained or ever confided
32 in you about Dennis McKenna behaviour?
33 A. No.
34
35 Q. At all?
36 A. No.
37
38 Q. Not once?
39 A. No, no.
40
41 Q. I think you have already conceded though that there
42 may be a very good reason why a student, if they had a
43 legitimate concern, whether they would be a little bit
44 embarrassed or worried about approaching you about that?
45 A. Oh, yeah. Well, that's right. That's right. And I
46 apologise to them. I said to me other brother once, I'd
47 meet him in the street and shake their hand, you know.

1 Like I said at the start of this Inquiry, 12 to 14-year-old
2 kids, they don't know the protocol. What are they going to
3 do? Who are they going to see, you know? It is
4 embarrassing to go to your mum or dad or a brother - even a
5 sister. Or are you going to ring your sister?
6

7 My 25-year-old boys and girls at the moment may ring
8 each other up occasionally, and I don't think they discuss
9 relationships with their husband and wife either, you know
10 what I mean, or even their social life. They just talk
11 "How's things going? How's the grand kids? Heard from mum
12 and dad? Yeah, they're coming for a barbecue on Sunday".
13

14 Q. Were you aware of a practice that your brother,
15 Dennis, insisted upon that letters that were to be written
16 by the students of the hostel when they were placed in
17 envelopes were not to be sealed?

18 A. You know what, you are asking me to drag a lot out. I
19 don't know if I've kept it all in there, mate. I really
20 want to help everybody out here and be as honest as I can.
21 To be honest as I can, I don't know - there's a little tiny
22 per cent of me probably saying I remember envelopes not
23 being sealed at one stage, but I don't know why. But I do
24 remember him opening up some envelopes as well, and I don't
25 know why.
26

27 Q. Envelopes that weren't addressed to him?

28 A. That's right.
29

30 Q. So you remember him doing that?

31 A. Yes. And I don't know why. I'll just say the student
32 Robyn McKenna here, "Ah, she is a troublemaker and this
33 comes from Bremer Bay. It looks like Dougie Jones. You
34 know, I'll rip it open. See what she is saying, because
35 she spent the weekend down at Bremer Bay".
36

37 Q. Well, your brother had a phobia about Bremer Bay,
38 didn't he?

39 A. You say that as if I've hit the nail on the head.
40

41 Q. So you recall instances where he would do that?

42 A. Yes, yeah. And I don't know what the situation was,
43 how to explain to the kid that the letter got opened, you
44 know what I mean? Whether they even got passed that letter
45 or it went in the bin, I don't know.
46

47 Q. Mr McKenna, there would be no explanation?

1 A. No, I know.
2
3 Q. Plausible explanation for him to do that?
4 A. No, no. That's right.
5
6 Q. That's a serious breach of a student's privacy?
7 A. That's right. Yeah.
8
9 Q. Do you know the question I am going to ask you: What
10 did you do about that?
11 A. And here I am again, I naturally realised I may have
12 over-counteracted. I'm not embarrassed by anything I say, but
13 I said I'm pretty sure he may have opened a letter. I'm
14 not saying who it was to. I don't know who it was to. And
15 unless I can remember who it was to, I don't know how I
16 would have handled it.
17
18 Q. It doesn't matter who it was to if it is not addressed
19 to him.
20 A. Hm. Well, naturally I would have said, "That's not
21 right. What are you doing?" He's told me he's got grounds
22 to do it, he's the warden. "Anything comes through here is
23 up to me. I can do what I want". I said, "Well, you know,
24 I know that girl isn't going to take it too happy. What if
25 she goes and tells her mum or dad? Well, that balls up
26 what you had with mum and dad". This is the scenario that
27 probably would have come about.
28
29 Q. Do you have a recollection of that occurring on --
30 A. Yeah, a conversation along those lines; yes. It is
31 hard to recall when I want to snap after 28 years, you know
32 what I am saying.
33
34 Q. Mr McKenna, that behaviour is entirely inappropriate?
35 A. Yep.
36
37 Q. I can't help thinking you state that you would speak
38 your mind --
39 A. Yes.
40
41 Q. -- and say something if it needed to be said.
42 A. That's right.
43
44 Q. This would be a clear example, would it not, that
45 would require informing the board about?
46 A. You are really looking for something, aren't you.
47

1 Q. That's the purpose of an Inquiry, Mr McKenna.
2 A. That's right. But I don't know why I'm on the stand.
3 No-one - you know what, this Inquiry is to see who someone
4 had spoken to. And no-one had spoken to me, and I didn't
5 see anything. All this other stuff, I'm afraid I'm trying
6 to help you out but I can't think of anything. I don't
7 know how good the pies were down in the bakery on that day
8 either.
9
10 Q. No. The question of a warden --
11 A. The question is --
12
13 Q. -- opening up somebody else's mail is --
14 A. Yeah, that's right. Anything I've seen I would have
15 spoken to him. But when I said how high are you going to
16 let it go before you snap it or do something, I can't say.
17 But when they are little items like that - call me
18 uneducated, call me what you like - but I didn't see a
19 couple of those occasions warranting. Probably I may have
20 spoken to a chap when I rung him, a board member, when I
21 rung him about something else. I might have thrown a
22 couple of scenarios around, but I can only remember one
23 main one I spoke to him. The other couple of occasions may
24 have been there, I don't know.
25
26 Q. But, you see, Mr McKenna, you seem to be approaching
27 this on the basis "well, this was an isolated incident that
28 wouldn't require taking it further", but what you've told
29 us this morning is of a number of occasions in which the
30 conduct by your brother --
31 A. Yep, inappropriate.
32
33 Q. Yes. It is the snowball effect. The snowball rolling
34 down the hill, it just gets bigger and bigger.
35 A. Yep, yep.
36
37 Q. So now you have given a number of occasions in which
38 you have seen him --
39 A. That's right.
40
41 Q. -- behaving, inappropriate behaviour, and yet --
42 A. I'm admitting I don't know how big I'm supposed to
43 stop that snowball. Is that what you are saying?
44
45 Q. It seems to me that it never reached a point that you
46 can clearly recall --
47 A. No.

1
2 Q. -- where you said, "right" --
3 A. No. Don't forget, when I go ahead and say this is
4 what has been happening and finally I snap, and I saw him
5 open an envelope, he will only tell the board about me
6 finding him opening up an envelope. He wouldn't have
7 brought up all the other situations. Then they would ask
8 him and he would say "That is all bullshit Wayne just
9 said", unless I can prove the envelope, or take the student
10 with me. But that's what I'm saying. He would probably
11 say that last situation is "pssh".
12

13 Q. You would be able to tell the board about the other
14 instances that you had observed?

15 A. Yeah. They wouldn't have believed me.
16

17 Q. You are saying they wouldn't have believed you?

18 A. No.
19

20 Q. They would have believed your brother over you?

21 A. That's right.
22

23 Q. You don't think they would have thought, well, this
24 person's the brother of the warden and that it would be
25 unlikely that he would be making things up or embellishing
26 things about his own brother who had given him his job?

27 A. Mmm-hmm. I don't know what they would think.
28

29 Q. That's probably a question you can't answer.

30 A. Mmm-hmm.
31

32 Q. Do you recall providing a statement to the Inquiry?

33 A. Yep.
34

35 Q. Dated 1 May of this year?

36 A. Mmm-hmm.
37

38 Q. Do you recall stating in that statement at
39 paragraph 11:

40
41 When I was at the hostel as a supervisor I
42 did raise issues with Dennis about a lot of
43 things, but he didn't really like people
44 questioning him or telling him how to run
45 the hostel.
46

47 So you had to be quite careful how you actually raised

1 things with him?
2 A. Yes, that's true.
3
4 Q. That's true?
5 A. Yes. Like I said, you can't stand over him, and he
6 even had trouble talking on the same level, but I liked
7 talking on the same level to everyone; but, no, you had to
8 be careful.
9
10 Q. Okay. You've already alluded to this. I want to ask
11 you now --
12 A. Yes.
13
14 MR URQUHART: -- about - I'm going to try and finish, sir.
15 I don't know whether I can finish by one, but I might be
16 able to finish shortly after that, yes.
17
18 HIS HONOUR: All right. And, Ms Morgan, do you expect to
19 have lengthy cross-examination?
20
21 MS MORGAN: No, I don't, your Honour.
22
23 HIS HONOUR: Right. Well, keep going.
24
25 MR URQUHART: Thank you, sir.
26
27 Q. You've alluded to this previously, about a telephone
28 call you've made to a Board member --
29 A. Yes.
30
31 Q. -- and it's to do with a student?
32 A. Yes.
33
34 Q. And I'm going to ask you now - you're aware of that
35 student's name, aren't you?
36 A. Yes.
37
38 Q. Yes. But for the purposes of my question of you, we
39 are just simply going to refer to him as "S"?
40 A. Yes, yes.
41
42 Q. Okay.
43 A. Yes.
44
45 Q. All right. Now, you are aware, are you not, of some
46 evidence that's been given by Alan Parks who was a Chairman
47 of the Board --

1 A. That's right, yes.
2
3 Q. -- and he had several stints as a Chairman, but at one
4 point he was a Chairman of the Board in around 1982, 1983?
5 A. Yes.
6
7 Q. He's already given evidence - and this starts at
8 page 1436 - to the Inquiry, regarding an occasion when he
9 received a phone call from you late one night --
10 A. Yes.
11
12 Q. -- and he says it was 11 o'clock, and that you rang
13 him and he answered the phone --
14 A. Yes.
15
16 Q. -- and you told him from what he can remember that
17 Dennis, your brother, was picking on a student and he said
18 that the student - this student apparently had a disability
19 of some kind, he wasn't aware whether it was a learning
20 disability, but you said to him that Dennis wasn't treating
21 him as well as he should have been. Okay. And he also
22 says that you never rung him before or since, that was the
23 only occasion, and had never rung him at such a late hour?
24 A. No.
25
26 Q. Now, as I understand it, you do recall an occasion --
27 A. Yes.
28
29 Q. -- where you rang Mr --
30 A. Mr Parks.
31
32 Q. -- Mr Parks?
33 A. Yes, yes.
34
35 Q. And this would seem to be - would you take issue that
36 it seemed to be sometime around 1982/1983?
37 A. Yes, that would be about right.
38
39 Q. That would be about right.
40 A. Yes, yes.
41
42 Q. Okay. What's your recollection of the reason why you
43 called him?
44 A. My recollection was this student, I'm afraid, had bad
45 hygiene. I don't think it was anything to do with the way
46 Dennis handled it. I think he didn't handle it is why I
47 rung; like, when we do dormitory inspections, and I think I

1 might have noticed he had dirty sheets or his jumper was
2 wrinkled, and the next day it was wrinkled, so I opened his
3 wardrobe and all of his clothes were thrown in a big heap,
4 his hygiene was terrible, and - but I noticed and did talk
5 to some other kids. No one's ever seen him in the shower,
6 so I spoke to the kid and got all his clothes taken to the
7 laundry to get them cleaned, and if I didn't go and make
8 sure he was in the shower himself, I'd make sure one of the
9 boys would make sure he was in the shower. That was after
10 four weeks. He didn't have any friends, and I probably
11 wonder why, but I confronted Dennis about the situation, to
12 make sure that when I wasn't on, someone else was around,
13 or, "Can you make sure someone kept an eye on a certain
14 student to make sure he was changing?", he was doing
15 whatever, and protocol, you know, and at least make sure
16 there was going to be someone around, because he didn't
17 have many friends; make sure he was getting included into
18 something, and Dennis wasn't doing that. I wondered why.
19 I even wrote a report home to his parents, as said, "His
20 hygiene was no good", and that all got screwed up, and I
21 got told off, and Dennis rewrote another one and he got a
22 tick, merit, but that's why I spoke to Mr Parkin. I
23 thought it probably 10, 10.30ish.

24

25 Q. I see.

26 A. Dennis may have been off somewhere. I was on duty by
27 myself anyway, so --

28

29 Q. Well, that's, in fact, Mr --

30 A. -- I used the office in the phone.

31

32 Q. That's Mr Parks' recollection as well --

33 A. All right, yes.

34

35 Q. -- that Dennis wasn't there at the hostel?

36 A. He wasn't pushing it through for some reason. He
37 wasn't doing anything, yes.

38

39 Q. All right. Well, Mr Parks says that it wasn't like
40 that, it was that Dennis was picking on this student, and
41 that --

42 A. I don't think he was picking on him, no.

43

44 Q. And that Dennis wasn't treating him as well as he
45 should have been?

46 A. Mr Parks might have got my phone call misinterpreted
47 probably, but that, I would swear, is what happened, and

1 that is that boy's problem, and someone else who is here
2 now probably recalls the same problem --
3

4 Q. What did you --

5 A. -- that his hygiene was no good. And it was four
6 weeks before I found out he wasn't in the shower.
7

8 Q. What did you think Mr Parks could do about it?

9 A. Could at least speak to Dennis, try to - a bit higher
10 Authority. I just happened to throw it up there having a
11 cup of tea, you know, "How are these new boys going?", you
12 know, "Is anyone lagging behind?" They were all doing the
13 laundry system, do you know what I mean, trying to drop a
14 word on it, you know, he could mention it, but I mentioned
15 it bluntly; he had me doing this, all his stuff's on the
16 floor, things underneath his pillowcase.
17

18 Q. Well, did you speak to the boy about it?

19 A. Yes, I did, on the day that I found him there, yes,
20 but I spoke nicely, do you know what I'm saying, I didn't
21 degrade him.
22

23 Q. And --

24 A. I didn't degrade him and --
25

26 Q. -- but, so --

27 A. He told me he'd do the right thing, "If you want to go
28 further with it", he wanted me to - he said yes, he would,
29 and I had to keep questioning him, but I laughed, smiled,
30 "No, you haven't." I said, "You haven't been in the shower
31 because would you believe I went and touched your towel,
32 here's your towel, look, it's still dry." I didn't. I
33 said, "Hey, you didn't wipe it on anything else, don't give
34 me that, come on". I just laughed, "You've got time now,
35 do it now, or I'll do it straight after school".
36

37 Q. And then did you speak to Dennis shortly after that?

38 A. Yes, yes, told him what I was doing.
39

40 Q. And Dennis said?

41 A. "That's your problem, you wanna - I don't think
42 anything's wrong with it, whatever". I don't know why he
43 didn't tell that student off, or point him into line --
44

45 Q. You see --

46 A. -- but that was a troubled little boy, which was - not
47 being rude; but, like I said, if you tell someone off, they

1 just blank off because you're talking on the same level,
2 you'll get somewhere, and that's the way I got along with
3 him, and some of these people probably realised the same
4 thing. I include him on a lot of things. He - when we had
5 little plays, there was him and another kid who I coached
6 them to do that skit, 'My Boomerang won't Come Back', and I
7 think they won an award for it.
8
9 Q. Okay. You see, he's also made allegations --
10 A. Yes.
11
12 Q. -- that your brother, Dennis, sexually interfered with
13 him?
14 A. Has he really.
15
16 Q. Yes.
17 A. Very sad for him. The same for the rest of them, sir.
18
19 Q. And the reason why I'm therefore asking you about this
20 conversation you had --
21 A. Yes.
22
23 Q. -- with Mr Parks, is whether you had noticed something
24 amiss about --
25 A. No, I am sure he was --
26
27 Q. -- the relationship between your brother Dennis and
28 this young boy?
29 A. No, I - I didn't see him leaning towards that boy. He
30 wasn't one of his good - what we said - and I am sure one
31 of his group wouldn't have accepted that kid into his
32 group.
33
34 Q. You see, when Mr Parks says he raised it with your
35 brother --
36 A. Yes.
37
38 Q. -- this is at the bottom of page 1437, sir - he spoke
39 to your brother Dennis next time --
40 A. Yes.
41
42 Q. -- he saw him, and he asked him - I'll see what he
43 said to him.
44 A. And he said - he said, "Who spoke to you?", and Mr
45 Park said, "No one".
46
47 Q. Yes, I'm just - I want to get it, put it in its right

1 context, yes. He asked him how the - he asked your brother
2 Dennis how the lad was going, and he said:
3
4 Has someone been talking?
5
6 And he said:
7
8 No, I'm just curious - just wondering how
9 the boy's going?, and he said, "Oh, he's
10 going fine".
11
12 A. Mm-hmm, and left it at that. That's right.
13
14 Q. Yes.
15 A. But I made sure I kept "S" occupied.
16
17 Q. Okay. Well, I'm going to ask that you just refer to
18 him as "S", if you can, but that's okay. All right. We
19 can fix that.
20 A. "S".
21
22 Q. Yes, okay. Now, you see, your brother immediately
23 went on the defensive, it seems, asking, "Has someone been
24 talking?" --
25 A. Yes.
26
27 Q. -- which might suggest it was something more than just
28 a question about this boy's hygiene?
29 A. Yes, I can see his concern.
30
31 Q. Yes.
32 A. Yes, I think you told me that.
33
34 Q. So it might have been - mightn't it have been the case
35 that you actually raised with Mr Parks a difficulty that
36 you saw between the relationship this boy had with your
37 brother?
38 A. That's right.
39
40 Q. Well, I'm asking you whether it's possible Mr Parks'
41 recollection is correct?
42 A. What they spoke of I wouldn't have a clue, but --
43
44 Q. I'm talking about now what Mr Parks said you said to
45 him - that is, that Dennis, as far as you could see --
46 A. Yes.
47

1 Q. -- was picking on the student and wasn't treating him
2 as well as he should have been.
3 A. I don't see that.
4
5 Q. You never saw that?
6 A. No, I don't see him acting like that at all towards
7 "S" --
8
9 Q. Well, okay.
10 A. I don't see him asking like that at all towards the
11 student because --
12
13 Q. Okay.
14 A. -- he was a lonely boy. The only reason I could see
15 him not doing anything was what you just told me, he is now
16 a victim, and why Mr Parks was - may have got misled, I
17 don't know. He might have with his conversation with
18 Dennis, got a little bit of mine, a little bit of his in
19 there.
20
21 Q. Okay. Are you able to - you might not be able to, but
22 if you can offer some sort of explanation, given the fact
23 that you were his brother, you worked with him for a number
24 of years --
25 A. Yes.
26
27 Q. -- you obviously grew up with him?
28 A. Yes.
29
30 Q. Can you provide any explanation for why it was that he
31 committed this sexual abuse upon the boys that he's been
32 convicted of sexually abusing?
33 A. Well, I think if anyone could wave the magic wand,
34 mate, I think we'd stop a lot of problems in the world, but
35 no one can lead anyone down a path. That's what a parent
36 is there for, to give the kid a little bit of guidance.
37 Some good kids have gone off the rail from good families.
38 So using that as an example, and probably not an excuse,
39 what can you say? I didn't see anything, I've got no
40 excuse. Whether dad playing around, having a fear of
41 shooting through, work being hard, there was no medicals,
42 no dole to help him out, and he did decide to have a truck,
43 someone stole his truck, you know what I mean, there goes
44 his livelihood. Whether it was that, why he decided to go
45 out and have affairs and disappear, whether that's got
46 anything to do with his upbringing and he had to be the
47 older person and guide us all, and I don't mind saying -

1 don't mind saying apart from that, I can say the rest of us
2 brothers turned out all right, your Honour, and my three
3 kids, would you believe, have all got a trade and none of
4 them got a record. You can soon check.
5
6 Q. All right. It might not be the case that all your
7 other brothers have come out --
8 A. Yes, so --
9
10 Q. -- okay.
11 A. Yes. So I'm saying --
12
13 Q. Well, hold on --
14 A. -- where can you point it at, do you know what I mean?
15 I think it's in your genes, the way you're born.
16
17 Q. Wait on, Neil's been convicted as well.
18 A. That's right, but - what are we talking about here?
19 Neil, or what's happened with Dennis.
20
21 Q. No, I was going to ask you where you said that all the
22 other brothers were okay.
23 A. I'm not talking about Neil's case, sir.
24
25 Q. Okay.
26 A. I can plead his innocence, which is, "I win". You can
27 say, "It's not innocent", you win.
28
29 Q. Okay. Leaving aside Dennis's sexual offending --
30 A. Yes, yes.
31
32 Q. -- we also heard a lot of evidence about
33 victimisation --
34 A. Yes.
35
36 Q. -- of bullying and intimidation of students by him.
37 A. Mm-hmm.
38
39 Q. Just that behaviour --
40 A. Yes.
41
42 Q. -- seemed to be extremely cruel. So leaving aside the
43 sexual offending, have you got any explanation as to why he
44 engaged in that?
45 A. No. I suppose I got off the track, I was talking what
46 could you blame it on, but I really think it must be in his
47 genes. That is it. You're born that way. That is it.

1 Same as everyone gets everything genetics from their
2 parents, born with half their legs, whatever, you must be -
3 must be a little bit of female in somewhere, there
4 somewhere; some girls are a bit boyish.
5
6 Q. And finally, Mr McKenna, do you believe that you could
7 have done something to prevent --
8 A. If --
9
10 Q. -- Dennis's sexual offending?
11 A. I would have. I certainly, certainly would have, even
12 if I had to pack him up in a car and take him home and we
13 all lived at their place until he was removed. I would
14 have certainly done something.
15
16 Q. Well, do you believe that what you observed, that you
17 could have done something more?
18 A. What I observed was nothing leading to that situation.
19 I didn't see anything that would have led to something
20 sexual.
21
22 Q. All right.
23 A. Honestly.
24
25 MR URQUHART: Thank you, Mr McKenna, that's all the
26 questions I have for you.
27
28 THE WITNESS: Okay.
29
30 HIS HONOUR: Ms Morgan.
31
32 <CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS MORGAN:
33
34 MS MORGAN: Q. Mr Parks' evidence that we were just
35 discussing, obviously he said, and you agree, you called
36 him late at night because you were concerned --
37 A. Yes.
38
39 Q. -- about essentially a student's hygiene?
40 A. Yes.
41
42 Q. Why was a concern about a student's hygiene more of an
43 issue than the things you were seeing, such as a student
44 sitting on Dennis McKenna's lap?
45 A. Yes, I know what you mean, yes, yes. Possibly because
46 if you want to look at the hygiene situation, it was four
47 weeks, and if it came to someone sitting on his lap, I

1 think I would have noticed how long before it looked like
2 that person is showing me - what's the word -
3 embarrassment, or whether they were over it, whatever way
4 you want to mention it - do you know what I mean? It may
5 have only been five minutes. I don't think it was anything
6 more than where you would say the deadline was one day, you
7 know, would the kid take it humourlessly; so, I mean,
8 there's no reason to push it. If the kid's running down
9 the road screaming - you know what I'm saying - that's when
10 you - you must do something then, isn't it? So where do I
11 draw the line? How long is this kid going - you know, it's
12 hard. I know what you're getting at, but there were other
13 students, there was eight there, he wasn't in there with
14 the door locked, you know, by himself with the lights out.
15 Do you know what I mean? That's where you show concern.
16 If someone wants to come and sit on my lap now, that's
17 fine, you know.

18

19 Q. Was the phone call important enough to be made at half
20 past 10 in the evening?

21 A. That's right, that situation.

22

23 HIS HONOUR: 11 o'clock.

24

25 MS MORGAN: Q. 11 o'clock --

26 A. Yes, yes.

27

28 Q. -- sorry, in the evening.

29 A. That's right, yes, yes.

30

31 Q. Just to do with his hygiene?

32 A. That's right.

33

34 Q. There was no concerns about anything else at all in
35 that phone call?

36 A. I'm very sure - I'm very sure that's what I would have
37 brought up, unless he said, "Look, is there anything else
38 that's not going right there". I could have said something
39 like - well - like, "He did open someone's letter the other
40 day, but I don't recall that" - do you know what I'm
41 saying? And even so, "Well, look - well, I'll speak to
42 him." I may have done something along those lines because
43 I don't decide to speak up until it really come to bang,
44 bang, you know, so there may have been something else. I
45 don't say we neglected anything, but Mr Parks would have
46 possibly also just said, "Oh, Dennis, did you happen to
47 open someone's letter the other day?", "No, that was, that

1 was nothing", "Who told you that?" That's probably why he
2 blabbed out and said, "What have you heard?", because there
3 may have been a little bit more than the kid's hygiene, all
4 right. That's all I can say, sorry, but basically I didn't
5 touch anyone. As far as I'm concerned, I don't know if he
6 touched anyone. And you can't blame a kid for not speaking
7 to him. That's all I can work out in a nutshell.

8
9 MS MORGAN: Okay. Thank you.

10
11 HIS HONOUR: Is there anything else from you, Mr Urquhart?

12
13 THE WITNESS: Don't forget, sorry, I'd like to add --

14
15 <RE-EXAMINATION BY MR URQUHART

16
17 MR URQUHART: Q. Mr Parks was never saying it was
18 anything to do with opening letters?

19 A. No, no, that's right.

20
21 Q. He's saying it was. You were complaining about --

22 A. The hygiene.

23
24 Q. Making - no --

25 A. Yes.

26
27 Q. -- making the observation about your brother's
28 treatment of this boy?

29 A. Yes, no. No, definitely didn't, definitely didn't.
30 What - what's the treatment of this boy is Mr Parks'
31 thinks - I thought, "No, I can't see him there at all. I
32 can't see him there at all."

33
34 Q. All right. Okay.

35 A. He said - I'm not being rude, but we've said before
36 the certain group that hang around the brother, that boy
37 wasn't one of those that would hang around.

38
39 Q. Mr McKenna, but do you see there's two completely
40 different matters? One involves your brother's treatment
41 of a particular student --

42 A. Yes, yes.

43
44 Q. -- and you ringing up about this student's hygiene?

45 A. What I think of it, yes, yes. What I see.

46
47 Q. That they're two completely different subjects --

1 A. Yes.
2
3 Q. -- aren't they?
4 A. Yes, they are. That's right. I know, there's --
5
6 Q. There's little room for --
7 A. It's like winning Lotto really, isn't it?
8
9 Q. There's little room for a confusion between those
10 two --
11 A. I know.
12
13 Q. -- events.
14 A. That's right. I can see why, you know --
15
16 Q. But you're saying --
17 A. You know what, I would look at it and say, "Why would
18 Mr McKenna bring it up if he's going to get himself in the
19 shit?"
20
21 Q. Sorry, who was going to bring what up?
22 A. Me. Why did I bring it up about speaking to someone?
23
24 Q. Because you were concerned --
25 A. If I hadn't of spoke to someone, I rang a person -
26 that's who I told you about.
27
28 Q. Let me finish. You were concerned about your
29 brother's treatment --
30 A. Yes.
31
32 Q. -- of this student?
33 A. Yes. Or the lack of treatment, not supervised, keep
34 an eye on it. Nothing sexual.
35
36 Q. Well, this is a student who now has made --
37 A. Now you've told you --
38
39 Q. -- allegations --
40 A. -- today, sir.
41
42 Q. -- that your brother sexually interfered with him.
43 A. I just - now you've told me, that's fine, but I can't
44 see any link. He's not one of the followers, he's not one
45 of the favourites. It's just a shot in the dark.
46
47 HIS HONOUR: Q. Why did you ring at 11 o'clock at night?

1 It's a very strange time to ring.
2 A. Probably been on my mind for a couple of days to do
3 it, your Honour; but, like I said, Dennis - I was left
4 alone on duty, there was no time, or any other time that I
5 could ring it. There was another staff member who could
6 do me in for being in the office, ringing someone - do you
7 know what I mean?
8
9 Q. You think that's because your brother was away at that
10 time?
11 A. That's right. He'd gone to Perth. He'd gone to do
12 something, and everyone's gone. I'm there to lock up, "Oh,
13 good" I probably even rung mum and dad as well at that time
14 of night - do you know what I mean?
15
16 Q. All right. Now, is there anything else you want to
17 add that hasn't been discovered by questions?
18 A. I would just like to say I'm - personally, I'm very,
19 very, honestly sorry for those people. I can see why they
20 didn't come to me, but I thought I was approachable. I
21 don't think they could probably tell you that I probably
22 yelled at any of them. We had some great times, which I
23 don't like a bit of slander by certain couple on there, and
24 all accusations, but they'd like to know there was some
25 great kids who had some great times, but I don't think
26 you'd put the McKennas there, I'm sorry, in the whole
27 umbrella because Robert and I were the only two there for a
28 long time. He would have left at the end of '84. Then
29 Wendy came along. It's not as if the kitchenhand, the
30 cook, the cleaner, everyone was a McKenna - they weren't.
31 There's five more staff there. And you could ask them what
32 does the rest of the McKennas do, if you want them to? I
33 am sure they can back up my story, my character.
34
35 Q. Very well. Well, that completes your evidence, is
36 that all you want to say?
37 A. (No audible answer).
38
39 HIS HONOUR: Very well, that completes your evidence.
40 You're free to go.
41
42 <THE WITNESS WITHDREW
43
44 HIS HONOUR: And we'll now adjourn until 2.15.
45
46 MR URQUHART: Thank you, sir.
47

1 **LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT**
2
3 **UPON RESUMPTION:**
4
5 HIS HONOUR: Please be seated. Ms Chong, you appear.
6
7 MS CHONG: Yes, I do, your Honour. I seek leave to appear
8 on behalf of Ms Wendy McKenna.
9
10 HIS HONOUR: Very good. Thank you. Yes, Mr Urquhart?
11
12 MR URQUHART: We will call now the aforementioned person,
13 Wendy McKenna.
14
15 <WENDY MCKENNA, sworn:
16
17 <EXAMINATION-IN-CHIEF BY MR URQUHART:
18
19 MR URQUHART: Q. Mrs McKenna, do you have a middle name?
20 A. No.
21
22 Q. So it is just Wendy McKenna. I need to ask you how
23 old you are for the purposes of figuring out what age you
24 were when certain events happened some time ago, so can I
25 ask you that?
26 A. Yeah. I'm currently 50.
27
28 Q. You reside in the Perth metropolitan area?
29 A. Yes.
30
31 Q. You are married to Neil McKenna?
32 A. That's correct.
33
34 Q. When did you both get married?
35 A. In 1982.
36
37 Q. Do you have any children?
38 A. Yes, I have three daughters.
39
40 Q. Just the years that they were born, can you tell us?
41 A. 1989, 1991 and 1996.
42
43 Q. I understand that you were a student who attended
44 Katanning Senior High School and you also resided at the
45 hostel?
46 A. Yeah.
47

1 Q. For your five years at high school; is that right?
2 A. Yes, that's right.
3
4 Q. Am I right in saying that was from 1975 through to
5 1979?
6 A. That's correct.
7
8 Q. When you first started there was your
9 brother-in-law-to-be, Dennis McKenna, the warden or was
10 there somebody else?
11 A. No, there was somebody else.
12
13 Q. Can you recall who that was?
14 A. Mr Percival was his name.
15
16 Q. Is it your recollection that he subsequently left
17 during the course of that year?
18 A. At the end of the year, from what I remember, yes.
19
20 Q. If you can take your mind back, do you recall Dennis
21 McKenna becoming what was referred to back then as a house
22 master for the boys' dormitory?
23 A. Yes.
24
25 Q. Can you recall what year it was that you met your
26 husband?
27 A. I first met him in about 1976, yep, towards the end of
28 1976.
29
30 Q. That's when you were in year 9; is that right?
31 A. That's right, yep.
32
33 Q. How did it come about that you met him then?
34 A. We went on a camp and we went to his parents' place.
35 There was only a small group of students, and he was there.
36
37 Q. The camp that you went on, who organised that?
38 A. That was organised by Dennis.
39
40 Q. So he took a number of students, did he, to a camp?
41 A. Yes.
42
43 Q. What, you stayed at his parents' house?
44 A. I don't remember staying there. I just remember
45 visiting.
46
47 Q. How many of the students were there?

1 A. Oh, there might have been around 10.
2
3 Q. That's where you met Neil for the first time?
4 A. That was when I just was introduced to him.
5
6 Q. How much older is Neil you to?
7 A. About three-and-a-half years.
8
9 Q. Do you recall the next time you met him?
10 A. It was at the - would have been towards the end of
11 1977.
12
13 Q. Towards the end of 1977, so again that's when you were
14 in year 10?
15 A. Yes.
16
17 Q. What was the context that you met him on that
18 occasion?
19 A. It was the Christmas school holidays.
20
21 Q. Again, do you recall where you met him?
22 A. Basketball game.
23
24 Q. Did you subsequently have a relationship with Neil?
25 A. I did. That's when I started going out with him.
26
27 Q. That was then?
28 A. Yes.
29
30 Q. That was end of year 10?
31 A. Yes.
32
33 Q. When you finished school did you go off and do any
34 study?
35 A. I did. I did Mothercraft Nursing Course in south
36 Perth.
37
38 Q. And did you then subsequently return to the hostel
39 where you got a position?
40 A. I did, yeah.
41
42 Q. And can you recall what year that was?
43 A. It was the start of the school year in 1982. It was
44 just after we got married.
45
46 Q. I was just going to ask you that. It was after you
47 got married?

1 A. Yes.
2
3 Q. Before I talk to you about that stage in your life,
4 can I ask you about your times as a student there at the
5 hostel from 1975 through to 1979. Can you give us an
6 indication, please, of your recollection of Dennis McKenna
7 as the warden, right? So once he took the position over as
8 warden, which we understand was some time in 1976?
9 A. Hm. My first year of high school I didn't like it at
10 all. I was very home sick and I used to go home every
11 weekend. You know, there was nothing organised at the
12 hostel. The staff wouldn't spend time with you. And then
13 after Dennis took over, you know, there was activities
14 started to be arranged and different - you know, the
15 atmosphere was a little bit different. The staff would,
16 you know, communicate with you a bit more. I did find that
17 easier to stay there.
18
19 Q. So there was an improvement, as far as you were
20 concerned?
21 A. Yeah.
22
23 Q. Did you notice any problems that existed within the
24 hostel? For example, with respect to discipline, what did
25 you find about the discipline?
26 A. Well, it sort of didn't suddenly change. You know,
27 probably as the numbers increased it, you know, it did
28 become quite strict, yep.
29
30 Q. Who introduced those strict measures?
31 A. Oh, I guess it would have been Dennis.
32
33 Q. You started work there just after you got married?
34 A. Yep.
35
36 Q. Start of the first term of that year 1982. By that
37 stage that was the year you would have turned 20; is that
38 right?
39 A. That's right.
40
41 Q. What was your job there?
42 A. Female supervisor.
43
44 Q. Can you recall whether you were replacing someone?
45 A. Not really, no.
46
47 Q. Were you interviewed for that position?

1 A. No, I wasn't.
2
3 Q. How did it come about then that you got the job as a
4 female supervisor?
5 A. Dennis said there was a position there available.
6 Once I finished my study with the nursing I didn't have a
7 job, so I knew that there was a position being available -
8 coming up, so he offered it to me.
9
10 Q. Were you living in Katanning at the time?
11 A. No. We were in Perth.
12
13 Q. You were in Perth?
14 A. Yeah.
15
16 Q. What about your husband Neil, was he also offered a
17 job at that stage?
18 A. No.
19
20 Q. What was he doing, can you recall?
21 A. He was working as a truck driver for a company in
22 Fremantle.
23
24 Q. He obviously followed you to Katanning to live, did
25 he?
26 A. Yes.
27
28 Q. When you got there in February of 1982 were there any
29 other relatives of Dennis' working there?
30 A. Yes, there was Wayne and Robyn McKenna.
31
32 Q. Obviously you had met them before?
33 A. Yes.
34
35 Q. Whereabouts did you live? Did you live on the hostel
36 grounds?
37 A. We did. When we first moved there we lived in the
38 house.
39
40 Q. Is that what has been described as the "warden's
41 house"?
42 A. Yes.
43
44 Q. How long were you there for?
45 A. Then we moved - probably only about 12 months or so -
46 then we moved over to a flat. We did a swap with Wayne and
47 Robyn so --

1
2 Q. Is there any reason for that swap?
3 A. They had just had their second child.
4
5 Q. You hadn't had any children at this stage?
6 A. No.
7
8 Q. Was that flat part of the female dormitory area?
9 A. It was, yes.
10
11 Q. So the swap took place. What was your husband Neil
12 doing at this time?
13 A. He was working - he got a job on the Broomehill Shire,
14 so he was working - travelling in and out from Katanning to
15 Broomehill.
16
17 Q. Do you know whether his brother Dennis assisted him in
18 getting that job?
19 A. Not as far as I know, no.
20
21 Q. Now, you mentioned you didn't have an interview when
22 you took over the position. Did you do any training?
23 A. Not specifically, no.
24
25 Q. Were you provided with any guidelines, a handbook,
26 anything of that nature?
27 A. Not that I remember, no.
28
29 Q. How did you learn what to do?
30 A. It was basically - you were just there for the
31 children, trying to - I knew the surroundings from being a
32 student. I knew what was entailed in the job. It was a
33 home away from home for them. So we had to make them feel
34 comfortable. Supervise their studies. It was all -
35 because I had been there, lived there for five years, I
36 roughly knew what was expected.
37
38 Q. At some stage did Neil become a member of the hostel
39 staff?
40 A. Yes, he did.
41
42 Q. Do you recall when that was?
43 A. Towards the end of 1985.
44
45 Q. How did that come about?
46 A. I don't exactly recall. I think Dennis just asked him
47 whether he wanted to work there.

1
2 Q. Had he still been working in the same job that he had
3 had?
4 A. Yes.
5
6 Q. At Broomehill?
7 A. Yes.
8
9 Q. Again, do you know whether Neil had an interview
10 process or anything like that?
11 A. Not that I remember, no. I don't know.
12
13 Q. Were there any other applicants for his position?
14 A. I don't know.
15
16 Q. What job did he then begin at?
17 A. He was the male supervisor.
18
19 Q. Had he replaced anyone?
20 A. I don't really remember.
21
22 Q. By this stage was Robyn and Wayne still working there?
23 A. No. No.
24
25 Q. Again, did Neil have any background or qualifications
26 in this area?
27 A. No. You didn't need to have qualifications for the
28 job.
29
30 Q. You didn't think you needed anything?
31 A. No.
32
33 Q. It was that straightforward?
34 A. Well, no-one that I - the other staff, I'm aware none
35 of us had qualifications.
36
37 Q. Wasn't, in the time that you were there, the major
38 positions held at the hostel, that is the supervisory
39 positions, were pretty much held by members of the McKenna
40 family?
41 A. There were - yeah, members of the McKenna family that
42 held positions there. There was also outside people that
43 held the same positions.
44
45 Q. Were they generally ex-students?
46 A. No. There was independent ladies. One that used to
47 supervise at night time. She was also a cleaner, so she

1 would come in during the day and then supervise at night.

2

3 Q. You can recall her name?

4 A. Yeah. It was Judy Zilm.

5

6 Q. She had a connection to the hostel in that her
7 children - at least one child of hers had stayed in the
8 hostel?

9 A. No. They lived in town. They all went to the high
10 school.

11

12 Q. During the time that you were there - I will just ask
13 you this, how long do you recall working there for?

14 A. From when I got the job?

15

16 Q. Yes.

17 A. I worked seven years full-time until I had reached my
18 long service. That was around the same time as I had my
19 first child, so I took the three months long service when I
20 had her.

21

22 Q. That's 1989?

23 A. Yes.

24

25 Q. You went back to work after that?

26 A. I went back as part-time.

27

28 Q. Part-time supervisor?

29 A. Yes.

30

31 Q. Was that until about January of 1992; does that sound
32 right, the year after the birth of your second child?

33 A. Yes.

34

35 Q. Does that sound about right?

36 A. Yep.

37

38 Q. Your husband Neil, did he also stay working at the
39 hostel from 1985 through until about the same time?

40 A. Yes.

41

42 Q. During that time can you recall what other members of
43 the McKennas worked there?

44 A. After Wayne and Robyn left I don't recall any other
45 McKennas working as supervisors.

46

47 Q. No, but just as positions there?

1 A. Christine McKenna was there. I can't quite remember
2 the exact years. She did work in the laundry, I think.
3
4 Q. Didn't she also have a position as a part-time
5 supervisor after that?
6 A. She did work as a supervisor. I think she may have
7 been there before I started, I just can't remember the
8 years.
9
10 Q. That is okay. Was she married to Graham McKenna?
11 A. Graham, yep.
12
13 Q. Can you recall where they lived?
14 A. Well in Broomehill, yeah.
15
16 Q. Did Graham have any jobs at the hostel that you can
17 recall?
18 A. No.
19
20 Q. Not at all?
21 A. Not that I remember.
22
23 Q. Didn't drive the bus from time to time?
24 A. He may have driven the bus, but I never remember him
25 being employed at the hostel.
26
27 Q. Another McKenna, Gunda?
28 A. Oh, Gunda.
29
30 Q. Yes?
31 A. She worked at Reidy House.
32
33 Q. Was she there the same time you were there?
34 A. Yes.
35
36 Q. Would you agree with me that at one stage there whilst
37 you were working, this is including Dennis, there were no
38 less than five McKennas on the hostel staff?
39 A. At the same time?
40
41 Q. Yes, at the same time?
42 A. I don't remember it being that many.
43
44 Q. Yourself, your husband, Dennis?
45 A. And Gunda.
46
47 Q. Gunda, yes, she was there from January 1988 to

1 December 1990; sound about right?
2 A. Yes. Yep.
3
4 Q. Then Christine during that time also worked there
5 from --
6 A. Oh, yeah, was that when she was in the laundry?
7
8 Q. Started in the laundry in November of 1985, does that
9 sound about right?
10 A. Yep.
11
12 Q. A couple of months after Neil began working?
13 A. Yep. Sorry, I can't remember what all the years and
14 who was there.
15
16 Q. That is fine. I understand that. She worked until
17 May of 1989. And do you recall a time where she left for a
18 few months?
19 A. I think so. Vague memory.
20
21 Q. And then she returned again. So there was a point
22 there in 1990 and 1991, at least part of 1991 - during 1990
23 there would be occasion where there would be five of you
24 there?
25 A. I guess there must have been, yeah.
26
27 Q. Did you ever think that arrangement was a little
28 unusual?
29 A. Not at the time, no.
30
31 Q. No?
32 A. No.
33
34 Q. Not at all there were that many McKennas?
35 A. Not really. Before, you know, before I started there
36 they were all a reasonably close family, yeah. So I didn't
37 - I honestly didn't think it was that unusual.
38
39 Q. They might be a close family, but close families don't
40 necessarily all work together.
41 A. No, that's correct. There may have been a few issues
42 from time to time but - yeah.
43
44 Q. Are you aware whether your employment was ever
45 approved by anybody other than Dennis McKenna?
46 A. Well, I assumed it would have all been run up against
47 the board, and they would have agreed on it so - yeah. I

1 wasn't - I didn't know what the process was for employment.
2
3 Q. Can I ask you what you observed of the relationship
4 between your husband and his older brother, Dennis? This
5 is during the time when they were working together at the
6 hostel.
7 A. Well, they used to get along. It was - you know,
8 sometimes the normal - brothers, you know, they might have
9 disagreements about something, but most of the time they
10 got on quite well.
11
12 Q. Mrs McKenna, have you been following the evidence that
13 has been given at this Inquiry since February this year?
14 A. No.
15
16 Q. Have you been --
17 A. I haven't been reading anything because there's so
18 much rubbish getting put out there.
19
20 Q. Sorry, "there's been" --
21 A. There's been a lot of rubbish put in the media so I've
22 just refrained from it. It's been a difficult time so --
23
24 Q. Certainly, I can appreciate it. Are you saying that
25 you started to read about the Inquiry --
26 A. I haven't actually read any of the Inquiry, no.
27
28 Q. When you say "there is a lot of rubbish out there" --
29 A. It's just what has been put out in the papers.
30
31 Q. Regarding the evidence that has been adduced at this
32 Inquiry?
33 A. Oh, just in regard to everything; court cases and
34 trials, yep.
35
36 Q. In that case I might need to refer to some of the
37 evidence that has been given at the Inquiry. I gather you
38 would be aware that a number of ex-students have given
39 evidence?
40 A. Oh, yes, yes.
41
42 Q. You are aware of that?
43 A. Yes.
44
45 Q. Are you aware of what they are saying regarding the
46 behaviour of your brother-in-law Dennis?
47 A. I'm aware of all that, yes, sorry. I just hadn't been

1 following word-by-word the Inquiry, yep.
2
3 Q. We have heard from a number of witnesses, ex-students
4 who give accounts of what they saw Dennis do. This would
5 be the time when you were at the hostel working and,
6 indeed, it would seem when you were a student there. For
7 the moment I will just concentrate when you were working
8 there as a supervisor. Before I do that, I would ask you
9 this: Did you ever see Dennis McKenna do anything that
10 would cause you concern?
11 A. No, I didn't.
12
13 Q. I'm not just talking about any evidence of sexual
14 impropriety, but any behaviour of his?
15 A. As in? Such as?
16
17 Q. Such as bullying of students?
18 A. I don't know - well, I don't know if it was like
19 bullying. He - you know, sometimes would be sarcastic, you
20 know, to different people. But I don't remember, you know,
21 constant bullying or anything like that.
22
23 Q. Demeaning students?
24 A. Possibly, yeah.
25
26 Q. Publicly ridiculing them?
27 A. What, in front of everyone?
28
29 Q. Yes.
30 A. Yeah, there may have been occasions when that did
31 happen.
32
33 Q. Making comments over the PA system designed to
34 humiliate a student?
35 A. I can't remember anything specifically, yeah.
36
37 Q. But just generally?
38 A. There may have been occasions, yeah.
39
40 Q. I'll ask you about those then. What sort of occasions
41 would fit under those categories that I have mentioned to
42 you?
43 A. Well, as I said, I can't remember anything in specific
44 about, you know, what might have been said or over the PA
45 or anything.
46
47 Q. I gather you've got some general recollection where

1 he'd use the PA system to humiliate a student?
2 A. I honestly can't remember anything - to put words into
3 it, I can't remember anything that he may have said.
4
5 Q. Do you recall occasions in the dining room where, in
6 your presence, a student would be called out and then be
7 made the subject of ridicule in front of the other
8 students?
9 A. Well, yeah, I do have a - I don't remember what it
10 might have been about, but I do remember people, you know,
11 being put out the front. But I can't tell you what it
12 might have been about. I can't remember.
13
14 Q. On any of these occasions where you have a general
15 recollection, without recalling specifically, can you
16 recall your reaction when you either saw these things or
17 heard these things?
18 A. At times it would have made me feel uneasy. You know,
19 I don't - I'm not in favour of that type of behaviour so,
20 yeah, there would have been times when I might have been a
21 little bit uncomfortable.
22
23 Q. Can I ask you what you did as a result of that, if you
24 did anything?
25 A. Well, I don't remember doing anything. We - you know,
26 it was fairly strict, and we sort of just tried to abide by
27 the rules that were set down for us to follow.
28
29 Q. The rules set down by Dennis?
30 A. By Dennis, yes.
31
32 Q. Did you think that some of those rules at times were a
33 little harsh?
34 A. Some of them were a little harsh at times.
35
36 Q. Some of the rules, indeed, unnecessary?
37 A. Depends how you class "unnecessary", because when you
38 are dealing with a large group of - a large number of
39 people who come from all walks of life you do have to have
40 certain rules and regulations. Some may not - you know,
41 some people may not like some rules but - and, yeah, it was
42 just something we had to follow. May not have agreed with
43 all of them, but we had to uphold the rules.
44
45 Q. I can understand why the students might have to, but
46 do you say that extended to staff members there?
47 A. No. Oh, I don't know what you're trying to, like, get

1 across. I don't understand.
2
3 Q. Okay. Well, I am just asking --
4 A. I did feel - sometimes I did feel uncomfortable with
5 kids being - you know, if they were put out in the front
6 or, you know, then harshly spoken to by Dennis. But a lot
7 of the times we didn't get the full story of why, you know,
8 that was happening, so we just had to try to, you know,
9 reason - well, support the whole system.
10
11 Q. Well, support Dennis?
12 A. No. I'm not saying I supported him, but we had a job
13 to do and that's what we had to do.
14
15 Q. Did you try and find out what the full story was on
16 any of these occasions?
17 A. Who with?
18
19 Q. With anyone; with the student who was being
20 humiliated?
21 A. I can't pinpoint any particular issue, it was such a
22 long time ago. I can't pinpoint. I am just vaguely
23 remembering there were times when students might have been
24 put up in front of people and he might have been saying,
25 you know, they did this wrong or something. That's the
26 vague memory that I have. I can't pinpoint anything in
27 particular.
28
29 Q. Do you have a vague memory of getting other students
30 to ridicule this targeted student in front of the others?
31 A. Not really, no.
32
33 Q. Not by the prefects?
34 A. Not that I know of.
35
36 Q. Am I right in saying you can't recall any occasion in
37 which you were concerned about what was happening that you
38 actually did something?
39 A. I might have gone up and spoken to him and tried to
40 find out what was going on. But as I said, I can't
41 remember - recall any specific moment. I just have a vague
42 memory of some kids being, you know, put up in front of the
43 students.
44
45 Q. Was he a man who would readily appreciate a difference
46 of an opinion that was presented to him?
47 A. Not particularly.

1
2 Q. Well, I am going to say not at all, would be that fair
3 to say?
4 A. Well I guess so, yes.
5
6 Q. Would that be a reason why you might have been
7 reluctant to come forward on any of these occasions where
8 you had some concern?
9 A. Yeah, there was probably times when I didn't want to -
10 you know, that I was reluctant to go forward. But, you
11 know, I did try and find out what - I've been trying to
12 find out, you know, why the reason that he may be
13 ridiculing that student or whether it was particularly
14 because they did something wrong. But, yeah, as I said, I
15 don't recall a specific issue.
16
17 Q. You can't remember --
18 A. Like what situation you might be referring to.
19
20 Q. I am just referring to the situation --
21 A. In general.
22
23 Q. -- in which you personally had some concern about your
24 brother-in-law's behaviour?
25 A. Well, yeah, as I said, I felt uneasy. And I felt
26 uncomfortable. I don't like anyone being ridiculed or
27 being treated badly. It's not my nature.
28
29 Q. In your position as a supervisor did you not feel it
30 was part of your job to find out if the student, for
31 example, was okay, all right?
32 A. Well, I might have done that. That's what I said; you
33 know, I'm - I regard myself as a fairly caring person, very
34 caring person, and I don't like seeing people upset or
35 getting harshly treated.
36
37 Q. Well, you see, Mrs McKenna, we've heard repeated
38 accounts of your brother-in-law deliberately humiliating
39 students in front of others, victimising them, ostracising
40 them, and behaving basically in quite a deplorable way that
41 would be a behaviour totally inappropriate for a warden?
42 A. I can understand that, yes.
43
44 Q. So when we have heard these accounts, you wouldn't
45 necessarily disagree with them?
46 A. No, because I know there were times like that, but I -
47 I can't - wouldn't be able to tell you about a specific

1 situation.
2
3 Q. And we've also heard from these students that they
4 felt they had no one to go to so far as the hostel staff
5 were concerned, because everywhere they turned there was a
6 McKenna?
7 A. That does sound like a generalised comment. There
8 were other people that they could have gone to.
9
10 Q. Like?
11 A. There was - I'm not sure what years you're talking
12 about, but there were a number of other staff independent
13 of the McKenna family that worked there. There were
14 kitchenhands. There was a cook who, like, a lot of them,
15 had a very good relationship with a lot of the kids. As
16 staff I felt we had a good relationship with a lot of the
17 kids.
18
19 Q. But in the pecking order, cooks and kitchenhands are
20 towards the bottom - no disrespect to them - but when
21 you've got the warden, and then you've got the supervisors
22 below - haven't you?
23 A. Yes, you do.
24
25 Q. And in the ordinary course of events, if a student was
26 to have a concern with the behaviour by a warden, they
27 would speak to the person who was directly responsible for
28 their care - that is, the supervisor.
29 A. That's right.
30
31 Q. Would you agree with that?
32 A. Yes, it would be, I guess, yes.
33
34 Q. Okay. So looking at the situation that existed when
35 you were there - you supervised the girls, and your husband
36 supervised the boys; is that right?
37 A. Yes.
38
39 Q. So you can see the problem there. If a student wanted
40 to confide or make a complaint to someone, it was going to
41 be potentially difficult for them to report that matter to
42 a relative --
43 A. I can - yes.
44
45 Q. -- of the person they want to complain about?
46 A. I can definitely see how that looks, looking at it
47 now, looking back; but, you know, I would have thought -

1 and I didn't think about it at the time - I would have
2 thought that I was approachable, that the other staff
3 members were approachable, there was teachers that used to
4 come in, that they were approachable - outside, independent
5 people, but I can see how people - how they would have felt
6 that at the time, because there were a number of McKennas
7 working there.

8
9 Q. Can I ask you this: in the 10 years that you were
10 there, can you ever recall one student coming to you and
11 complaining about something that Dennis McKenna had done to
12 them?

13 A. As in sexual abuse?

14
15 Q. As in any complaint - whether it be bullying --

16 A. I can't --

17
18 Q. -- intimidating --

19 A. I can't recall any student coming to me with a
20 complaint about Dennis. They - no, I can't actually.

21
22 Q. Yes.

23 A. Yes.

24
25 Q. See, that actually proves the point, doesn't it?

26 A. Well, it does. That's what I mean. Looking at it
27 now, I can see how that's - that's how it may have
28 appeared, but back then I didn't get that feeling, like --

29
30 Q. Ms McKenna, I've got some problems grappling with what
31 you're saying "looking at it now", but surely back then
32 you've got a stern warden who's clearly behaving on
33 occasions which concern you, and yet you don't have
34 students who are the victims of his behaviour coming to you
35 to complain.

36 A. I - we had really good relationship - I had a good
37 relationship with a lot of the kids there, with a lot of
38 the girls. I got on very well with all - with the majority
39 of the girls that I used to supervise. There was lots of
40 different numbers coming through every year. Yes, there
41 was occasions when Dennis used to raise his voice and get
42 really angry, and everyone knew when he was angry; but, you
43 know, this was over - well, as I was working there, like a
44 7-10 year period. It's not something that constantly
45 happened all the time.

46
47 Q. Are you aware whether any boy ever confided or

1 complained to your husband regarding behaviour by Dennis
2 McKenna - that is sexual or otherwise?
3 A. No.
4
5 Q. And would I be right in saying that if there was such
6 a complaint made to your husband, expect to have known
7 about it?
8 A. Yes.
9
10 Q. So regarding the behaviour of your brother-in-law,
11 Dennis, am I right in saying that you never observed any
12 behaviour by him that would cause you to be suspicious of
13 him insofar as matters of a sexual nature are concerned?
14 A. No.
15
16 Q. Nothing at all?
17 A. I never saw anything of a sexual nature in regards to
18 students. I never heard anything. No one came to speak to
19 me about anything.
20
21 Q. Okay. Well, we heard a number of students give an
22 account, including the period when you were there not just
23 as a supervisor, but also as a student, where they would
24 see your brother-in-law, and it was always boys - holding
25 hands with boys, having boys sit on his lap; he would be
26 seen with his hand down the front of a boy's shirt, rubbing
27 his chest. These sorts of inappropriate touchings - that's
28 nothing to do with the sort of allegations that were proven
29 against him with respect to his court matters. Do you see
30 the difference? So it was this sort of behaviour. Did you
31 ever --
32
33 MS CHONG: I think my friend is assuming that Ms McKenna
34 knows what Dennis McKenna pleaded guilty to.
35
36 HIS HONOUR: What, sorry?
37
38 MS CHONG: What Dennis McKenna pleaded guilty to, or that
39 he - that Ms McKenna is aware of the nitty-gritty details
40 of his plea, and --
41
42 HIS HONOUR: I think what's being put to Mrs McKenna is
43 that Dennis - there's lots of evidence that Dennis McKenna
44 quite openly in front of students and staff would be very
45 touchy-feely with some boys, hold hands with them, put
46 hands down shirts - there has been plenty of that sort of
47 evidence. That's what's being put to Mrs McKenna.

1
2 MS CHONG: Yes.
3
4 HIS HONOUR: And it's been put that she should have
5 noticed that.
6
7 MR URQUHART: Q. And just as my friend was getting to
8 her feet, I was about to ask the witness did she ever see
9 anything of that nature occur?
10 A. I didn't see anything of the nature of him putting his
11 hands down boys' shirts or anything. I did use to see, if
12 you were in the office and he was sitting on a chair, there
13 might be someone sitting on the armrest; but, no, I didn't
14 see anyone with, you know, with him fondling anyone, no.
15
16 Q. Well, it's not quite fondling, but it's holding hands.
17 Did you ever --
18 A. No.
19
20 Q. -- see him hold hands with boys?
21 A. No, no, I didn't see that.
22
23 Q. Never saw boys sitting on his lap in his office?
24 A. Yes, that's what I said. I might - they were sitting
25 on the armrest, and they might have had their legs over his
26 legs, you know, with a whole group of students around.
27 That's what I'm - I have - what I have seen, but I
28 certainly haven't seen anyone - him holding hands with
29 anyone, or having his hands down their shirt.
30
31 Q. And had you seen something like that, just if you'd
32 seen something like that, would that concern you at all?
33 A. It would do, yes.
34
35 Q. And, again, if you'd seen something like that, what
36 would you have done?
37 A. It's hard to say. If I was - got - if I had of got
38 really concerned and, you know, thought that there was
39 something more to it than just being, you know, friends or
40 like a friendly-type fatherly nature, then, yes, I
41 certainly would have tried to investigate it a bit more.
42
43 Q. And how would you have done that?
44 A. Well, it's hard to say. I mean, a long time ago I may
45 have confronted Dennis, I may have asked the student if he
46 felt comfortable with that type of behaviour.
47

1 Q. Right. When you say you would have confronted Dennis,
2 did you ever confront Dennis over any matter?
3 A. No, because I never saw anything like that.
4
5 Q. Over any matter at all?
6 A. I don't remember anything in particular, no.
7
8 Q. Might that be because you were - he was quite an
9 imposing figure?
10 A. He - yes, he was.
11
12 Q. Would of you been reluctant to confront him over a
13 matter that concerned you?
14 A. I don't know. I may have been a bit reluctant; but,
15 you know, if there was something that I felt really
16 strongly about, then I certainly would.
17
18 Q. See, we've heard from one witness that she gave an
19 account which is very common with other witnesses; and,
20 again, this was at a time when you were at the hostel, the
21 mid 1980s, that Dennis McKenna - and he didn't make any
22 attempts to hide this, insofar as do it in the privacy of
23 his unit at all, but either in the meals area, the dining
24 room or the office, this particular student would see boys
25 sitting on his knees, hand up boys' shirts, she would see
26 him rubbing the backs of boys and hands on the boys' upper
27 legs, near their groin - so not touching their groin, but
28 near their groin. Now, did you ever see anything like
29 that?
30 A. No, I didn't. As I said, I did see where boys would
31 be sitting on a chair and they may have their legs over his
32 legs on the chair leg.
33
34 Q. Well, she said there were staff members would be
35 present on these occasions, and she - when she was asked
36 who those staff members were - and this is at page 361, sir
37 - she mentioned you?
38 A. Yes. I'm sorry, I don't remember seeing anything like
39 that.
40
41 Q. Can you see the difference between "I don't remember
42 seeing anything like that", and, "I did not see anything
43 like that"?
44 A. Well, it was such a long time ago. There were lots of
45 situations were there would be boys in the office, or boys
46 and girls in the office, which staff - I honestly don't
47 remember seeing anything like that.

1
2 Q. You see, it would be predominantly boys though,
3 wouldn't it, who would be in this situation around him?
4 A. Most of the time, yes.
5
6 Q. So you never saw anything of that sort of behaviour
7 that would cause alarm bells to ring inside your head?
8 A. No, not as a - not on a sexual type nature, no.
9
10 Q. Well, I suppose this sort of behaviour would be best
11 described as grooming - that is, it's the initial behaviour
12 towards boys which might lead to something further.
13 A. I don't know, because I don't know the process of --
14
15 Q. No, but --
16 A. -- how someone works like that, so --
17
18 Q. But if you saw something like that that would cause
19 you some concern?
20 A. Well, it possibly would, yes.
21
22 Q. Throughout your time there, would I be right in saying
23 that you did notice that Dennis had favourites?
24 A. Yes, he did.
25
26 Q. And how did you make that observation? What made you
27 see that?
28 A. Basically there would be - you know, a lot of the same
29 students just hanging around him all the time; you know, if
30 you would walk down the rec centre or wherever, there would
31 be a group of students always around him.
32
33 Q. Yes.
34 A. And it was usually the same particular - the same
35 students all the time.
36
37 Q. Were you aware whether they got any preferential
38 treatment?
39 A. I know sometimes he used to let them watch TV in his
40 lounge room. I guess that could have been classed as
41 preferential treatment. They used to stay up, you know,
42 later, after I knocked off. They might be in there
43 watching TV.
44
45 Q. And would they be, in most instances, just boys?
46 A. Yes, all instances. I don't recall because I would
47 have to put the girls to bed.

1
2 Q. Yes.
3 A. Yes.
4
5 Q. And this would be after lights out?
6 A. After I put all the girls to bed, yes, I walked down
7 past the office and, you know, there might be - I could
8 hear the TV going and, like, boys talking and that in his
9 lounge room.
10
11 Q. And was this throughout the time that you were there
12 as a supervisor?
13 A. Yes, it would have been. I'm not - I'm not too sure
14 whether it occurred when I was a student.
15
16 Q. That was going to be my next question.
17 A. Yes, I honestly don't know whether I did.
18
19 Q. Don't know. Okay, then. Now, did he have a video
20 recorder in his unit at the time that you started working
21 there. Can you recall?
22 A. As in like the old tape?
23
24 Q. Yes. The old video recorder, the VCR?
25 A. I think we all had those.
26
27 Q. Well, maybe not in 1982 - I certainly did not - but
28 you can recall that being there?
29 A. Well, I think he had one, yes.
30
31 Q. Okay. Can you recall also whether there was another
32 video recording unit that the students had access to in
33 another part of the hostel?
34 A. Not particularly, no.
35
36 Q. Okay, then. Well, we've heard evidence that from as
37 early as 1977 - and this might not necessarily be a VCR, it
38 might be films - but from 1977 onwards, including the time
39 that you were there, that boys were shown films or videos
40 of a pornographic nature?
41 A. I was never aware of that.
42
43 Q. Never aware --
44 A. No.
45
46 Q. -- of that at all?
47 A. No.

1
2 Q. And that he was also - would supply those boys with
3 alcohol?
4 A. See, I wasn't aware of that either.
5
6 Q. Never aware of that?
7 A. I didn't know that was going on.
8
9 Q. Well, wasn't it your experience though, as a
10 supervisor, that if things of that nature - I mean, things
11 that were different to the routine, that would get out
12 pretty quickly --
13 A. Are you - if you're --
14
15 Q. -- in a hostel environment?
16 A. If you were referring to when I was a student there.
17
18 Q. And I'm referring to - well, both.
19 A. Yes.
20
21 Q. Both.
22 A. Well, no, because we were up in the girl's wing, so we
23 used to - after lights out, or from the time we were sent
24 to our dormitories, we just ran by the rules of that. I
25 don't know what was going on down the boys' end.
26
27 Q. And, well, what about when you had the role of
28 supervisor?
29 A. Well, the same. I used to do my duties with the girls
30 wing. Once the time was for lights out, then I used to go
31 home.
32
33 Q. And if you had been aware that sort of thing was going
34 on inside his unit, would you have done anything about it?
35 A. If he was providing alcohol, yes.
36
37 Q. What about the other matter?
38 A. Well, yes, of course. As I said, I was not aware of
39 that happening.
40
41 Q. And what would of you done?
42 A. Well, I would have confronted Dennis and, you know,
43 told him that it's just not right.
44
45 Q. And if he was to deny it?
46 A. I don't know. He's denied a lot of stuff.
47

1 Q. Back then, if he denied it, would of you just accepted
2 his denials?
3 A. It depends on what his excuses were.
4
5 Q. What if he said to you, "That's total nonsense, I
6 wouldn't supply these students with alcohol" --
7
8 MS CHONG: Sir --
9
10 MR URQUHART: Q. -- would you --
11
12 MS CHONG: -- I know this is an Inquiry and there are no
13 strict rules of evidence, but what my friend - the series
14 of questions that my friend has put to Ms McKenna are what
15 we call hypothetical propositions.
16
17 HIS HONOUR: Yes.
18
19 MS CHONG: And it's very easy and tempting to be able to
20 sit in the comfort of this Inquiry room and say, "What
21 would you have done then?" I don't know whether it's going
22 to assist the Inquiry to come to any findings it is
23 required to make, but --
24
25 HIS HONOUR: Well, there's an issue as to whether or not
26 staff knew what was going on.
27
28 MS CHONG: That's not --
29
30 HIS HONOUR: And if I was to find they did know something
31 about what was going on, it's relevant to know what the
32 staff members themselves say should have been done in those
33 circumstances.
34
35 MS CHONG: But if I put that series of questions, "And if
36 this had happened, what would you have done?", and the
37 witness has been asked to put herself in the hypothetical
38 question now, going back from 20 years ago as to what she
39 would have done - if your Honour believes that it's going
40 to assist the Inquiry, then I would not take any further
41 objection with them.
42
43 HIS HONOUR: Well, I am sure there has been a great many
44 of - phase two witnesses have been asked these questions
45 without objection until now.
46
47 MS CHONG: Yes.

1
2 HIS HONOUR: But I do think it's relevant, and it's not
3 something to be dealt with endlessly, but I think it's
4 reasonable what's been asked so far.
5
6 MS CHONG: Thank you.
7
8 HIS HONOUR: All right, yes.
9
10 MR URQUHART: Thank you sir.
11
12 Q. So, Mrs McKenna, in a situation where you've just
13 simply been told that he was supplying alcohol to boys, and
14 it wasn't something that you personally observed, you'd
15 confront Dennis about it, and he denies it.
16 A. Well, that's what - yes, that's - if I was aware of
17 it.
18
19 Q. If you'd been told?
20 A. If I'd been told. Depending if I'd been told by
21 students, then - you know, I don't know what I would have
22 done, but I certainly would have tried to do something.
23
24 Q. Okay.
25 A. But I was not aware of any of that going on --
26
27 Q. All right, so --
28 A. -- so I don't know how I would forecast how I would
29 react.
30
31 Q. Well, you've agreed with me that he was a rather
32 imposing figure?
33 A. Yes.
34
35 Q. Would you also agree with me that he could be somewhat
36 intimidating?
37 A. Yes.
38
39 Q. And that he didn't like a different point of view
40 being put to him?
41 A. No. Well, there might have been situations when he
42 would take our point of view, but most of the time, yes, it
43 was his way.
44
45 Q. Given those characteristics of the man, and the fact
46 that he was essentially your boss, would have you just
47 simply accepted his - and this is hypothetical - his denial

1 that anything like that had happened?
2 A. That's the thing, I don't know how I would have
3 reacted, but I would have tried to do something about it.
4
5 Q. All right. So you'd have approached him, it's reached
6 that point, would you take it any further?
7 A. If it - if the students came to me and said that they
8 didn't agree with it, then, yes, maybe I would have
9 confronted - maybe I would have reported it to the Board.
10 I don't know, because I wasn't - I wasn't aware of any of
11 that happening, so I don't know how I would have reacted.
12
13 Q. Did you know anybody on the Board at any time whilst
14 you were there as a supervisor?
15 A. Yes. There was lots of different parents, the school
16 principal - so there was parents on the Board.
17
18 Q. Were you aware of the relationship that Dennis McKenna
19 had with the Board in your time there?
20 A. As in communicating with them?
21
22 Q. Yes.
23 A. Well, I assume the communications were fairly open.
24
25 Q. See, we are also talking about a man who at that time
26 had a very impressive reputation within the community. Do
27 you agree with that?
28 A. Yes, he did.
29
30 Q. Did you ever get the impression of what you observed
31 of him, that he would, because of that good reputation,
32 often get his way?
33 A. I would agree with that, yes.
34
35 Q. Now, you've mentioned there that you can recall that
36 he had a group of favourite boys. Were you aware of his
37 behaviour whereby he'd spread rumours and gossip about
38 students?
39 A. As in - well, not really, no.
40
41 Q. No?
42 A. No.
43
44 Q. Nothing like that?
45 A. Even from the students there would be lots of rumours
46 and that coming out.
47

1 Q. Yes.
2 A. Yes.
3
4 Q. It's one thing to have rumours and gossip from - by
5 students, it's another by the warden himself?
6 A. Do you mean as him telling us about different things?
7
8 Q. Yes.
9 A. About the student?
10
11 Q. Yes, that.
12 A. Well, there may have been, you know, if they got into
13 trouble, he might have told us what they were in trouble
14 for doing.
15
16 Q. Can you remember your time of being a supervisor
17 there, that there were often expulsions of students by
18 Dennis McKenna?
19 A. Yes, there were.
20
21 Q. Can you recall whether there was a common reason
22 behind these expulsions?
23 A. Not particularly, no.
24
25 Q. No?
26 A. No.
27
28 Q. If I jog your memory and suggest that more often than
29 not it was to do with stealing?
30 A. Yes, there were boys that were - well, that - I was
31 told that had been stealing.
32
33 Q. Yes.
34 A. Yes.
35
36 Q. Let me guess, from the canteen?
37 A. I don't know where it was from.
38
39 Q. Well, cast your mind back. Was the allegation that
40 you can --
41 A. I can't remember any particular allegation, but there
42 were - you know, there were several students who would have
43 been expelled over the course of my time there, so I don't
44 remember anything in particular. There were ones that may
45 have been from stealing; so, yes, that's - I don't
46 remember certain allegations. I know sometimes we used
47 to - kids stuff used to go missing and we'd try and

1 investigate it. We didn't know whether other students were
2 stealing.
3
4 Q. And do you recall whether there'd also be allegations
5 not just of stealing from the canteen, but also from the
6 particular store in Katanning?
7 A. No, sorry, I don't remember that.
8
9 Q. No recollection of that?
10 A. No.
11
12 Q. Did it ever come to your knowledge whereby the Board
13 would ever overrule a decision by Dennis to expel a
14 student?
15 A. I don't remember any situation like that, no.
16
17 Q. Can you tell us a process that, as you recall it, that
18 a student had to do if they wanted to post a letter, or
19 wanted to send a letter to somebody, that had to be posted?
20 A. They would write a letter, put it in an envelope and
21 put it in a - I think there's probably something in the
22 office. We used to do the mail every morning.
23
24 Q. When you say "we", did you?
25 A. Well, I used to do the mail sometimes, yes.
26
27 Q. Was there a rule in place when you were there, that
28 the students had to leave the letters in the envelope and
29 not seal the envelope?
30 A. Not that I ever remember, no.
31
32 Q. You don't remember that?
33 A. No.
34
35 Q. Seems we've heard this again from a number of
36 ex-students over a number of years, that that was the rule
37 they had to abide by.
38 A. Sorry, I don't - I wasn't aware. There was no rule
39 like that as far as I was concerned. Kids used to post a
40 letter, they would hand it in, and we would post it for
41 them.
42
43 Q. When you say "we", was it you or was it Dennis?
44 A. It could be me, it could be the other female staff,
45 the male staff, whoever was doing the mail run. It was
46 usually the other staff. Dennis didn't usually do it.
47

1 Q. Now what about mail coming in?
2 A. We used to - I can't quite remember the process.
3 Letters would come in - whether we would drop them on
4 their - up in the dormitories, or have them for them. Kids
5 used to just come and check to see if there was any mail.
6 I don't, yes, remember any specific processes.
7
8 Q. See, the allegation has been made by the ex-students
9 that Dennis McKenna would read their mail?
10 A. Well, I wasn't aware of that. I've never read any of
11 the student's mail.
12
13 Q. There's no allegation that you did, but there was that
14 Dennis would?
15 A. Well, I wasn't aware of that.
16
17 Q. You never --
18 A. No, I never heard of that.
19
20 Q. Never saw or - any hint or suggestion that that might
21 have been taking place?
22 A. No.
23
24 Q. No. Because one clever student actually put something
25 in a letter to her friend that she hadn't told anybody else
26 about --
27 A. Yes.
28
29 Q. -- and left it unsealed to be sent off, and sure
30 enough she caught Dennis out by virtue of the fact that he
31 knew what was in that letter?
32 A. Yes.
33
34 Q. Yes.
35 A. No, I'm --
36
37 Q. So --
38 A. -- sorry, I wasn't aware of any of that going on.
39
40 Q. Would you agree with this statement, that as far as
41 you could observe of him, that he - that is Dennis - didn't
42 like people questioning him or telling him how to run the
43 hostel?
44 A. Yes, that's probably true.
45
46 Q. And that you had to be careful how you raised things
47 with him?

1 A. As in kids' behaviour?
2
3 Q. Well, nothing suggests he had to - careful how you
4 raised things with him in which it involved a contrary view
5 to the one that he'd taken?
6 A. Yes, I guess that's probably fairly fair, yes.
7
8 Q. Is that your experience of him?
9 A. In a general view, yes.
10
11 Q. We've also heard another description of him - he being
12 of a Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde character. Would you agree with
13 that?
14 A. That's certainly an opinion that I've got now, yes.
15 At the time I didn't, no.
16
17 Q. You didn't have that opinion back then?
18 A. No.
19
20 Q. And this is not so much - that reference wasn't made
21 so much with regards to his sexual offending of boys, but
22 the way he would be calm, polite, one moment, and then the
23 next he would explode?
24 A. He - yes, he did used to explode if things upset him.
25 Yeah, he got angry. He got very angry. But I don't - I
26 can't remember somebody going from one extreme to the
27 other.
28
29 Q. Can you recall any examples where he did get really
30 angry?
31 A. It would just be someone did something, you know,
32 fairly wrong, fairly bad, disobeyed a rule, you know. I
33 can't recall anything in particular.
34
35 Q. Mrs McKenna, you are in the rare position, if you like
36 it or not --
37 A. Tell me about it.
38
39 Q. -- you were there at the time when, for most of the
40 time, that Dennis was warden, either as a student there and
41 then as a supervisor yourself. It would seem from what I
42 can figure out that you were only not there when he was the
43 warden for three years?
44 A. From when I left school.
45
46 Q. Yes. Maybe --
47 A. Two years.

1
2 Q. Maybe two years; 1980, 1981?
3 A. Hm.
4
5 Q. So we know he has been convicted of sexual abuse of 11
6 boys at the hostel ranging in years from 1977 through to
7 1990?
8 A. Hm.
9
10 Q. This Inquiry has heard evidence from a number of
11 ex-students regarding your brother-in-law's victimisation
12 of them, bullying of them and intimidation of them. That
13 is either by him personally or by other students at his
14 direction. We have also heard evidence of his expulsion of
15 students on fabricated charges, such as stealing.
16 A. I don't know if they were fabricated or not. We never
17 - that was the reasons that they gave to us. I don't know
18 if it was fabricated or not.
19
20 Q. I gather you never followed up with the students
21 themselves to find out if there was any truth?
22 A. No, no.
23
24 Q. For all the time that you were at the hostel, either
25 as a student or as a supervisor, you were completely
26 unaware --
27 A. Yes.
28
29 Q. -- of him sexually offending the boys?
30 A. Yes, I was completely unaware. And as I found out
31 now, there's a lot of kids that I went to school with.
32
33 Q. Who have been victims; is that right?
34 A. I've got relatives that have all been victims of him.
35 Sorry, I had no idea that was going on.
36
37 Q. Never heard so much as a rumour or a gossip, nothing
38 like that?
39 A. No.
40
41 Q. Do you think you could have done something more to
42 possibly prevent this or not?
43 A. I don't know what - I wasn't aware of any of it until
44 he was charged. It was a shock. And I found out that, you
45 know, the people were involved were good friends of our
46 family, so it was hard. But, I had no idea until he was
47 charged that anything was going on. I hadn't heard

1 anything. No-one came to see me. No-one - I don't even
2 remember anyone saying anything about it.

3
4 Q. Am I right in saying that you were not only shocked
5 but you also did not believe the allegations that were
6 made? I'm referring to the ones back 21, 22 years ago.

7 A. I didn't. I - no, I did believe the allegations. I
8 mean, once he was charged and convicted and I had heard
9 from a couple of the victims via another family member,
10 because one of them, they were a good friend, you know,
11 that's when I became aware something had happened. But
12 leading up until that time I had no idea.

13
14 Q. Was it the case that you actually didn't believe the
15 allegations that were made against him when he was charged,
16 I'm talking about back in 1990 and then again in early
17 1991?

18 A. Yeah, it was a shock to the whole family because we
19 had no idea. We'd been given this - maybe he manipulated
20 everyone, even his own family. But - so it was very hard
21 to believe, and it wasn't until it started coming out with
22 the names of who was involved that I realised that
23 something had happened.

24
25 Q. That wasn't until what, before the trial or after the
26 trial?

27 A. Before the trial.

28
29 Q. You did actually give evidence?

30 A. I did. I had to appear as a character witness of the
31 person I knew at the time, yeah.

32
33 Q. Given what you have just told us now, did you express
34 any reluctance then to be a character witness for someone
35 who you believed to have been responsible --

36 A. No-one wants to attend the court. So, you know, I
37 didn't really want to do it, but had no knowledge of
38 anything happening when I was there, so that's what I was
39 guided to answer the questions on.

40
41 Q. Just finally, Mrs McKenna, I have spoken to Ms Chong
42 about this, this is the only question I am going to ask you
43 about the subject matter. I understand Ms Chong is not
44 going to object to it. But is it the case insofar as your
45 husband is concerned, you never saw anything of his
46 behaviour to suggest that he would be involved in any
47 sexual offending upon any student at the hostel?

1 A. No. I never saw anything and I never heard anything.
2
3 MR URQUHART: Thank you, Mrs McKenna. That's all the
4 questions I have, sir.
5
6 HIS HONOUR: Ms Morgan?
7
8 MS MORGAN: No, thank you.
9
10 HIS HONOUR: Nothing for you, Mr Jenkin?
11
12 MR JENKIN: No, thank you, sir.
13
14 HIS HONOUR: Ms Chong?
15
16 MS CHONG: Just one question, your Honour.
17
18 <CROSS-EXAMINATION BY MS CHONG:
19
20 MS CHONG: Q. Ms McKenna, are you aware of the process of
21 expulsion of students from the hostel?
22 A. Back then?
23
24 Q. Yes.
25 A. Most of the time they used to be suspended first. But
26 if it was a serious offence then, yeah, there could be
27 straight expulsion, but I was always under the impression
28 that the board would be told about it.
29
30 Q. Is it not the case that it was Dennis McKenna who
31 initially made the decision to suspend students?
32 A. Yes.
33
34 Q. If a student had to be expelled Dennis McKenna would
35 make the recommendation to the board, but in fact it was
36 the board which had the authority and which made the
37 decision to expel a student?
38 A. That's how I thought it ran, yes.
39
40 Q. You would agree that Dennis McKenna had no power to
41 expel any student?
42 A. I always thought that he had to consult with the board
43 first. So if they agreed then he would make the expulsion.
44 But that's the view that I had, yes.
45
46 Q. To your knowledge were you or any other members of the
47 staff ever consulted by Dennis McKenna with respect to any

1 suspension or expulsion of a student?
2 A. No, not really.
3
4 Q. Is it the case that you or the staff did not know
5 about those students' expulsion until that expulsion had
6 occurred and that is communicated back to staff members?
7 A. Yeah. We would just - I mean, we might get told that
8 a student had done something, then we would be told whether
9 they had been suspended or expelled.
10
11 MS CHONG: Thank you. That is the cross-examination.
12
13 HIS HONOUR: Nothing arising from that?
14
15 MR URQUHART: No, thank you, sir.
16
17 HIS HONOUR: That completes your evidence. You have
18 nothing else you wish to say?
19
20 THE WITNESS: No.
21
22 HIS HONOUR: Very well, you are free to go.
23
24 **THE WITNESS WITHDREW**
25
26 HIS HONOUR: Yes, Mr Urquhart?
27
28 MR URQUHART: The next witness will be Christine McKenna.
29
30 MS CHONG: May I seek leave to withdraw, your Honour?
31
32 HIS HONOUR: Yes, Ms Chong.
33
34 **<CHRISTINE MARIE McKENNA, sworn:**
35
36 **<EXAMINATION-IN-CHIEF BY MR URQUHART:**
37
38 MR URQUHART: Q. Mrs McKenna, have you got a middle
39 name?
40 A. Marie.
41
42 Q. Is that spelt M-A-R-I-E?
43 A. Yes, it is.
44
45 Q. I apologise for doing this. I don't ask a lady their
46 age unless there is a reason for it, but we need to know
47 how old you were with respect to things that happened some

1 time ago. So may I ask how old you are?
2 A. Now?
3
4 Q. Yes?
5 A. Sixty-two.
6
7 Q. You reside in the Perth metropolitan area?
8 A. I do now, yes.
9
10 Q. You are married to Graham McKenna?
11 A. I am.
12
13 Q. How long have you been married to Graham for?
14 A. Probably about 47 years.
15
16 Q. Forty-seven years?
17 A. Yep.
18
19 Q. You are 62 now?
20 A. Yep.
21
22 Q. You got married when you were 15, did you?
23 A. Oh, 16.
24
25 Q. Do you have any children?
26 A. I have three.
27
28 Q. Just the years that they were born?
29 A. 1969 - oh, sorry, 1966, 1969 and 1975.
30
31 Q. Is it the case that - I'll cut straight to the point -
32 at some stage you went to work at the Katanning hostel?
33 A. I did.
34
35 Q. Was that first as a laundry or a kitchen-hand?
36 A. Yes.
37
38 Q. Does this sound about right, that you started work
39 there in November of 1985?
40 A. I'm not quite sure of that date, but it's probably
41 right.
42
43 Q. Did you have any of your children with you?
44 A. We didn't live at --
45
46 Q. No, I know that. I understand you lived at
47 Broomehill?

1 A. Yes.
2
3 Q. Is that right?
4 A. Yes.
5
6 Q. Your children all accompanied you there to Broomehill?
7 A. Yes, yes.
8
9 Q. Your husband Graham --
10 A. Yes.
11
12 Q. -- did he have a job at Broomehill?
13 A. Yes, he did.
14
15 Q. What did he do?
16 A. He started off as a truck driver, become a grader
17 driver and then a supervisor.
18
19 Q. Was the reason for the move to Broomehill because
20 Dennis McKenna offered you a job at the hostel?
21 A. It is.
22
23 Q. What did he say that he wanted you to do there?
24 A. Well, to start off to be a supervisor. That's what I
25 wanted to point out, in 1981 we went there.
26
27 Q. In 1981 you went there?
28 A. Yes. I supervised for a year and then I decided to
29 leave because I had three children. It was just too hard
30 to work those hours and the weekends.
31
32 Q. So you went there in 1981?
33 A. Yes.
34
35 Q. Can you recall where you lived then when you went in
36 1981?
37 A. Well, I'm not quite sure if it was the house or in
38 Makita Street.
39
40 Q. When you say, "the house", do you mean what's referred
41 to as the warden's house on the hostel grounds?
42 A. Yeah, I'd say - yeah, yeah.
43
44 Q. As you drive into the entrance of the hostel --
45 A. There's a house on the right-hand side.
46
47 Q. Yes?

1 A. Yes.
2
3 Q. That one?
4 A. Yes.
5
6 Q. And Graham was there with you in 1981?
7 A. Yes.
8
9 Q. Did he have a job at the hostel?
10 A. No, he did not.
11
12 Q. How did that job in 1981 come about? Was it again
13 Dennis ringing you?
14 A. Yes, yes.
15
16 Q. And just offering you the job?
17 A. Yes.
18
19 Q. Can you recall, apart from Dennis, were there any
20 other McKennas working there in 1981?
21 A. It is 25 years ago.
22
23 Q. Try 31.
24 A. I'll try and do my best. Wayne and Robyn were working
25 there then.
26
27 Q. They were there, yes. Can you recall where they were
28 staying at the hostel?
29 A. They were up in the other wing, the girls' end in the
30 flat there.
31
32 Q. You and Graham were in the hostel warden's house?
33 A. House, yeah.
34
35 Q. Dennis?
36 A. He lived on the premises in the boys' end.
37
38 Q. Was it the case that he always lived there in that
39 unit?
40 A. As far as I know, yes.
41
42 Q. Did you ever ask him why it was that he always stayed
43 in that unit?
44 A. No. I did not, no.
45
46 Q. When you went there again in 1985 there was some
47 extensions done?

1 A. Yes.
2
3 Q. And there were other supervisor buildings built, isn't
4 that right?
5 A. Yes, that's right.
6
7 Q. If he wanted to, he could have moved into those?
8 A. I suppose he could have. I'm not quite sure of that.
9
10 Q. Weren't they much better accommodation than the small
11 unit he had in the dormitory?
12 A. I'm not quite sure, because I didn't go up that - up
13 to the other new ones that were built. We lived at
14 Broomehill then.
15
16 Q. But you saw them, didn't you, the new ones that were
17 built there behind the dormitories?
18 A. Yes, I probably did, I think.
19
20 Q. They certainly looked a bit bigger and newer than the
21 small unit that he had?
22 A. Oh, yes, I think so.
23
24 Q. That is 1981?
25 A. Yes.
26
27 Q. 1985 you worked there?
28 A. Yes.
29
30 Q. Your initial job there was that as --
31 A. In the kitchen and worked in the laundry as well.
32
33 Q. Am I right in saying on both occasions, 1981 and 1985,
34 Dennis rang you?
35 A. Yes.
36
37 Q. And asked you if you wanted this job?
38 A. Yes.
39
40 Q. And you simply said yes?
41 A. Well, yes, I did say yes. And I thought it would be a
42 better life for our children to live in the country. And
43 that was one of the reasons, yeah, I decided to take it.
44
45 Q. And there was no interview process as such. You
46 didn't go and be questioned by people?
47 A. No.

1
2 Q. Did you have any qualifications or experience that
3 would be relevant, firstly, to the position you had in
4 1981?
5 A. Probably not, no. No.
6
7 Q. Were you surprised when Dennis rang you offering you
8 that job in 1981?
9 A. Not really, no.
10
11 Q. No?
12 A. No, I don't know. I don't know. I don't know how to
13 answer that.
14
15 Q. In 1985 can you recall who the McKennas were that were
16 working at the hostel, apart from Dennis and yourself,
17 obviously?
18 A. And Wendy and Neil and Wayne and Robyn. But I think -
19 I'm not quite sure when they left.
20
21 Q. Yes, they might have left - Robyn and Wayne might well
22 have left at or around the time --
23 A. Yeah.
24
25 Q. Probably before you got there?
26 A. Yeah, yeah.
27
28 Q. It was the case there always seemed to be a number of
29 other McKennas work at the hostel whenever you worked
30 there?
31 A. Yes.
32
33 Q. Would that be fair to say?
34 A. It was fair to say, yes.
35
36 Q. Did you ever wonder how that would come about?
37 A. No, I did not. No. No. Not - not back then, no.
38
39 Q. No?
40 A. No. No.
41
42 Q. Our records indicate that you worked in the position
43 of laundry/kitchen-hand --
44 A. Yes.
45
46 Q. -- until about the middle of 1989; does than sound
47 about right?

1 A. Yes.
2
3 Q. And that you then didn't become a supervisor until the
4 following year?
5 A. That's right, yes.
6
7 Q. Are you able to remember why it was that you left in
8 about the middle of 1989?
9 A. I just left. There was no reason or - you know, I
10 just wanted to spend more time with my family and my
11 children.
12
13 Q. And then our records show that you returned back to
14 the hostel in February of 1990?
15 A. Yes.
16
17 Q. After about seven, or eight, nine months away, does
18 that sound about right?
19 A. Yeah.
20
21 Q. You had the job of a part-time supervisor?
22 A. Yes.
23
24 Q. And again, how did that position be offered to you?
25 A. Well, I think that was because Dennis had been charged
26 then, would it?
27
28 Q. No. That was probably six or seven months before
29 that.
30 A. Oh, okay. Just must have asked if I wanted to come
31 back and do a bit of supervising.
32
33 Q. And you agreed to?
34 A. Yes.
35
36 Q. On that occasion did you go back to Katanning with
37 Graham?
38 A. No. We lived in Broomehill.
39
40 Q. Oh, sorry, you lived in Broomehill?
41 A. Yes.
42
43 Q. My apologise. You were still in Broomehill then?
44 A. Yes.
45
46 Q. Again, were you interviewed formally for that
47 position?

1 A. No.
2
3 Q. Didn't respond to an advertisement or anything like
4 that?
5 A. No.
6
7 Q. Unaware if there were other people applying for the
8 job?
9 A. As far as I know, no.
10
11 Q. It was just you?
12 A. Yes. Well, I mean, I wasn't told there was other
13 people applying for the job.
14
15 Q. You were also aware at that time that in addition to
16 Neil, Wendy and Dennis, that Gunda McKenna was also working
17 off site at Reidy House?
18 A. Yes.
19
20 Q. Were you aware of that?
21 A. Yes.
22
23 Q. So you recall at one stage there, there were five
24 McKennas?
25 A. Yes.
26
27 Q. Working at the hostel?
28 A. Yes.
29
30 Q. Did your husband Graham ever do anything at the
31 hostel?
32 A. I think he drove a bus one day for footy. That was
33 it. Yep.
34
35 Q. Now, Mrs McKenna, can I ask you, what was your
36 relationship like with Dennis? I am talking about up until
37 he was charged with sex abuse offences in September of
38 1990.
39 A. So before that?
40
41 Q. Before that, yes?
42 A. I did my job the best I could. I didn't, sort of, try
43 and make waves for anybody. Dennis was very hard to work
44 for.
45
46 Q. Why do you say that?
47 A. He had - he had to have that power over you. I

1 remember a couple of occasions that I would get called to
2 the office and you would be thinking on the way down "What
3 have you done wrong?" It mightn't have been anything too
4 bad, but you always thought, "Well, what have I done wrong
5 today? Maybe I didn't wipe the bench properly". Yeah,
6 power, yes.

7
8 Q. What happened on those occasions when you were called
9 to his office, can you remember?

10 A. Oh, he just - I can't remember exactly what it was
11 about, no. No.

12
13 Q. Would he talk to you in a measured tone?

14 A. Oh, yes, yes. Yes.

15
16 Q. And the reason for you being called to the office, was
17 it always justifiable, in your view?

18 A. No. Not really, no.

19
20 Q. So you mentioned how he had to have power, how he to
21 had to be in control?

22 A. Oh, yes, yes.

23
24 Q. What other examples can you give of that?

25 A. Well, I can just say that's how he ran the hostel.

26
27 Q. Are you able to give me some examples of that then?

28 A. No. No.

29
30 Q. The manner in which he ran the hostel when you were
31 there, did you always agree with how he ran it?

32 A. Well, I was in the kitchen so, I suppose, I thought he
33 was running it right - properly. There were things that
34 you'd sort of feel he was a bit powered over. He liked to
35 organise things. He liked to be very organised. That's
36 all I can see.

37
38 Q. Did you ever see any behaviour by him - I'm not saying
39 it was necessarily sexual; in fact, leave that aside for
40 the moment - nonsexual behaviour, did you ever see any
41 nonsexual behaviour by him that caused you to be a little
42 concerned?

43 A. No. No. Definitely not.

44
45 Q. Towards students at all?

46 A. No.

47

1 Q. Public ridiculing the students, you never saw that?
2 A. A couple of times I did see that.
3
4 Q. Can you tell us about those, please?
5 A. That was, sort of, like he'd - oh, I don't know how to
6 explain it. He'd pick a student out and he might say he
7 did something silly and he'd, sort of, make fun of him. I
8 did see that on a couple of occasions.
9
10 Q. Would be that in front of the other students?
11 A. Yes it was, yes.
12
13 Q. Would this be in the dining room?
14 A. Yes.
15
16 Q. The things that he said to that student, did they ever
17 cause you concern?
18 A. No. No.
19
20 Q. You thought that the student deserved to be treated in
21 that way?
22 A. No, I didn't think that the student deserved it, but I
23 didn't think there was anything inappropriate about it.
24
25 Q. Did you ever used to hear anything being announced
26 over the PA that was designed to cause embarrassment or
27 humiliation to a student?
28 A. No, not really, because I worked there in the day
29 time. The students were only there breakfast, lunch, and I
30 was gone home by half past two.
31
32 Q. I appreciate there might have been limited occasions,
33 but I just need to ask you those sorts of things.
34 A. Yes.
35
36 Q. Although that changed though when you were a
37 supervisor. In 1981 you would spend more time there,
38 wouldn't you?
39 A. 19?
40
41 Q. Sorry, 1981, I apologise. 1981 you would spend more
42 time at the hostel then you would if you were a
43 kitchen-hand?
44 A. Yes.
45
46 Q. On those occasions?
47 A. Probably only a couple.

1
2 Q. I know it is a long time ago.
3 A. It is a long time ago, yes, yes.
4
5 Q. Are you able to recall them?
6 A. No.
7
8 Q. We have heard from a number of - I don't know if you
9 have been following the evidence that has been given at
10 this Inquiry?
11 A. No.
12
13 Q. You haven't?
14 A. No.
15
16 Q. We have heard accounts given by a number of
17 ex-students regarding the behaviour of Dennis, not so much
18 the sexual behaviour that he has been convicted of, but
19 rather his behaviour of touching students in an
20 inappropriate way. I will give you an example: holding
21 boys' hands?
22 A. No, I did not see that; no.
23
24 Q. Having boys sit on his lap?
25 A. No, I did not see that.
26
27 Q. Him placing his hand down the front of boys' shirts so
28 it would be on their chests?
29 A. No, no.
30
31 Q. Rubbing their backs?
32 A. No.
33
34 Q. And placing his hand on their inner thigh?
35 A. No.
36
37 Q. You never saw --
38 A. No, definitely not. No.
39
40 Q. Mrs McKenna, if you had seen something like that --
41 A. Would I have done something about it?
42
43 Q. Yes?
44 A. Yes, I would have. I had children of my own who were
45 teenagers that went to school with these students. I'm
46 sure I would have done something if someone had of come to
47 me. And I know, and I realise they probably didn't because

1 I was a McKenna.
2
3 Q. Well, that's the question I was going to ask you. You
4 can see the problem there, couldn't you?
5 A. Yes.
6
7 Q. If someone needed to confide in another hostel staff
8 member about the warden's behaviour they might feel
9 reluctant to come and speak to a relative?
10 A. Yes, I do understand that. Yes, I do.
11
12 Q. Did that ever cross your mind at that time, for
13 example, when you went there working part-time in 1990 when
14 there were four McKennas working for the hostel?
15 A. Yes.
16
17 Q. Did it ever cross your mind, well, look if a student
18 did have a complaint about Dennis it is going to be a bit
19 difficult for them to see those staff that were immediately
20 below him? Did you ever think of that?
21 A. No. If a student had of come to me and said something
22 was going on I'm sure - and I don't care if he's my
23 brother-in-law or what - I would do something about it.
24
25 Q. I was going to ask you that. What would you have done
26 about it?
27 A. I would have gone to the police or I would have
28 observed something. I mean, I have got children of my own
29 and I would hate it to happen to my children.
30
31 Q. I can understand that. You never heard any whispers
32 or gossip?
33 A. No.
34
35 Q. Or anything like that?
36 A. No.
37
38 Q. I am not suggesting you did, I am just asking about
39 that, okay. Did you ever see Dennis or hear of him acting
40 - when I say "inappropriately" I'm talking about acting in
41 a way in which it wasn't appropriate for a warden to behave
42 - I'm talking about disciplinary procedures, for example;
43 did you ever observe him unfairly disciplining a student?
44 A. No, no.
45
46 Q. You see, we have heard a lot of evidence of how he
47 would ostracise a student; get the other students to ignore

1 that person --
2 A. No, I did not see that.
3
4 Q. -- so they would be on the outside?
5 A. No.
6
7 Q. Ever saw anything like that?
8 A. No, I did not; no.
9
10 Q. Or have a student come and complain to you about that?
11 A. No, no, no.
12
13 Q. So do you say you would have been able to confront
14 your brother-in-law potentially if you saw anything or
15 heard of anything untoward about him?
16 A. I would.
17
18 Q. Notwithstanding that his character?
19 A. I don't care. I would.
20
21 Q. You see, it seems your brother-in-law had an effective
22 means of dealing with any student he believed could raise
23 the alarm about his behaviour. For example, he would have
24 them expelled.
25 A. I don't know.
26
27 Q. Were you ever concerned if you were to raise a matter
28 with him about any of his behaviour that he would have you
29 expelled, effectively?
30 A. If he did so I would certainly carry on with what I -
31 if I had seen something or heard something or someone come
32 to me I would definitely take the matter further.
33
34 Q. But you were aware, were you not, of his reputation
35 within the Katanning community?
36 A. Yes.
37
38 Q. That he was extremely highly regarded?
39 A. Yes, yes.
40
41 Q. And highly respected?
42 A. Yes.
43
44 Q. A Citizen of the Year?
45 A. Yes, I know.
46
47 Q. You're aware of that?

1 A. Yes, yes.
2
3 Q. Right.
4 A. Yes.
5
6 Q. And to take on someone with that sort of reputation,
7 it would be somewhat intimidating, wouldn't it?
8 A. No.
9
10 Q. No?
11 A. No.
12
13 Q. Not for you?
14 A. No, it wouldn't be when I know that - if a child had
15 been sexually molested, I would do something about it, as a
16 mother.
17
18 Q. Can you recall what your reaction was when you found
19 out that Dennis had been charged --
20 A. God.
21
22 Q. -- with child sex abuse matters back in 1990?
23 A. Devastated. Absolutely devastated.
24
25 Q. Did you believe the allegations?
26 A. No, I did not.
27
28 Q. And why was that?
29 A. I just didn't believe it. I just did not believe it.
30
31 Q. Well, why, because you didn't think he would do --
32 A. Well, I didn't see anything to make cause that he did
33 do something.
34
35 Q. But did you - it never crossed your mind that he could
36 be someone capable of doing that?
37 A. No, I didn't - no, no, I didn't.
38
39 Q. At your time there at Katanning, working at the
40 hostel, were you aware whether he'd ever take any children
41 away on trips? I know I am not just talking about camps,
42 I'm talking about occasions where he would just take one or
43 two students away with him?
44 A. Yes, I do remember that, yes.
45
46 Q. You do?
47 A. Yes, a couple of times, yes.

1
2 Q. Yes. Could you tell us about those?
3 A. No, because that wasn't - I mean, I was in the girls'
4 end, nothing to do with the boys' end.
5
6 Q. I realised that, but you were aware of that happening
7 a couple of times?
8 A. Yes, I do, yes.
9
10 Q. And do you know whether they involved overnight stays?
11 A. I've got no idea.
12
13 Q. And those - when you heard about those trips, it
14 didn't cause you any concern?
15 A. No.
16
17 Q. Because you believe the man would treat them properly?
18 A. I did, yes.
19
20 Q. And what sort of relationship did your husband,
21 Graham, have with Dennis - and I'm talking about back then,
22 I'm not talking about now, but back then?
23 A. Back then? A brother, and that was it. I mean, there
24 was no social, really, social - because, you know, like, we
25 lived at Broomehill. We had our own friends. We didn't
26 really mix with the family. It's hard - I know it's hard
27 to explain, but I think because we worked there, you didn't
28 really mix with them afterwards anyway.
29
30 Q. And since Dennis has been convicted, both back in 1991
31 and then again last year --
32 A. Yes.
33
34 Q. -- well, starting then with 1991, had either you or
35 your husband had anything to do with him?
36 A. No.
37
38 Q. Right.
39 A. No.
40
41 Q. And can you say whether that extends to the rest of
42 the members of the family?
43 A. Yes. We don't really have anything to do, and we
44 haven't for about 20-something years.
45
46 MR URQUHART: Yes, thank you, Mrs McKenna, that's all,
47 sir.

1
2 HIS HONOUR: Ms Morgan, have you got anything?
3
4 MS MORGAN: No, thank you.
5
6 HIS HONOUR: Mr Jenkin, nothing.
7
8 MR JENKIN: No, thanks.
9
10 HIS HONOUR: Well, that completes your evidence, Ms
11 McKenna.
12
13 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
14
15 HIS HONOUR: You're free to go. Thank you.
16
17 THE WITNESS: Can I say something?
18
19 HIS HONOUR: Yes, beg your pardon, you certainly can say
20 something, yes.
21
22 THE WITNESS: I do feel sorry for the victims. It's been
23 hard for us as well, and my children, and my grandchildren.
24 And I'm so sorry for what he did. He's a monster, and I
25 hope he never gets out. Thank you.
26
27 HIS HONOUR: Right, thank you.
28
29 <THE WITNESS WITHDREW
30
31 HIS HONOUR: Yes.
32
33 MR URQUHART: The last witness today, sir, is Gunda
34 McKenna.
35
36 <GUNDA MCKENNA, sworn:
37
38 <EXAMINATION-IN-CHIEF BY MR URQUHART:
39
40 MR URQUHART: Q. Now, Mrs McKenna, are you right there?
41 Okay. Now, I have just got a few questions to ask you, it
42 won't take very long. Your first name's Gunda, is that --
43 A. Yes.
44
45 Q. -- how it's pronounced?
46 A. Yes.
47

1 Q. And do you have a middle name?
2 A. No.
3
4 Q. No. Okay. Now, you're married to one of Dennis
5 McKenna's brothers?
6 A. I was, yes.
7
8 Q. Yes, you were married. And who was that?
9 A. Brian.
10
11 Q. Brian. And can you remember in what - who he was - I
12 know he wasn't the first or the third or the fifth - was he
13 the second or the --
14 A. He was the third youngest.
15
16 Q. Third youngest, was he - third youngest. Okay. And
17 for the - I don't normally ask a lady their age, but for
18 the purposes of working out, how old you were when --
19 A. 56 - oh --
20
21 Q. -- certain things - 56 now?
22 A. I am now, yes.
23
24 Q. Okay. And when did you marry Brian?
25 A. 20. At the age of 20.
26
27 Q. Okay. So that's - am I right about this, about 1976?
28 A. Yes.
29
30 Q. Is that about right?
31 A. Yes.
32
33 Q. Okay. And do you have any children?
34 A. I have two children.
35
36 Q. And was it the case that you separated from Brian
37 prior to 1988?
38 A. '87.
39
40 Q. Yes.
41 A. Around August/September we had separated.
42
43 Q. Okay. Now, up until that point in time, did you know
44 his brother Dennis very well?
45 A. Not very well, no, no. He was my brother-in-law. I
46 didn't know him that well, I never saw him. He wasn't
47 much - a big part of my life. No, not really.

1
2 Q. Now, the year after though, you'd separated from
3 Brian, did you make contact with Dennis?
4 A. When I separated?
5
6 Q. Yes. So you separated in 1987?
7 A. '87, around August/September.
8
9 Q. Yes.
10 A. I spoke to Dennis, yes, late in '87 when Wendy had
11 rung me on behalf of Dennis to approach me about a job
12 offer that was coming up in the following year, in '88;
13 that there was a new place opening, Reidy House, and Wendy
14 had said - mentioned that Dennis thought I might be good
15 for that job. And having two very young children, he had
16 suggested that I would be able to have my children with me
17 and to think about the job; that it could be a good
18 position so I could have my children with me and I'd also
19 have some family support there, because there was quite a
20 few McKennas in --
21
22 Q. Yes, we've --
23 A. -- Katanning at that time.
24
25 Q. -- we've heard, yes.
26 A. And, yes, I'm - they left it with me to think about,
27 and then not long after that Dennis had rung me. I
28 couldn't tell you a date or when or what month.
29
30 Q. That's fine.
31 A. But he rang me to arrange if I could come to Katanning
32 for a weekend to have a look at what the job entailed, and
33 that it wasn't - nothing was concrete, I didn't have the
34 job at that point or anything; to have a think about it,
35 and to come for one weekend and have a look at the job, and
36 I may have to sit towards the Board and meet the Board
37 members to apply for the job.
38
39 Q. Okay. And did that actually happen? Did you actually
40 meet and be formally interviewed by the Board members?
41 A. No.
42
43 Q. No?
44 A. No.
45
46 Q. That never happened?
47 A. No, no. I arrived there and was shown around and

1 shown Reidy House. I did meet a member of the Board, but
2 not - I never had to sit in on any Board meeting or - I
3 just remember meeting a member, I don't know if it was the
4 President or who it was, but I did meet a Board member, got
5 introduced over coffee.
6
7 Q. Yes.
8 A. And that was about it.
9
10 Q. All right. So that Board member didn't formally
11 interview you or anything like that?
12 A. No.
13
14 Q. Okay. And our records, Mrs McKenna, or the records we
15 looked at, indicate you started in your position as a
16 Senior Supervisor on 27 January 1988?
17 A. That's correct.
18
19 Q. Does that sound about right?
20 A. That's correct.
21
22 Q. And that you remained there at Reidy House as a Senior
23 Supervisor until December 1990?
24 A. That's correct.
25
26 Q. Does that sound about right?
27 A. Yes, I was finishing up that year in 1990.
28
29 Q. Okay.
30 A. I had let Dennis know, and all the staff knew that was
31 my final year probably about July/August that year. I had,
32 you know, three years in Katanning, I was ready to move
33 back to Perth.
34
35 Q. Did you have any qualifications or experience in this
36 particular field prior to --
37 A. Not at all.
38
39 Q. -- Dennis calling you up?
40 A. Not at all.
41
42 Q. None at all?
43 A. No.
44
45 Q. Were you surprised at all that he had rang you?
46 A. Yes, certainly was surprised, and the opportunity I -
47 yes, I was surprised that I'd even been offered the job.

1
2 Q. And did you get any training --
3 A. Not really.
4
5 Q. -- for the job?
6 A. No, no.
7
8 Q. Did you get a handbook or some written guidelines as
9 to what to do, or anything like that?
10 A. No.
11
12 Q. So Reidy House is about two or three kilometres from
13 where the main hostel was; is that right?
14 A. Correct, yes.
15
16 Q. Did the children that you were supervising, did they
17 have all their meals at Reidy House, or did they go to the
18 main hostel?
19 A. Reidy House.
20
21 Q. At Reidy House. What about lunch times during
22 school days, did they --
23 A. That would be up at the main - yes --
24
25 Q. The main?
26 A. On weekends sometimes they ate up at St Andrew's, the
27 main one; and, of course, yes, lunchtime, because I used to
28 drive them up in the morning to St Andrew's, and then they
29 would walk to school from there.
30
31 Q. Right. Would you drive a small bus, would you?
32 A. Coaster bus, yes.
33
34 Q. Yes. And there were, what, about 15 students there at
35 Reidy House when you were there, or more?
36 A. I had approximately - no, I had - yes, approximately -
37 could be up to 30.
38
39 Q. So would that require two bus trips or just the one?
40 A. Yes, it would be one? I can't exactly --
41
42 Q. That's all right?
43 A. -- remember how many students. It was 20, 20
44 something students --
45
46 Q. Okay.
47 A. -- I had, yes.

1
2 Q. Boys and girls?
3 A. Yes.
4
5 Q. Right. And can I ask you - this is prior to him being
6 charged with the offences that we know about - what was
7 your relationship like with Dennis McKenna?
8 A. He treated me very nice, and he was kind to me. I
9 didn't have any special relationship, apart from being a
10 staff member and he was nice to me. I can't say we had any
11 special relationship of any kind, just as a working - and,
12 like I said, I was his sister-in-law or family. He just -
13 it wasn't anything special, not from anyone else.
14
15 Q. And how much time would you actually spend at the main
16 hostel grounds during your time there?
17 A. I would go up, like I said, to take the students in
18 the morning --
19
20 Q. Yes.
21 A. -- to school. Sometimes I would go off and do other
22 errands, sometimes I would be just up there hanging out
23 with other supervisors, or go back to Reidy House.
24
25 Q. Yes.
26 A. It wasn't anything set each day. I might have
27 appointments or have to take students somewhere.
28
29 Q. So you knew Wendy well, did you?
30 A. Yes, she was my sister-in-law, yes.
31
32 Q. Okay.
33 A. I did know Wendy well, yes.
34
35 Q. And Neil as well, you knew him?
36 A. Neil and Wendy, yes.
37
38 Q. And then there was some time there, wasn't there, when
39 Christine and yourself overlapped there, working at the
40 same time; is that right?
41 A. I think she did work there in the kitchen, or she was
42 there. I'm not sure. I can't really remember if she was a
43 supervisor at the same time. I really don't remember.
44
45 Q. Okay. Now, at your time there from January 1988
46 through to December 1990, did you ever have any concern
47 regarding any behaviour by your brother-in-law Dennis?

1 A. Not at all, no.
2
3 Q. I'm not just talking sexual behaviour, but non-sexual
4 behaviour. Anything of that nature?
5 A. No.
6
7 Q. No?
8 A. No.
9
10 Q. Never saw him bully or demean or victimise a student
11 in your presence?
12 A. I might have saw him get angry at students
13 occasionally over not mixing with other students, but
14 nothing - nothing bad.
15
16 Q. So nothing that would cause you any concern?
17 A. I never heard him use language or treat them bad, no.
18
19 Q. No. Okay. And no student ever confided or made a
20 complaint to you about any behaviour towards them by
21 Dennis?
22 A. Never.
23
24 Q. Again, I'm not talking about any sexual impropriety,
25 but any complaint at all about how he treated them?
26 A. Not that I can remember. I honestly cannot remember
27 anything that - of any concern that was serious in any way,
28 no.
29
30 Q. I see. You no doubt recall the occasion when Dennis
31 was first charged?
32 A. Yes, that was a shock.
33
34 Q. Yes, I was just going to ask. What was your reaction
35 to that.
36 A. Shocked. Yes, very shocked.
37
38 Q. Did you believe the allegations at the time?
39 A. I didn't. I honestly don't think I gave it much
40 thought. I was just shocked that these things were
41 happening - you know, had happened, and that I was not
42 aware of anything, or had ever heard of anything happening.
43 No, I was just in a state of shock.
44
45 Q. Were you aware the reputation that he had within the
46 community before he got charged?
47 A. Yes, that he was a pillar of the community; he was

1 well-liked by everybody; he knew a lot of people; he was
2 pretty powerful in Katanning. I remember him having that
3 very powerful personality.
4

5 Q. Yes.

6 A. And everyone - everyone seemed to look up to him, or
7 respect him.
8

9 Q. And how were you able to gauge that? Is that just
10 from what people were saying about him, or what you saw?

11 A. Everyone seemed to do whatever Dennis said more or
12 less back then, and people sometimes - everyone used to say
13 what - how good Dennis was running this place, and how
14 popular and smoothly St Andrew's ran. That's all you used
15 to hear, really. I never heard any negative things about
16 Dennis while I was - in my time in Katanning, no.
17

18 Q. And then when he got convicted in 1991, did that also
19 come as a shock to you?

20 A. Not when you started reading and hearing things about
21 him. It was a shock right from the word go, and if that's
22 what he did, well - yes, it was still a shock to be under
23 your nose and know that this sort of thing went on. I
24 honestly didn't know or hear of anything or know any of
25 these things. It saddens me to hear that this went on. It
26 really does.
27

28 Q. Okay. And can you recall when it was that you had -
29 the last contact you had with Dennis McKenna?

30 A. Only at St Andrew's, from what I can remember.
31

32 Q. Only at St Andrew's. You had nothing to do with him
33 since then?

34 A. No. I - yes, one incident I had was a family 21st,
35 and he happened to be at that family 21st.
36

37 Q. And approximately what year was that, just roughly?

38 A. I'm trying to think. Hang on, it would be about
39 11 years ago.
40

41 Q. I see.

42 A. About 12 years ago, and that was my last contact, and
43 that was at a family 21st.
44

45 Q. And did you speak to him at all at that function?

46 A. "Hello".
47

1 Q. That was it?
2 A. That was a very short - yes.
3
4 Q. And were you able to make an observation as to what
5 contact other members of the McKenna family have with him?
6 A. No, no. We all drifted apart when - in 1990, and I
7 can probably count on one hand the amount of McKennas or
8 family - that side of the family that I have seen in the
9 last 25 years.
10
11 Q. Finally, Mrs McKenna, were you asked by any of his -
12 Dennis McKenna's lawyers, to give evidence at his trial in
13 Albany in 1991?
14 A. No.
15
16 MR URQUHART: Yes, thank you, sir, that's all the
17 questions I have.
18
19 HIS HONOUR: Is there any further questions, Ms Morgan?
20
21 MS MORGAN: No, thanks.
22
23 HIS HONOUR: Very well. Well, that completes your
24 evidence.
25
26 Q. Is there anything you wish to add, or that hasn't been
27 covered, or anything you'd like to say?
28 A. Only that it's very sad that this has all happened,
29 and I enjoyed my time in Katanning, and I was very blessed
30 and lucky to have some fantastic students. I loved my job
31 at Reidy House, and they were great. It just saddens me,
32 and I feel sorry that I - no one felt they could come to
33 any of us and tell us. I have children, and it just breaks
34 my heart to think that this has happened to all these
35 children. That's really all I have to say.
36
37 HIS HONOUR: Allright. Well, thank you very much. Well,
38 that completes your evidence, you're free to go.
39
40 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.
41
42 <THE WITNESS WITHDREW
43
44 HIS HONOUR: Now, what time do we start tomorrow?
45
46 MR URQUHART: 11 o'clock tomorrow, sir, yes.
47

1 HIS HONOUR: Very well. We'll adjourn now until
2 11 o'clock tomorrow.

3
4 MR URQUHART: Thank you, sir

5
6 **AT 4.12PM THE HEARING ADJOURNED TO**
7 **FRIDAY, 11 MAY 2012 AT 11AM**

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