

Barrett Adolescent Centre Commission of Inquiry

BARRETT ADOLESCENT CENTRE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

*Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950**Section 5(1)(b)*

STATEMENT OF ELAYNE MAY RAISIN

Name of Witness:	Elayne May Raisin
Date of birth:	
Current address:	
Occupation:	Teacher Aide
Contact details (phone/email):	Phone: Email:
Statement taken by:	David Thompson and Stacey Parker

I **ELAYNE MAY RAISIN** make oath and state as follows:

1. I make this statement in relation to the Commission of Inquiry into the closure of the Barrett Adolescent Centre in Wacol (**BAC**).
2. I am a Teacher Aide at the Barrett Adolescent Centre Special School in Tennyson. I have held this role on a contract basis since September 2010 and on a permanent basis since May 2011. I worked at the Barrett Adolescent Centre Special School when it was co-located with the BAC in Wacol, and when it operated from Yeronga on a temporary basis (**BAC School**).

Events leading up to the closure of the BAC

3. The closure of the BAC was extremely upsetting for me and my colleagues at the BAC School.
4. I am aware that then Minister for Health, Lawrence Springborg made the announcement about the closure of the BAC on 6 August 2013. Prior to this, I recall Mr Springborg visiting the BAC at the request of Anastasia Palaszczuk and Greg Fowler, and I remember Mr Springborg having a meeting with some of our students, parents and staff.

I do not recall when this visit occurred. I do

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recall that someone said that they were going to try to stop Mr Springborg from coming and that Sharon Kelly had to approve this visit. Both Sharon Kelly and Lesley Dwyer came down to the unit after he arrived.

5. The day after the announcement the Principal of the BAC School, Kevin Rodgers, and the Head of Nursing Staff, arranged a meeting for the BAC School staff and BAC nursing staff to tell the adolescents about the closure of the BAC, as they wanted to break the news to the students rather than them see it on the television. They also asked the Chaplain for The Park – Centre for Mental Health, to attend this meeting.
6. I recall that we attempted to start packing up the BAC School after this time, but we had to stop packing because the adolescents were so upset by this.
7. In September 2013, Dr Trevor Sadler was stood down. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
8. I do not recall any support being offered to the adolescents or the BAC School staff during this difficult time – no one knew what was happening. I remember the Queensland Teachers Union visiting the BAC. I believe that the purpose of this visit was to talk to the teaching staff about job security, but I belong to a different union, so I did not participate in these discussions.
9. The BAC was in lockdown for a long time after this – I recall that the BAC was in lockdown for all of December 2013 at least. The adolescents were not permitted to take unescorted leave during this time. I know this because the BAC School staff had access to, and could contribute information, to the adolescents' clinical charts. Also, every morning we would have a handover meeting with the nursing staff about what was going on with the students and what had happened overnight. I recall that when the teaching staff asked why the BAC was in lockdown, the nursing staff said that their administration did not want any incidents to occur.

10. [REDACTED]

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11.

12. The last day of the school term that year was 13 December 2013. I recall that some teaching staff came in through the school holidays in December 2013, then on 4 January 2014, when we were originally supposed to move to Yeronga, however Yeronga was not yet available, so the move was delayed for another two weeks.

After the closure of the BAC

13.

14.

15.

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16.

[REDACTED]

17.

[REDACTED]

18.

[REDACTED]

19.

[REDACTED] Later that day, I recall seeing a lot of messages on Facebook which made me feel uneasy. I suspected that something was not right, so I rang Liam to ask him if he knew what was going on. He told me he had not heard anything, but would ring someone and find out.

20.

[REDACTED] All the BAC School staff were talking about it. I recall Kevin arranging a staff briefing and either Kevin or Debbie Rankin arranging for Dan Mobbs and two other people from Headspace to visit the BAC School to provide support to staff. I also remember the Senior Guidance Officer, Donna Lloyd, being involved in this.

21.

[REDACTED]

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22. The Department of Education did not offer the BAC School staff much support until [REDACTED]. After this happened, Mark Campling, a public servant from the Department of Education visited the BAC School and gave us the phone number for the Optum helpline. I recall Debbie asking the Department to send someone from Optum to the BAC School to speak to staff one-on-one, on a voluntary basis. [REDACTED]

Current situation

23. The school was relocated to Tennyson in 2015. During the last few months of 2014, some BAC teaching staff went over to Tennyson to meet the staff and see how their service ran. A few of the BAC teaching staff helped the Tennyson staff with their roster.
24. I am aware that both Kevin and Darren Bate took stress leave because of everything that happened with the BAC. Stress levels at the BAC School remain extremely high even now.
25. The BAC School caters for a very similar cohort as when it was co-located with the BAC at Wacol, but without any clinical support. [REDACTED] If a student needs medical attention, we now have to call the ambulance, which can take up to 20 minutes to half an hour to attend the BAC School. When we were co-located with the BAC at Wacol, BAC School staff would have a nurse on hand and could call the BAC nurses if we needed and they would immediately come and collect the student from the BAC school, and treat them at the BAC.
26. [REDACTED]
27. Some students can be physically threatening. I recall two or three times where different [REDACTED] students trashed property and rooms at the BAC School. [REDACTED]

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- [REDACTED]
28. If there was an adolescent who was being threatening when we were co-located with the BAC at Wacol, we would call security – the BAC rarely called the police unless it was after hours, and security was not available. We do not have any security at the BAC School now, and we do not have any agreement with the local police – the police usually just send officers from whatever station has capacity at the time. [REDACTED]
29. The BAC School generally caters for students that no one else can cope with – this has not changed, but what has changed is our control over the admissions process. When we were co-located with the BAC at Wacol, the adolescents were referred to the BAC School through the BAC nurses. Now, Senior Guidance Officers from other schools contact us with a referral form that must include details of their psychiatrist or any other psychiatric support. We try to liaise with the students' treating psychiatrists, but this is no substitute for being co-located with the BAC.
30. I understand that the BAC School was initially meant to focus on students with anxiety issues, rather than those with behavioural issues, but we seem to have a lot more adolescents with behavioural issues these days. This has led to students with anxiety issues staying away from the BAC School because they cannot cope with the students with behavioural issues.
31. I personally do not cope with violence very well. I used to look forward to going to work, but some days I dread going to work now. [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] I find it really hard to talk about everything that happened – generally, I try not to think about it because I cannot even speak about [REDACTED] these days without bursting into tears.

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OATHS ACT 1867 (DECLARATION)

I ELAYNE MAY RAISIN do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

- (1) This written statement by me is true to the best of my knowledge and belief: and
- (2) I make this statement knowing that if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything I know to be false.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the *Oaths Act 1867*.

.....Signature

Taken and declared before me at Brisbane this 9th day of February 2016.

Taken By
Justice of the Peace / Commissioner for Declarations / Lawyer

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