

THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Witness Statement of Massimo [REDACTED]

I, MASSIMO [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] DPA [REDACTED] will say
as follows:-

1. I am a trustee of Church of Scientology Religious Education College Inc, which is a charity registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ABN 93741842528) and which owns and is responsible for Churches of Scientology in England. I am providing this statement in answer to a request to contribute to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse investigation into Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings.
2. The worldwide Church of Scientology comprises thousands of Churches, Missions and Groups found in more than 160 countries. Most of these bodies are separate legal entities, but they all recognise the ecclesiastical authority of the mother church, Church of Scientology International, which is based in California. In this statement I refer to the Church of Scientology in this country.
3. As I will explain in more detail below and in the exhibits, the Church has had extensive policies and procedures designed to safeguard all persons, including children and vulnerable adults, from harm and abuse for several decades. The entire ethos of our Church is in the direction of helping people to become more moral and ethical in their lives and encouraging them to provide help to, and not to harm, others. In recent years we have augmented our policies and procedures to embrace the legal and societal developments and improved knowledge and guidance now available in the area of protection, and that work is continuing.

Background and overview of the Church of Scientology

4. The Scientology religion was founded by author and humanitarian Mr. L. Ron Hubbard. Mr Hubbard was interested in the workings of the mind, and his research in this area led him to publish a book called "Dianetics" in 1950 – which provided a simple talking therapy that anyone could use to improve their mental wellbeing. It also spawned a grass roots movement, which spread very quickly around the world. Mr Hubbard's further research and experience of people using Dianetics led him to conclude that man did not just have a mind but was a spiritual being – and out of that conclusion the religion of Scientology was born. The first Scientology Church was created in 1954. Mr Hubbard continued to research and develop the subject all the way to his death in 1986, leaving a legacy of many tens of thousands of pages of materials covering techniques, policies, procedures and underlying philosophy. I have included as Exhibit MA1 a short description of the history and teachings of Scientology in a paper intitled "Fundamentals of the Scientology Religion". The Inquiry may also be aware that in 2013 the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom found that Scientology was a religion and ordered that Scientology Churches be registered as Places of Religious Worship. That judgment also provides a reasonable description of Scientology, and I have therefore included it as Exhibit MA2. Further information on Scientology can also be found by viewing the Scientology television channel – which can be found in this country on several platforms, including the internet at scientology.tv
5. In brief summary: Scientology teaches that one is an immortal spirit and that one lives life after life in successive physical bodies. It further teaches that Man is basically good, but that one's true nature has become aberrated due to one's enmeshment with the physical universe, and in particular due to transgressions one has committed against others, which one feels guilty about and is not willing to take responsibility for. Scientology seeks to free you as a spiritual being by providing a path which you can follow to (1) become certain that you are a spirit and (2) realise your true nature. That path includes helping you to resolve anything in your life which is preventing you being free and happy. When one is fully aware that one is a spirit, one also recognizes that nothing in the physical universe can really harm one, and one measures one's value only by how much help one can provide to others. In Scientology the amount of real help an individual provides to others is the index of their spiritual progress.
6. To achieve this end the Church provides hundreds of different services through its volunteer staff. These include direct help to individuals with whatever they need

through chaplains and ministers, through enlightenment and training courses, and through ministering many different spiritual exercises in a practice known as “auditing” - which is ministered both congregationally and one-to-one. In its Scientology judgment the Supreme Court correctly stated that the aim of auditing is to help people “to free themselves from material influences of the physical universe and so attain greater spiritual awareness”.

7. I have myself been a member of a Scientology religious order, known as the Sea Organisation, for 33 years, and a trustee of Church of Scientology Religious Education College Inc since 1997. I am currently one of 3 trustees, and I have particular responsibility for legal matters and am the safeguarding lead. Churches of Scientology in England are staffed exclusively by volunteers many of whom are members of a religious order. We have about 700 volunteers staffing our English churches in Manchester, Sunderland, Brighton, London, Birmingham, Plymouth and East Grinstead. Our English headquarters are based in East Grinstead. Most English members of my religious order live communally in Crowborough, and work in East Grinstead. Scientologists and Scientology groups are widely spread across England and Wales and consist of people of all ages.
8. We provide services and help to anyone who wants them, regardless of whether the person identifies as a Scientologist. Currently the English Church sends its newsletters to about 100,000 people, and on average 1,700 people visit our English Churches each week to participate in services or activities.
9. Overall management of the Church in England is carried out from East Grinstead, but each individual Church also exercises a certain amount of autonomy, and has its own head and executive council. In terms of safeguarding and protection issues all staff members (and indeed all Scientologists) have a responsibility in this area. All Scientologists are required to provide a written report to the Ethics Department of their local Church should they notice anything wrong, even if it is just matters that lead to a suspicion, so that they can be investigated. Written reports may be preceded by a verbal report in cases of emergency. Depending of the seriousness of the matter reports may be passed up to senior Ethics personnel, and further escalated to the legal officer (my equivalent in the local Church) and its head. Reports may then also be shared with East Grinstead, including myself – the person with overall responsibility for this area in this country. I will describe these procedures in more detail below. On occasion we work with the police and other agencies when this is required.

10. Before a person can become a volunteer staff member we carry out a detailed review of their background, including any criminal history and their ethical record. DBS checks are also carried out if they are likely to be involved with children. Further scrutiny occurs before a person is given any position of authority, including of their personnel and ethics files (which are kept for all staff members). An ethics file contains a person's ethical record, and consists of commendations (when a person has done something good worthy of particular acknowledgment) , reports (written by the person them self or others, when their conduct may have fallen short) and the records of any investigations carried out by the Ethics department.
11. In brief outline, we do everything we can to ensure that our Churches are friendly and safe places for children. This includes risk assessing the physical environment to avoid things which could cause injury, training our staff to spot and report on any points which appeared to be inconsistent with how something should be (and taking action to address that), not having as volunteer staff any person below the school leaving age and requiring any minors attending to be accompanied by a responsible adult.
12. Some years ago members of the religious order were allowed to live in the order with children. However it was recognized that this did not create an ideal environment for raising children. Accordingly, since 1987, a member of the religious order has had to leave the order if they wished to have children. They can return when the children are grown up. A registered school that we used to have was closed.

Activities involving unsupervised access to children

13. The Church organises its activities so as to not involve unsupervised access to children.
14. There are a number of activities which may involve children:
 - a. Congregational services and events. Children attending these will be accompanied by their parents or another responsible adult organized by their parents
 - b. Visits to a children's play area and refectory. Again they must be supervised by their parents or a responsible adult organized by their parents
 - c. Community events. Throughout the year events are organized in the grounds of the Church to which the public in general are invited. This includes an ice

rink at Christmas, an Easter Egg hunt and a medieval fair. We carry out normal risk assessments and only use staff who have been thoroughly scrutinized through our staff criminal history checks and ethics records. The activities occur in public areas, and again children will be supervised by their own parents or other responsible adults organized by their parents.

- d. Children may participate in Scientology services, but only with signed parental consent. These can consist of auditing or courses. While auditing may occur one to one in specialized rooms, these sessions are monitored by video link by a case supervisor. Because the auditing of minors in this fashion only occurs infrequently, and is supervised by a case supervisor, there has not been a requirement, to date, for auditors or case supervisors to have a DBS check or to undergo specialized training on working with children and child protection. Courses are provided in large classrooms with numbers of students. A child's parents or a responsible adult organized by the parents is responsible for supervising children when they are not actually receiving auditing or on a course. It is also required that the child themselves must want to receive the auditing or do the course. It may be noted that auditing consists of spiritual exercises of many kinds and can be ministered to anyone who is old enough to understand what is going on. Most auditing of minors is ministered by their own parents at home and in informal settings. It is unusual for a minor to receive auditing in a specialized auditing room in the Church before their mid to late teens.

- 15. All staff around the Church are trained to spot and immediately take steps to see corrected and/or report any non-optimum or suspicious circumstances. This includes noticing what we term "bad indicators" being displayed by any person, including children, that they may encounter. I will describe this in more detail below.

Incidents of allegations of child sexual abuse within the religious community

- 16. There are no known allegations of child sexual abuse within the English Church in the last 10 years.
- 17. About 20 years ago there was an incident reported to the police which resulted in a prosecution. The victim was given pastoral support and auditing to help her to deal with the incident, including her own guilt about what had happened.

Policies and procedures

18. It is a core principle of the Scientology religion that transgressions against others, and causing harm to others, is the primary reason for spiritual degradation. Scientology teaches that spiritual advancement is only achieved by not transgressing against or causing harm to others, and indeed is only achieved by those who actively help others. There are many hundreds of pages of Scientology materials devoted to this area. The importance of children, and safeguarding their welfare, is also stressed throughout Scientology materials. A selection of relevant material is included in Exhibit MA3.
19. Exhibit MA3 contains the following documents and extracts:
 - a. CLEAN HANDS MAKE A HAPPY LIFE (Bulletin 5 October 1961). This is the essential Scientology teaching that transgression against mores destroys happiness.
 - b. THE WAY TO HAPPINESS (1980). Here are extracts from the central moral code of Scientologists, including the sections entitled "Don't be Promiscuous", "Love and Help Children" and "Don't do anything Illegal".
 - c. KNOWLEDGE REPORTS (Policy 22 July 1982). This is the policy requiring members of the Church to write a report to the ethics department if they encounter any Scientologist engaging in non-optimum conduct (that is to say conduct contrary to the moral codes of a Scientologist). This serves two purposes: firstly, it allows ethics personnel to assist a person to address their own ethical lapses, and secondly, it enables ethics personnel to investigate, and if necessary to take action to protect the community. It is a principle of Scientology that Scientologists do not spread "gossip" or disreputable rumours about others, but instead they write a report so that actual facts can be established, and effective action taken to address a situation should that be required.
 - d. STAFF MEMBER REPORTS (Policy 1 May 1965). This policy lists reports that all staff members of the Church are required to make to the ethics department, including reporting any crimes or suspected crimes. The ethics department evaluates all reports received, assesses whether further investigation or corrective action is required, and acts accordingly.
 - e. THINGS THAT SHOULDN'T BE (Policy 15 August 1965). This policy directs Scientologists to write confidential reports for further investigation to the ethics department on anything that they see in the Church that they do not like.

- f. **CONFESSIONALS – ETHICS REPORTS REQUIRED** (Policy 10 March 1982).
Confessionals are a part of Scientology and sometimes people will disclose unethical behavior of others during a confessional session. This policy requires a report on that to be sent to the ethics department.
- g. **THE TONE SCALE** (last edition 1994). This is one of many teachings in the Church that staff are trained on to spot the emotional tone of people and children they encounter at the Church. This training directs the attention of staff to those who are doing well and those who may be in need of help (for whatever reason). A person or child who seemed to be doing less well in life, was less happy or more introverted than before, are all indications that some problem has arisen which needs to be addressed.
- h. **OFFENSES AND PENALTIES** (Policy 7 March 1965, last revised 10 January 1991). This policy lists out matters considered to be offences in Scientology. This list includes "Knowingly using Scientology to obtain sexual relations or restimulation" and "Seducing a minor". It also provides how each offence is addressed, which for more serious offences can involve a Court of Ethics, an Ethics Hearing or a Committee of Evidence. A Court of Ethics or an Ethics Hearing is convened and presided over by an Ethics Officer. A Court of Ethics is used to determine what disciplinary action should happen for relatively minor matters when there are no factual disputes. An Ethics Hearing is used where the Ethics Officer needs to obtain more information. A Committee of Evidence is convened by the Ethics Department for more serious matters. A Committee of Evidence is a fact-finding body composed of 3 to 5 impartial peers of the person. Its role is to establish the facts and to provide a full report and recommendation back to the Ethics Department. It will interview witnesses and the interested parties on tape, and will put all accusations to the interested parties. It can recommend expulsion from the Church, as the most extreme sanction. More usual remedies are requirements to re-train and numbers of hours on designated amends projects.
- i. **COMMITTEES OF EVIDENCE, SCIENTOLOGY JURISPRUDENCE, ADMINISTRATION OF** (Policy 7 September 1963). This policy sets out how justice procedures are organized and administered in the Church.
- j. **EMPLOYMENT OF CRIMINALS FORBIDDEN** (Policy 23 November 1959). This policy of the Church forbids any person who has committed crimes in the eyes of the law from being a staff member of the Church. If they are guilty of any unpunished crimes, they must clear it up with the law of the area, and Church will also assist them to do so.

k. MINORS (Policy 22 December 2014, last revised 13 June 2019). This issue forbids any person under 18 from joining Church staff in the United Kingdom.

20. While these key examples of policies and procedures within the Church extend far wider than child protection, they provide a very robust framework for safeguarding children. Our policies and practices are such that potential situations are very likely to be "caught in the bud" and not develop into a serious issue. Moreover, any would be perpetrator in the Church would know that it would be impossible to keep abuse secret for any period of time. Not only would their victims expose them, but the degree of vigilance of everyone in the Church is extremely high.

21. All staff are trained in the policies and procedures listed above, as well as many others which would help to safeguard children. The Church has a constant programme of training staff and re-training staff where any weakness in their knowledge or skills is noticed. It is the policy that all staff spend at least 12 and a half hours a week on training and development.

22. The Church only accepts as staff persons who are adults and who have a good ethical record. In addition to the background checks carried out by the ethics department staff applicants have to complete an extensive life history questionnaire, an example of which is at Exhibit MA4. If a person has committed crimes for which they have not been punished they must clear this up with the police and the courts before they can join staff. If they have a history of any serious crime this would disqualify them. More recently we have started doing DBS checks. Trustees and staff who have worked closely with children have had checks since about 2002. We have a target to do the DBS check on all staff. At Exhibit MA5 is the application form for staff volunteers – who we refer to as "active participants". Among the pledges that applicants are required to make is one to "uphold the highest degree of personal ethical conduct and at all times be familiar with and observe the ecclesiastical, moral and ethical policies, rules, norms and practices of the Scientology religion".

Arrangements in place to respond to allegations of child sexual abuse

23. The Church's systems in place to respond to allegations of child sexual abuse are outlined above. I am not aware of any instance where a member of staff in the Church in England has abused that position in order to sexually abuse a child, or been accused of doing so.

24. A staff applicant who admitted to having engaged in under age sexual activity when they were young would not qualify for staff unless they cleared that with the law first. Given the prevalence of under age sex in today's society, unsurprisingly this does arise from time to time. Even between consenting children, that is a crime, and it is treated as such by the Church.
25. While we do not currently keep separate records specific to child protection issues, we keep ethics files for all personnel and parishioners. All reports of any criminal, immoral or bad conduct are kept in a person's ethics file if they are a member of the Church. They are kept securely in the ethics department, and access is restricted to ethics personnel and senior staff. A person is also usually entitled to see their own ethics file, and indeed that occurs if an ethics officer is looking into a matter and seeks their response to reports that have been received. The ethics department consists of a Chief Ethics Officer, Ethics Officers and Assistant Ethics Officers specifically for staff members and for public, and administrative support personnel.
26. If a staff member commits a criminal act they cease to be eligible for staff and will be dismissed. For other ethical lapses a Committee of Evidence (usually made up of 3 to 5 of their peers) will recommend an appropriate disciplinary sanction and correction. This would usually consist of an amends project of some kind, commensurate with the wrong found. They can also be prohibited from receiving auditing until they have completed such a project or completed retraining in the area of failure. Moreover, while matters are under investigation, the ethics department can issue what is called a "Non-Enturbulation order" to a person, requiring them not to engage in certain activities or be in contact with someone they are alleged to have harmed in some fashion. The most severe sanction is expulsion from the Church itself. If the issue involved sexual abuse the person would not be allowed to participate in the regular activities of the Church, even as a member of the public, until he had fully sorted out his situation with the law and made appropriate reparations.

Internal information sharing

27. All staff members agree that information concerning personal ethical matters can be shared with other Scientology churches, including the Church of Scientology International. In practice this means the head office in East Grinstead will receive reports of any matters which are serious, or which may have a bearing on any future staffing arrangements. A copy of all Ethics Orders can be accessed by those who need

to know at the head office, as well as in the local Church. This would include myself, if it touched on something legal.

28. We have robust systems for handling and responding to any kind of allegation.

Awareness raising

29. While we have had effective systems for several decades, we have taken cognizance of the cultural, societal and legal shifts towards safeguarding issues and in particular towards protecting children and vulnerable adults. We are in the process of creating an overall practice and guidance manual for staff specific to these areas. To assist this project we engaged a consultant last year, Mrs Susan Rush MA. Cert Ed. Dip SEN, Dip SpID, Dip Management, who is an independent advisor on Safeguarding and Child Protection.

30. As an intermediate measure, in addition to all of the training our staff normally receive, they had made available to them a copy of the NSPCC "Worried about a child?" booklet – which contains guidance on all the common types of child abuse, the signs to look for and how to ensure that children get the help that they need. A copy of this is at Exhibit MA6. I have also taken a course for safeguarding leaders. We will be doing a lot more of this in the future.

Complaints, victims and survivors

31. We do not have any recent or ongoing allegations of child sexual abuse against staff in the English Church. It is an issue that comes up from time to time with parishioners, involving persons external to the Church and usually from a time before they were involved with the Church. We have a lot of ways of assisting the victims of such crimes to resolve any trauma they may still be experiencing. Many auditing procedures help people get to the root of different traumas and help them to put them behind them. Our training helps people to understand why people commit such crimes, and also to become more effective at dealing with any efforts to cause them harm.

32. The Church is funded by parishioners' contributions for many of the individual services they receive. However, no donation is requested from people helped by the ethics department, or for the pastoral assistance of the Chaplains.

33. No civil claims have ever been made against the Church in England and Wales in respect of child sexual abuse.

Relationship with other statutory organisations

34. We have not yet had a situation where there has been a need to share information with the local Authority regarding persons on Church staff. We have shared information with them in the past concerning situations that have come to our attention external to the church (although not in the last 5 years). We do not yet have a formal policy in this area.

35. We work with the police from time to time, but this has not concerned the area of child sexual abuse for many years. In the mid 1990s a non-Scientologist working in a local school was discovered to have sexually abused some Scientologists' children. This was discovered when those children received auditing. It was reported to the police, who captured this man. He subsequently received a 5-year prison sentence.

Vetting and barring

36. We do not have many staff who have worked with children to the degree that a DBS check is legally required. Nevertheless we use Atlantic Data Ltd for this purpose. Our system of checks for new staff has always been extremely thorough, however we have decided to do this for all staff. This will be implemented in the near future.

Auditing, inspection and oversight

37. As child sexual abuse has not been an issue in the English Church in the last 10 years, there are no such reports. We are presently reviewing our policy and procedure in this particular area, with a view to producing practice guidance specific to it.

Resources

38. As mentioned above, the Church relies on volunteer resources. There is some expenditure of money in this area, but I am afraid that I could not quantify it.

Interfaith work

39. The Church engages in a lot of interfaith work, but not yet involving this area.

Charity status and interaction with the Charity Commission

40. The English Church is registered as a charity in Australia and does not fall within the remit of the Charity Commission for England and Wales. It has not so far been asked to do anything relating to child protection.

Other matters

41. We are aware that other religious organisations have had particular issues in relation to child sexual abuse. It is very difficult to generalise because different religious organisations operate in many different ways. Some are very capable at policing ethical and moral behavior themselves, others less so.

42. The Church would certainly welcome some common materials and some common training requirements – provided these were not too heavy handed.

43. We are not aware how serious a problem this is in this country and hope that this will be determined by the inquiry. We suspect that the combination of the attention now given to this area and the rise of social media and camera phones will significantly reduce the number of offences of this kind.

44. It is important that children themselves receive some education on what adult behavior is unacceptable and have a safe way of reporting this. This would best be done through schools, rather than religious organisations.

45. I have done my best to cover everything the Inquiry has requested but am happy to provide any further information should this be required.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Sign:

DPA

Dated22 November 2019.....