



Christopher Hallett;  
march 2012

St Vicents De Paul's Boy's Orphanage South Melbourne

The impact of my childhood treatment as leading to serious  
lifelong effects Emotional. Physical and spiritual health

Emotional and sexual abuse Neglect and  
Psychological abuse -In and around the Orphanage

Both of us (christopher [redacted] ) were placed under  
the care of Brother [redacted]  
After some time [redacted] was sent to Frankston hospital with rheumatic  
fever and then sent home. i was left alone ... brother [redacted] was a  
monster with the strap , i was made a Altar-Boy .....Went with  
brother [redacted] many times to other churches because i would just  
sit . (was all ears) in the yard he  
would send me to his room and get the small black book or the  
large one .. i use to look often to see who got the cuts and  
what hostel priest there was.. the sportsman's club was like a hotel  
and had doors to the street; Young priest from Queensland,  
Canada, Sydney , U.S.A some were kids trained up by  
the brothers in other lands and they moved around . They  
had houses around the corner  
so many times i was taken  
even nuns were there the young brothers were like bodybuilders  
types there names should be in brother [redacted] big book; 3 of  
them gave me car sickness pills and other ones and i woke up while  
they were killing me and they just bashed my head  
with blood running down my legs i told brother [redacted]  
He strap me and 2 days in a small room after  
that the same young priest took me out and started cutting  
off one of my fingers.. the  
code of silence started .. Frequency of sexual abuse was many .

I had a mum and dad who would take me home some weekends  
When i got back the other kids would get me stick nails in  
my hands & legs-

most had no mothers and fathers.

I have a heightened *stress response* , Arthritis,  
Headaches , Cardiovascular disease, chronic fatigue,  
Anxiety Shame, Self blame and Guilt



The Christian brothers were trying to turn me into a priest

I was a good Altar-Boy and found a peace with in  
After leaving the Orphanage and going back home i would just sit  
for hours on my own and did not speak for a long time my  
brothers and sisters running around me calling me a home'ee ...  
i had to get far away after 2 years and ran away.

I never did drugs or have a police record-  
Did not drink till i was about 30

[christopher m hallett](#)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## *Statement of Complaint/Contact Report*

On behalf of: Christopher Michael HALLETT of [REDACTED]

Ph. [REDACTED]

The interview upon which this report is based was conducted by Michael Iacovino, at his Essendon rooms on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2012. Christopher was accompanied by his wife and carer, [REDACTED]

**REFERENCE:** Sexual and Corporal Abuse at St.Vincent de Paul Orphanage, South Melbourne

**PRESENT:** Christopher HALLETT – Complainant  
[REDACTED] – Christopher’s wife and carer  
Michael Iacovino – Contact Person, Towards Healing

1. I, Chris Hallett, hereby submit the following information in relation to the sexual and corporal abuse I was subjected to by the Christian Brothers whilst I resided at St.Vincent de Paul Orphanage, South Melbourne, Victoria, during the period 1964 - 1967(3 years) when I was approximately 9-12 years of age. I submit that as a result of my childhood abuse, I have suffered serious lifelong impacts on my emotional, physical, and spiritual health. I acknowledge that owing to the long passage of time since these events took place, and my age at the time, as well as the trauma involved in recounting these events, my recall of specific names, dates, descriptions, and other details may be imprecise.

2. I have been married to [REDACTED] or 22 years, and have two children; our 22 year old son, [REDACTED] who lives at home with us, and a 27 year old daughter, [REDACTED] from a previous relationship of mine, [REDACTED] and with whom I have regular contact. I enjoy a close and loving relationship with my wife and carer who has supported me over many years. Both of my elderly parents are still living and reside together in [REDACTED]

3. By way of background, I was born on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] In my early years, I resided with my family in Richmond. I come from a noted and distinguished family of stonemasons going back many generations in Australia, with strong connections with the Catholic Church. I come from a large family of nine siblings, five brothers, and four sisters, all born between 1951-1970. I’m third eldest. My mother’s name is [REDACTED] and my father is [REDACTED] I recall that my early childhood years were quite fraught; my mother had a number of miscarriages, and was often unwell. My father worked hard in the family stonemason business; he was a strict disciplinarian. The family struggled financially. I recall my relationships at home were not straightforward or easy; I did not receive close parental supervision.

4. I attended at Burnley Primary School with my brother, [REDACTED] until I was in grade 2, at which time the family moved to Chadstone. [REDACTED] was my closest sibling; he is a few years older than me. He took me under his wing and often led me astray; we got into some mischief as children. I remember that [REDACTED] often went truant from school, and forced me to miss school with him. I did not have close relationships with most of my other siblings until later in life.

5. During those early childhood years, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I got into some trouble, missing school, stealing bikes, running away from home, getting into trouble with the police. I cannot recall the precise nature and circumstances of my being removed from my family; I believe at that time, my mother was unwell and not coping and that the family finances were low. In February 1962, when I was about seven years old, I was made a ward of the State (No.806506 Vic), and from that time on, [REDACTED] and I spent the rest of our childhood and adolescence in and out of institutional care. As such, my childhood was not very joyful. Initially I was placed at Allambie Home in Rosanna for a few months. I was then transferred to St. Joseph's Home, Surry Hills, where I was brutally mistreated and sexually abused by the Josephite nuns for a number of months. After this time, in or about July 1964, I was relocated to St. Vincent de Paul Orphanage, South Melbourne, where I remained for the next 3 years. During the above period, I recall I had intermittent contact with my family and was occasionally placed in their care. All the while, during this tumultuous period in my life, I had received little formal education only to primary school level .

6. I was discharged from St. Vincent de Paul Orphanage to the care of my parents again in 1967 when I was 12 years old, but my time at home was fraught so after a while I ran away and travelled to Sydney where I remained for 6 years or so until 1974. Whilst in Sydney, I lived in Kings Cross where I met quite a number of colourful characters, living a precarious lifestyle in a very liberated culture. Somehow, I managed to find food and shelter, and people who were willing to help me (eg. Ted Knotts, Wayside Chapel). I received some basic private tuition. I recall at this time I played guitar and was busking and doing odd jobs, to earn some money and survive. In or about 1970, I got into trouble with the police again and was sent to Daruk Youth Detention Centre in Windsor (NSW) where I remained over the next 3 years or so. I remember Daruk was a very brutal establishment where I was often predated upon and brutalised by other co-habitants. Eventually, in 1974, I was transferred back to the care of my parents who were then living in Chadstone.

7. I had little by the way of formal schooling. My institutional upbringing left me both emotionally, educationally, and vocationally disadvantaged. Despite this, in or about 1975, I managed to initially find work as a junior postal officer at Toorak Post Office. Over the next 16 years, I moved from one job to another, in the postal services, working as a cook (10 years), as a stonemason's assistant, and finally, operating my own [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) for a few years until about 1991. In the 1990's I commenced studies in a Bachelor of Arts at Latrobe University but discontinued this after a short time. Because of the medical and mental health conditions arising from the abuse I was subjected to, I have not worked for many years. I am currently in receipt of Disability Support Pension and my wife is my carer.

8. I now provide some detail surrounding the traumatic and brutal treatment to which I was subjected by the Christian Brothers whilst I resided at St.Vincent de Paul Orphanage. I acknowledge that owing to the long passage of time since these events took place, and my age at the time, as well as the trauma involved in recounting these events, my recall of specific names, dates, descriptions, and other details may be incomplete and imprecise. I cannot recall the names of any other children there at the time. The abuse to which I was subjected was multidimensional; sexual, physical/corporal, emotional/psychological, and spiritual. I clearly remember the orphanage was a severe and awful place; the Brothers were very strict and unyielding, the food was of a very poor quality, schooling was minimal, and the standards of hygiene were low (eg.we were not given toothbrushes).

9. St.Vincent de Paul Orphanage was a strictly-run establishment and the Christian Brothers were brutal in their behaviour towards the resident boys. At the time, I was known as Christopher Hallett. The boys were also cruel to one another. All the while I was there, I had received little formal education. I recall that Brother [REDACTED] I cannot recall any identifying physical features. He was a cruel man who would often administer severe corporal punishment using a leather strap or cane. He and the other Brothers would often strap me and the other boys, or drag us by our hair. I recall that Brother [REDACTED] had a set of two books/diaries in which he kept much detail about specific children or brothers who were there at the time. From time to time, I would secretly look in these books. I recall there was only one Brother who seemed kind and caring; his name was Brother Bernie King.

10. Whilst at St.Vincent de Paul Orphanage, I was an altar boy which bestowed some privileges but it also meant we were subjected to a very strict code of silence and secrecy. As such, I was unable to report the nature of any abuse or brutality to any person for fear of retribution. On the few occasions that I did, I recall I was subjected to even-greater brutality by the Brothers. The abuse there was systematic and entrenched. Aside from the canings, strappings, and being punched around the head/ears, I was routinely placed in solitary confinement (usually locked in a cupboard or tiny room for hours or days). I was also subjected to mutilation; my hands were cut with razors or knives (I still bear the scars).

11. Aside from the physical and corporal abuse and brutality, I was also subjected to demeaning sexual abuse and depravities by the Brothers. I was aware that on a number of occasions, they would hold parties/orgies. A few times, I was gang raped and sodomised by many Brothers including Br. [REDACTED] Br. [REDACTED] Br. [REDACTED] I am not certain that these were their real names because they did not match the names I saw in Br. [REDACTED] books/diaries. I was also fondled and touched inappropriately on a regular basis. Besides the abuse, I was not provided with any schooling, which has acted to further entrench my disadvantage throughout life.

**12. Recalling these events has been very traumatic; I have felt a sense of anger and resentment towards the Church and the Christian Brothers for what I was subjected to. I was not able to report these deeds to any authority figures at St. Vincent de Paul Orphanage because of the real fear of retribution, and the unstated code of silence and secrecy. Over the years, I was forced to “deal” with my demons alone; I did not even tell my wife until 7-8 years ago. I have suffered in silence. I have tried to cope as best I can by throwing myself into my work and my business dealings to distract myself and to find some purpose. I have been well-supported by Open Place.**

**13. I have been in denial. I experience dark moods at times and find it hard to manage my conflicted feelings and emotions. I suffer from anxiety, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, panic attacks, as well as cardiovascular difficulties. I have disturbed sleep and I’m troubled by nightmares. I have turned inward and blamed myself at times. My psychological state has, at times, led me to drink. I have been receiving psychological treatment since October 2008 (3 ½ years). I avoid taking medications. I also have bad teeth which I ascribe to my poor dental hygiene at the hands of the Christian Brothers.**

**14. I have struggled with former relationships. As stated above, I have been married to [REDACTED] for 22 years, and have two children; our 22 year old son, [REDACTED] who lives at home with us, and a 27 year old daughter, [REDACTED] from a previous relationship of mine, who now resides in Perth and with whom I have regular contact. I enjoy a close and loving relationship with my wife and carer who has supported me over many years. I have a few friends and family supports. I have attached a few documents to this statement to provide some background and context to my life and abuse history. I have also attached copies of letters from Open Place and from my treating psychologist. I do not have a strong religious faith and am not a practicing Catholic but remain a spiritual person.**

**15. As for my desired outcomes from this current Church process, I would like to achieve the following:**

**\*a formal apology and acknowledgement, and sense of justice being done in this matter. It has been most helpful to have the opportunity to talk openly with the Contact Person. I would like some senior person from the Christian Brothers to take responsibility for what happened to me whilst at St. Vincent de Paul Orphanage, and to provide some formal acknowledgement of the impact it has had on me, so I can move towards healing and achieve some sense of closure.**

**\* I believe I have some entitlement to an offer of financial compensation and restitution from the Christian Brothers. I continue to suffer financial hardship being on the Disability Support Pension, and my wife has had to reduce her work in order to tend to my needs. As I mentioned earlier, the Church failed in its duty of care towards me in very profound ways. Moreover, I was not provided with any schooling or education which has acted to entrench my social and vocational disadvantage throughout life. As the result of my psychological condition, I have not been able to earn a living.**

**\*I would also consider an offer for payment of my continuing psychological counselling and treatment, to assist my emotional and psychological recovery and rehabilitation.**

**\* I expect the Christian Brothers/Church authority to exercise compassion and understanding towards me in considering and assessing this complaint.**

**16. I would consider meeting with Christian Brothers/Church representatives and/or Towards Healing personnel in progressing this matter.**

**17. I have signed the Towards Healing Privacy and Police Statements, and have had these explained to me fully by the Contact Person.**

**18. I am satisfied with the manner in which Michael Iacovino, the Towards Healing Contact Person, has conducted this Contact Interview.**

**19. I am agreeable for the Towards Healing process to continue to the next stage.**

**Signed: .....**  
**Christopher Hallett - Complainant**

**Before: .....**  
**Michael Iacovino, Contact Person for Towards Healing**

**Dated: .....**

**Eltham Counselling Service**

1117 Main Rd Eltham 3095

1<sup>st</sup> August 2011

To Whom It May Concern

Re:

Mr Christopher Hallett, DOB [REDACTED] 1955  
[REDACTED]

I have provided private psychological services to Mr Christopher Hallett since October 2008.

Recently Mr Hallett asked me to provide him with a report .

Mr Hallett is a survivor of childhood institutional care in Australia (namely, a "Forgotten Australian"). He was severely abused throughout his childhood and is experiencing long-term trauma. As a Forgotten Australian Mr Hallett is assisted by Open Place in conjunction with Victorian Department of Human Services.

In my opinion Mr Hallett suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Panic Disorder, and related depression and anxiety. As such Mr Hallett requires significant additional care and attention. Mrs [REDACTED] struggles to work as well as attend to Mr Hallett's daily needs, and has recently cut her work hours even further to support her husband.

Please contact me on [REDACTED] if you would like to discuss anything further.

Yours sincerely

Kerry Rhonda Jamieson  
ABN 64 892 559 023  
Psychologist  
Registration No 6586





# OPEN PLACE

*Support Service for Forgotten Australians*

## To Whom It May Concern.

Re: Christopher Hallett,  
DOB: [REDACTED] 1955.  
Address: [REDACTED]

*Open Place* is a support service for people who identify as Forgotten Australians. The service was launched in January 2010 as part of the Victorian Government's response to the declared needs of Victorian Forgotten Australians. "Forgotten Australians" is a term derived from the Senate Committee Report of that name which was a report on Australians who experienced institutional or out of home care as children during the last century. The Report was released in August 2004. In November 2009 Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued a National Apology to Forgotten Australians about how they were treated as children in out of home care. A Commonwealth Apology was the first of 39 Recommendations arising out of the Report.

Christopher Hallett identifies and is accepted as a Forgotten Australian and receives services and support from *Open Place*. His wife [REDACTED] as his primary carer is entitled to counselling support from *Open Place*. Both Christopher and [REDACTED] are well known to the service and respond well to the support that we are able to offer.

Of the 39 Recommendations mentioned above number 25 is particularly pertinent to the case of Christopher Hallett:

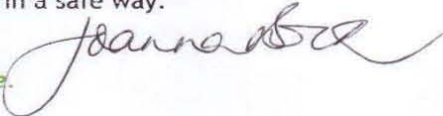
*That the Commonwealth and State Governments in providing funding for health care and in the development of health prevention programs, especially mental health, depression, suicide prevention and drug and alcohol prevention programs, recognise and cater for the health needs and requirements of care leavers.*

This recommendation is based on the findings of the Report:

*"The legacy of their childhood experiences for far too many has been low self esteem, lack of confidence, depression, fear and distrust, anger, shame guilt, obsessiveness, social anxieties, phobias and recurring nightmares...For far too many the emotional problems and depressions have resulted in contemplation of or actual suicide. Anecdotal evidence has shown an abnormally large percentage of suicides among care leavers".*

It is true to say that as Forgotten Australians reach their later years they become more fragile. Many Forgotten Australians have found it hard to gain or maintain employment such is their lack of education but also their lack of self worth and mental stability. Lack of due care and attention in childhood has led to poor physical and mental health in adulthood. Christopher is a highly vulnerable and fragile man as a direct consequence of his experiences as a child in institutional care. His mental health is constantly at risk and he requires daily support to maintain an outlook on life that does not place him at further risk. Without the day to day support of his wife, Josie, Christopher would not be able to manage his daily life in a safe way.

Joanna Bock  
Manager, *Open Place*.



27 April 2011

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