ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
MĀORI HEARING

Under	The Inquiries Act 2013
In the matter of	The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions
Royal Commission:	Ms Julia Steenson Dr Anaru Erueti Mr Paul Gibson Judge Coral Shaw Ali'imuamua Sandra Alofivae
Counsel:	Ms Julia Spelman, Mr Kingi Snelgar, Mr Wiremu Rikihana, Mr Luke Claasen, Ms Maia Wikaira, Ms Alisha Castle, Ms Tracey Norton, Ms Season-Mary Downs, Ms Alana Thomas, Mr Winston McCarthy, Mr Simon Mount QC, Ms Kerryn Beaton QC for the Royal Commission Ms Melanie Baker, Ms Julia White and Mr Max Clarke-Parker for the Crown Mr James Meagher for the Catholic Church Ms Fiona Guy Kidd for the Anglican Church Ms Sonya Cooper, Ms Amanda Hill as other counsel attending
Venue:	Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Tumutumuwhenua Marae 59b Kitemoana Road Ōrākei AUCKLAND
Date:	17 March 2022

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

INDEX

HARRIS SISTERS
Questioning by Ms Norton 618

STUART HARRIS
Questioning by Ms Hill 659

LEE HARRIS
Questioning by Ms Norton 698

COMMISSIONER ERUETI: Tēnā koutou katoa, and welcome back to our final session of the day for our last witness. I'm going to pass now to Counsel Assisting Ms Tracey Norton who will introduce our next witness. Kia ora.

LEE HARRIS

MS NORTON: Tēnā tātou katoa. I am here with Lee Harris who will introduce herself shortly. Lee will be appearing via Zoom. Lee was raised by her nanny and her koro. An emerging theme throughout this hearing has been the importance of honouring those mothers who lost their children. Lee would like to do that today for her nanny and we will start with some kōrero about her nanny and her Koro. Lee will articulate the intergenerational harm done to her whānau because of the State's actions in 1964. Lee will also share her whakaaro on the State's role in terms of that harm.

I would like to now hand the time over to Lee to introduce herself. Ko wai koe, nō hea koe (who are you and where are you from?)

A. Kia ora, Tracey. Just before we begin, I just wanted to open up with a quick waiata. (

Waiata : He rangatira nō Ngāpuhi, he tangata toa, te mana nui o te iwi Māori. Kia hiwa rā , Hone Heke. Hone Heke, Hone Heke.

[English: A chief of Ngāpuhi, of great man, an authority of the Māori people, Hone Heke.].

Kia ora, Tracey. I just wanted to open up with that little waiata today, it just helps me reconnect with our tangata toa, and it's at these times that we need to reconnect to that, so kia ora. My name is Lee Harris, and I am –-- you heard from my mother and her sisters earlier, my mother is Te Enga, she is the eldest of the eight siblings who were taken in care. And Mum's already given the whakapapa earlier, so I'm happy to leave that there, kia ora.

Q. So Lee can you tell us why it is so important for you to kōrero today?

A. Yes, yes, for me I'm speaking for my grandmother today, my grandparents but specifically my grandmother. I'm a grandmother today myself and my grandparents never got this opportunity to speak and so having had the privilege of being raised by them in their house, I'm here today to speak on my experiences of living with this,-- with our family.

Q. And can you tell us today how many descendants that your nanny and koro have?

A. Yes, I did the maths earlier, and, as we're the second family on both sides, but just for the purpose of this, my grandparents had eight children and their mokos and great mokos, there's about 80 plus, I can't give a definite number because unfortunately I have first cousins out there I have never met today, so I can't give a definite number, but it's definitely in excess of 80 plus.

Q. And can you also share how long you were in their care?

A. Yes, I recall being dropped off in their care preschool, so I can't give a definite age, but I do know I was before school. And I slowly move out come about college, so a good 10 years, a good 10 years. And I'm just grateful that later I had the privilege of my grandmother coming to live with me later on in life, so yeah, what an honour.

Q. And can you share a little bit about what it was like growing up in their whare?

A. Yes. Yeah, look my grandfather's, he's 60 when I'm born and there is a 12--year gap between my two grandparents and my grandmother's 48 and –-- oh, we had a good – --we had a good household, you know, my grandparents were firm but fair, my grandfather specifically, Nanny's always a bit of a pushover, but Granddad was firm but fair, he was - even though he was heavily religious, I'm grateful for the fact he never forced religion on us. So I -was –- I didn't have any religious conditioning put on me growing up in their household, even though he was -tūturu Katorika. Nanny had to change from Rātana to Katorika to marry him so she just left her hāhi to the side, so –-- but, yeah, no, look, we were pretty much, as long as we behaved, they were there providing whatever we needed, whatever they could provide for us and, you know, life was pretty basic, you were pretty much free to do your own thing as long as you kept yourself out of trouble and got home before the street lights turned on.

Q. Kia ora, and to finish off this section I only have one other pātai. Did your nanny or koro ever speak to you about having their children removed from their care?

A. Yes, over time, over time Nanny would share stories over time, you know, obviously when she felt in a comfortable space. Sorry, the other thing too, I just remembered before we come away from that, what I noticed growing up was my grandmother did a lot of sleeping and another thing I need to remember here is my grandfather is deaf so, unfortunately, he's not very sociable because it gets really hard yelling at somebody trying to communicate. So he's very much –-- spends a lot of time on his own singing himene, busting out himene whenever to keep himself company. And Nanny slept a lot, I think she was just largely resting. She had bad shakes and she said that she had Parkinson's. I don't know if she was diagnosed but, yeah.

Q. Tēnā koe, Lee. These next pātai focus on the intergenerational impacts of State care on the Harris whānau from your perspective. It has to be said that what Lee is about to share is deeply personal to this whānau. Lee will bravely share her whakaaro so the Inquiry can understand the depth and width of the harm and in so doing, can contribute to change and provide hope for mokopuna to come.

I'm about to ask my first pātai. The siblings were raised by the State. How did this impact on their ability to raise their own children?

A. It had a huge, a huge impact. It had a huge impact. When you've only known abuse yourself and only been afforded abuse yourself, then your only school said, when the shoe is on the other foot, is to repeat what you know. They were abused where they were placed and they –-- whenever they called out for attention they were always told, "Oh, you need to be grateful you've got a roof over your head", more or less shut up and put up, and be grateful for it, you know. So yeah, the disempowerment for them. I've always said that the parenting style that they were shown in care was not a good one, and that's just putting it lightly. And so what sort of parents do you think they became in turn, and then now with the future generations, what sort of grandparents and now what sort of great grandparents? Because this is – --they haven't received any help, so this is ongoing. A huge impact.

Q. Has the State had ongoing involvement with your whānau?

A. Yes, unfortunately. There's a long legacy of State involvement in the whānau. Yeah, it's an ugly history. It touches on the four generations after my mother's siblings, so yeah, it's ongoing.

Q. Can we talk about Aunty Joyce in that space?

A. Yes. For me, my aunty's line, she carries it, it's really heavy in her line, and it's ugly to start off with. Now, we're talking about my Aunty Joyce who was pregnant at 12 and a mother by 13, and this child is not offered back to my grandparents, this child is further fostered out again, and so this is my cousin. I understand she's had her –-- out of her six children, I think four of them have been through the State, I think the other two were left with their father's family, thankfully for them. But also they're having children too and I understand that the State is still involved with their next generation as well. So yeah, it was wrong from the get-go, my -aunty's generation, and they're still bearing the brunt of that kino today.

Q. And we heard earlier in evidence, we heard Joyce talk about her twin sister Toni. Can you talk a little bit about Toni's child in that space of Oranga Tamariki involvement?

A. Oranga Tamariki, okay. So, well, Aunty Toni is a mum at 15 and because she's underage they take her child off her. And these are –- my aunty has two daughters, one at 15, I think one at 17, and I haven't met either of them and- they'll be in their 40's as well today. Unfortunately, they were taken away from our family. I don't even know where the first daughter ended up, but I understand the second daughter went with her father's family too, so thankfully for her she retains at least 50% of her whakapapa.

Q. So a consequence of that is that the first child has been lost to the Harris whānau?
A. As far as I'm aware, I don't know what happened to my cousin.
Q. And you've had some doubts yourself around that legacy, haven't you, Lee? If you could share that with us now.
A. Yes, growing up, growing up and you're going through hard times, and you're just drowning, you're just drowning, and you just think, well, do I want to have,- do I want to have children myself because, you know, my brothers and I –- we would discuss this, we were worried about what sort of parents we were going to be. That's the impact that this has had. For us to question if we were going to be competent parents. Because of our experiences, would we, --is it going to make or break us as parents? So one thing my brothers and I decided early in the piece was once we made the decision to have a family, we were going to stick by our family no matter what, and especially my, --with my brothers, you know, we didn't have a father in the house, a father figure, and so, you know, my brothers had decided earlier in the piece that if they were going to have children, we all decided we were going to give them everything that we wanted as a child growing up that we felt that we didn't get, and that was important for us to have a father, because none of us had one. And when I reflect back on my brothers, yes, they all stood by their children and they still have their children today, so I mihi to my brothers for that.
Q. So in terms of Te Enga's children, you were actually able to break that cycle, would that be correct?
A. Yeah, through a lot of hard work, through a lot of hard work, yeah, we've done our best to try and turn things around because, you know, I've come to the realisation earlier in the piece, through my own experience, you know, children don't ask to be born, you know, and it's your duty to protect them. So yeah.
Q. Were your cousins, do they have similar stories to share or is it –-- is that not the case?
A. Look - sorry-, I forgot to add, my mother, because she's the eldest of her siblings, my brothers and I, we're the eldest of the mokos, and so there's a bit of a gap there. They've similar experiences, I think a lot of them don't have children, you know, for whatever reason, it's not always easy, an easy topic to talk about and share such a personal space. So, you know, no doubt they've had the same feelings that we've had, been in the same boat that we've been in.
Q. I want to turn to mental health which has been raised a number of times throughout this hearing. Arguably not an impact of the State but certainly a contributor to the siblings being removed from their parents' care. You have some reflections, some whakaaro that

you want to share in terms of mental health within the whānau; can you do that now, Lee, please?

A. Reflections on mental health. Sorry –

Q. Certainly in respect of your grandmother, your nanny?

A. Right.

Q. Can we start there?

A. Sure, yeah, of course, where else is there to start? You know, growing up with my grandmother, I didn't even know, I didn't even know she had – that --either of them had mental health issues. You know, we had a stable home, so it wasn't until I'm in college that my grandmother has a breakdown in my lifetime and I get to see firsthand- my grandmother unwell and, wow, she's just a complete different person. – --and I'm left looking at this person who looks like my nanny but you're not my nanny, who are you? But like I said, when I look back and think what triggered that, what was different, and it was stress, it was stress. She was triggered by stress.

Q. She was also treated by the State for mental health and we heard your mother share a story about her visit with her mum?

A. Yeah.

Q. You wanted to talk about that, so can you speak to that?

A. Yes, yes. So my mum talked about running away and making her wait and finding her mum, my nanny in Oakley Hospital. Now, I think my mum's nine, not even 10, and she's just wanting to offload to her mum, you know, she's trying to find a safe place and trying to –-- every child wants to be with their mum. And when they –-- when she more or less threatens them to come down and bring her mother to her, I understand that my grandmother was just a vegetable and not in her right state of mind.

Now, I've seen my grandmother in that state, and it's not nice. You can't - – you know, the lights are on but there's -no one home and in terms of a child trying to plea for some help to basically a vegetable, it must have been so distraughtful- for my mother that her calls for help are falling on deaf ears because she's just a shell. You know, my grandmother talks about receiving electric shock treatment, and she shared that with the family over the years. She's always said she would never wish that on her worst enemy, that experience.

And I have to –-- I've often wondered over the years, who in their right mind thought that electric brain treatment, electric shock treatment was a therapy? Because for me that sounds like a war torture not a therapy. And this is someone who's needing help

and they're kicking her when she's down instead of helping pick her up. So when I look at her and the hours that she spends sleeping, for me she's coping with the stress of the physical, let alone the mental stress of what she's been through because she directly accredits her shakes or Parkinson's with the electric brain shock treatment.

Q. Thank you for that, Lee. I want to move on to another part of our kōrero that is very deeply personal, and that's the sexual abuse that occurred for the siblings while they were in State care. I'll start with this pātai. Did any of the siblings escape sexual abuse while they were in care?

A. That's not my –- that's not my memory, no, from what I can see, all eight of them are more than high probability of being sexually abused as well as, you know, as if mental, emotional and physical abuse wasn't bad enough, sexual abuse was next level-.

Q. Well, we've heard from the Harris sisters earlier today and they were all touched by that. I want to really talk about the impact of that on the next generation for you and your cousins. Can we start with one of the brothers?

A. Yeah.

Q. And I can't speak his name.

A. Yeah.

Q. But can we –- and I'll ask you not to say his name, but can we start with that-?

A. Yeah, sure. So whatever these eight siblings have gone through, and they've all returned at different times, I say largely broken by their experiences, it's my description that each of the eight children all come back with a tragic story, each one just as bad, if not worse, than the last. And because none of their trauma was addressed, they're largely left to their own devices. Now, unfortunately, my uncle has returned, and now this has directly bled out into my generation.

Now, I sit here today and I'm owning that I am a sexual abuse survivor because of my uncle. And unfortunately, it's not an exclusive club, and it affects all the eldest of the granddaughters as far as I know, it could go even further. This isn't something that you talk about. So it's –-- we've been largely left, like our parents, to our own devices to cope with it. And I own that today, because I'm sick of carrying that shame. It's not my shame to carry.

But over the years I've had to counsel myself, I've had minimum counselling over the years about this, and how I feel about my uncle today, I feel indifferent to him today. I don't hate him, but I don't love him either. But if anything, I empathise with him because

for him to do that to us what happened to him, and obviously he didn't get any help either. So it's hard for me to hate him when I realise that he's probably a victim himself.

Q. Tēnā koe, Lee, for sharing that. You have talked to me about what we've coined as an unintended consequence and that has to do with one of your aunties. Can you speak to us about that now, do you feel able to do that?

A. Yeah, sorry, I'm just - -just a bit all over the place at the moment.

Q. We can take a minute, we can take a minute, so you can compose yourself.

A. If you could just refresh my memory.

Q. I appreciate this is hard.

A. If you could refresh my memory as to what you were alluding to.

Q. So there is something else that you and I talked about that, you know, you were okay to talk about, that was what we coined "an unintended consequence" and that relates to one of your aunty's stories –--

A. Yeah.

Q. –- that she shared earlier today-.

A. Yeah. I'm sorry, I'm just a bit overwhelmed at the moment, Tracey, it's just –- the stories are just overwhelming at the moment, so I need you to be a little bit more specific, sorry, if that's- okay.

Q. I wonder then if now is a good time to take a break.

A. Yeah, thank you.

COMMISSIONER ERUETI: Tēnā koutou katoa, we're going to take a short - how- much time do we need, 5 minutes? 5-minute break, thank you, kia ora.

MS NORTON: Kia ora.

COMMISSIONER ERUETI: Ka pai.

Adjournment from 4.01 pm to 4.10 pm

COMMISSIONER ERUETI: Tēnā koutou, welcome back, everyone. I just want to check with our person providing reflections on today's evidence, Ms Harris, how are you? Do you need some more time?

A. No, I'm good, thank you.

Q. Kei te pai? Okay, kia ora, haere tonu.

A. Kia ora.

QUESTIONING BY MS NORTON CONTINUED: Kia ora, Lee, and welcome back. I'm going to pick up on my last point, and you wanted to share your insights in terms of Aunty Joyce's relationship with her foster parents.

A. Yes.

Q. You can do that for us now.

A. Thank you. Yeah, so growing up, Aunty –-- Aunty still refers to her foster parents as mum and dad because that's her aroha for them and, you know, she speaks fondly regardless of things –-- of her time with them. And she's often shared how that in her time she wants to go and lie with them on their –-- with their tūpuna. This is the family that she identified with growing up.

And myself, I used to have trouble understanding how or why she would think like that, but –-- because my nanny, her mum's sitting here, but she's talking about her mum and it's –-- I have the benefit of hindsight now, so I'm able to reflect back and see that my mum has memories that are a lot stronger with my mum because she's 10 years old, but when my aunty was removed, she's 18 months, she is literally still in nappies, she's just a baby. And so this baby growing up has only bonded with these two faces, these are her world, she doesn't know her real parents over here, she just knows these parents.

In fact, when she comes back to meet the family, she's looking at strangers, she doesn't -- they have the memory for her, my mother has the memory for her, my –- any -mātāmua, especially an older daughter, takes on the relationship whether she wants to or not, she becomes a surrogate mum to the younger siblings, which is exactly what my mother was, a surrogate mum to her younger siblings.

Now, my mum's 10 years old and she knows she's got 18month twin babies that have gone and the next time she sees her little twins, my aunty is pregnant and 12, my mum is pregnant too, but my mum is 20. It's just wrong to have your eldest and your youngest daughter pregnant at the same time when there's eight years between them, with the younger daughter being underage.

So I've come to appreciate over time that my aunty only identified with them and that's through no fault of her own. So I've come to appreciate where she's coming from, and I just think that that's testimony on just how big her heart is to still continue to carry love for her whānau regardless of anything moving forward, it's just phenomenal, it's just a huge testimony to her.

Q. I want to move on to whānau connection, and I'll start this part with what the Harris sisters termed as "the reunion". When all the siblings were removed by the State they ranged in age from zero to 10 in age. What do you consider were the impacts of them of not seeing each other for 10 years and not being able to be together until they effectively aged out of care? Can you share your whakaaro and insights on that?

A. Yeah, sure. 10 years, that's a big gap not to see anybody at any age, let alone at such impressionable ages, you know, these are the years of formative years where they should be forming bonds and growing together as a family. They have now been separated and forcibly reconnected into somewhere else where they don't belong to really, and they're strangers, they're strangers. When they come back after a 10-year gap, they're strangers.

My aunty, who comes back at 12, who it isn't even explained to that she's coming back to her real family – how traumatic for her to be sitting there wondering what's going on, who are these strange people, why are they all looking at me and they all seem to know who I am. I've had those experiences myself. It's not nice to be looking at a whole group of strangers but they all seem to think they know you and your life. Yeah, you feel quite exposed I must admit.

But in terms of the impact, they were never returned back to live together again with their parents. They were never reunited to ever come back as a family of ten. That's hugely detrimental to their relationship, first and foremost as siblings, but also to us, the future uri coming through, because if they're strangers to each other, how are they going to have a strong aunty, uncle relationship with the next uri coming through?

Q. Is that the case today, what does the relationship look like today, between the siblings?

A. Look, I see they know their whakapapa, they know the story now, they have built up familiarity over the years, and in terms of sharing and have been able to reconnect as best they can, but in saying that, it's never going to be the same as if it would have been had they had the ability to grow up together. The damage has already been done. So, yeah --

Q. And has this had a flow-on effect for that next generation, and if so, can you tell us what that is?

A. Absolutely. You know, it's my experience that they came home and they were moved across the country, it's almost like they wanted to get away from each other. I guess they were, you know, being strangers at awkward times in their life and having come through what they've come through, they've moved away and so there was no reintegration, no reconnection, and very distant. So it's hard to grow close bonds with such great distance, especially entrenched distance like this.

Q. And reading the Harris sisters' evidence, it's very clear that while they were in State care there was no regard given to whakapapa, to Te Reo, to tikanga. So now, are your whānau connected to that?

A. No, no. Growing up in my grandparents' house, they were both smacked for speaking Te Reo at school, so obviously they didn't want us to go through what they went through. So

unfortunately for us they didn't pass on their reo. So in terms of cultural identity, there isn't any in an urban landscape, is my experience. And, you know, growing up in the '80s, thankfully, you know, back – - I- understand in the '70s it was not very fashionable to be a Māori so, you know, and that Māori pride just started strengthening and growing in the '80s as far as I can tell.

And so there was no cultural identity in the household growing up. I found myself, I found a culture, a community group Te Kupenga o Ōtara, and for me that was the best thing I could have ever done, and I often reflect back, those are the best memories of my childhood growing up, is my experiences with the kapa haka and I absolutely mihi to our rangatira, the late great Henare Mahana for giving us those opportunities. Because for me, that was a reconnection into Te Ao Māori that we didn't get, we weren't getting.

So I found the hapū, whānau, whanaungatanga that I was needing, I found that in culture. I've heard my aunty. She found that in the gangs. So, you know, we're trying to find some sense of belonging and, you know, for me at least in Te Ao Māori, our whakapapa will take you back to your whānau and reconnection and ground you so, you know, I'm very grateful for that. Yeah, there wasn't much Māori in our whānau, unfortunately, identity.

Q. Kia ora, Lee. Before I finish off this section, this next pātai is: Have any of the siblings addressed the trauma of State care?

A. No, that's not my experience, no.

Q. Can you speak to why they haven't?

A. Well, I think for one, I doubt they've been offered anything, and whether -- even if they had, if your experiences under the State have been negative, I don't think you're in a hurry to be signing up for any more of that, so as well as possibly, you know –- and I'm speaking for myself, being unaware of assistance that is available out there, no, they haven't, and listening to the evidence, I see, sometimes it's just easier to bury it, let sleeping dogs lie and do your best to keep moving forward in life. That's what I see that they've- done.

Q. We're going to move on to the last section of our kōrero, and that is redress and we'll kōrero about that. This is a big question I know, but I'm going to ask it: What could the State possibly offer to your mother and siblings to repair the damage that's been done to them?

A. Yeah, we were going through this earlier. I'm smiling because my tongue-in-cheek response to that was build a time machine, build a time machine and go back in time and stop that. Unfortunately, realistically, that's not possible. And I think all they can do is just help them as best they can moving forward.

Q. What I've read in the sisters' statements and what I heard in their oral evidence earlier and what you and I have discussed is that real mistrust of State as a result of being in State care.

A. Yes.

Q. And it would be easy to come to the conclusion that – and picking up on your kōrero that, you know, to engage in this system would be to ask the abuser to fix me. So you've got some real, you know, ideas around that. And I'm going to ask you this now. Should redress be Māori led and if so, why?

A. Absolutely, and what I heard just then was you cannot heal in the same environment that hurt you. And the State has hurt my family, huge, and it's little wonder my family have no trust to reengage now with the State in any manner or form whatsoever. -Should redress be Māori led? Absolutely, we've tried the non - -Māori way, it doesn't work for us. Māori understand Māori and therefore Māori have to be –- absolutely need to be empowered to -be - moving forward to reconnect, because obviously these are huge disconnections in whakapapa. -Now, a non - -Māori can't repair that.

Q. Do you think your mother and your sisters and that uri – do you think that they would be more likely to engage in the process if it's Māori led?

A. Absolutely, I think they'll be more open with –--- dealing with a Māori face, absolutely.

Q. I'm going to give you a pātai that -- this is a subject that you raised yourself, and I'm going to ask you now. Two of those siblings are deceased now. Should their children be eligible for compensation and why?

A. Absolutely, absolutely. I feel very strongly about this, because if they were to miss out, what message does that send? That means that they weren't worth anything, that their experience doesn't count because they're not here anymore? And the thing is, like myself, we, and I've always maintained this, now, the abuse as a State ward has affected my mother's generation firsthand, absolutely.

But it also affects us second-hand because we are their children, they haven't dealt with their raruraru, it affects us second-hand. I have a mokopuna it affects him third-hand. My two uncles, who are both deceased, left uri behind, and I am sad for my uncles that they weren't able to receive any compensation of any sort in their short time on earth because they suffered for it and they absolutely deserve some sort of recompense, and in their absence that should be awarded to their children, absolutely.

Q. Thank you for raising that whakaaro with me and thank you for expanding on it. I want to move to another subject of redress. It's also a theme that's emerged throughout this hearing, and that's a desire from our purapura ora to have their criminal convictions expunged.

Mereani felt that her offending was directly related to her time in State care, and therefore this would only be fair. We've heard from other witnesses in the hearing over the last almost two weeks who have gone on to turn their lives around and do good in the community and have remained convictionfree over decades. Can you share your whakaaro insights around this and what your views are?

A. Yeah, absolutely. Yes, I agree with my aunty. A lot of these, --a lot of the survivors were deemed troublesome for daring to ask for help for the abuse. They've been labelled as trouble makers, promiscuous, all these derogatory terms and typecast and, you know, racial profiling if you like. You know, pushed into situations where they've had their back against the wall and through no fault of their own in some situations have been pushed to breaking the law.

You know, if you've got no food at home, and you haven't eaten for a week, and you know you can do a quick run through the supermarket there and try and get something to feed you and your whānau tonight and you run the real risk of being caught and being labelled a thief and that starts to onward spiral of a simple action of just trying to feed you and your family, that's just tragic.

You know, I was reflecting back earlier, and like my mother asked a question, what was their crime, what did they do? It's not as though they went out and broke the law and were troublesome kids, they were perfectly fine, their mother had trouble and they were treated –- they were taken into a system and treated like troublesome delinquents, which they weren't-.

So they were already set off on to that spiral that was going to take them where they ended up, because obviously when you're – you know, they talk about the jail system today for an example, you know, you go in there for a relatively minor crime, you're in there rubbing shoulders with these big-time criminals, by the time you graduate that university of hard knocks you're a hardened criminal. So through - – -you're further victimised by the system that you're caught up with through no fault of your own.

So I absolutely agree with that, especially if they can show that there is a huge gap between reoffending, because why should something – when your back was up against the wall as a child and you did what you thought was best for your survival at that time, why should that have a huge effect on the rest of your life when your back was against the wall at that time?

Q. Kia ora, Lee. We've also spoken about the difficulties that you've had with obtaining DSW files and you've got some whakaaro around that. Can you share that now?

A. Yeah, look, for me the files are written by people who are protecting themselves, so they're going to be very skewed anyway, and if you're able to, by some fair grace access your files, the amount of them being redacted is - – it's, you know, what good is receiving files if 95% of the page is blanked out? What's all that about-?

Q. But you expanded on that whakaaro, didn't you, you shared with me the importance of that for your whānau to obtain files?

A. Yes, yes, sorry, yes. Look, we've given evidence previously in the Waitangi Tribunal. I've photocopied those transcripts out and gifted them to my cousin who was brought up outside of my family and he, for a whole week carried them in his arms, kissing them, "Taonga, taonga" he kept saying, because that was such a huge gift for him because he got to read our family history and get a better understanding as to why his father is the way he is, and that day changed his relationship that he struggled to maintain with my uncle all these years because if you've got no experience, he's a really hard man to build a relationship with.

So he just felt so blessed to have an insight, to have a window into our family history and that had an ongoing huge effect for him moving forward. So in terms of access to records, yes, it's important for our whānau to be able to access those so that they're aware of the legacy that we've inherited.

Q. I only have two finishing pātai. One is you – and I have had a kōrero about accountability and from your perspective that's quite big in terms of your whānau. Can you share your whakaaro on accountability for your whānau with us now?

A. Sure, yeah. Yeah, it's a big one. Because as I was saying, as far as I'm concerned, the State has had a huge impact on my whānau moving forward, thanks to that one day in '64. It's had huge ramifications on my whakapapa thereon moving forward. Nobody's been held accountable. My grandmother –-- and today, the gist of my kōrero today was you've heard from my mother's generation and they talk about their children, their mokopuna and their mokopuna tuarua.

But I'm here today to remind whānau that while my mum and them count four generations, I count five, I count five because the two forgotten victims in this whole story here are my grandparents who have been largely overlooked in this story and started the story halfway with the children moving forward.

Now, when I stop and think about everything that my grandmother's been put through, I was –- I love her even more, because I have three children of my own, and I have done my utmost best to make sure to provide for them as best as I can, and the thought of losing one of my children, let alone all of my children, three of them or even eight of

them, is absolutely devastating. And there's been no accountability. There's- been no accountability, my grandparents have taken their children to the grave.

Q. And Lee, I hear that from you loud and clear. But if I could get you to expand on that –--

A. Yeah.

Q. - – -in terms of what can the State do to take accountability for that?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. We talked about it.

A. Yeah, so moving forward, we were talking earlier about financial compensation. Now, I've just made a few notes here. To be honest, it leaves a bit of a bitter taste in your mouth because, you know, obviously nothing is –- nothing can replace or repair the damage that's been done, -so –- but at the end of the day, let's be realistic about it, -it's –- any- financial recompense is one real form of redress, I guess, moving forward. And I think considering the – --I'm going to say torture, that they've all gone through, then yeah, I think they deserve some sort of financial recompense in their time before they close their eyes. I mean, my mum, her next big milestone birthday is 70, you know, and they've lived a very humble life, shall we say. And yeah, why shouldn't they receive some sort of financial package to help make their last few days somewhat enjoyable.

My mum, for the first time, has finally moved back home to Mangamuka, why shouldn't she have some funds to help make herself comfortable there after everything she's been through? Because nothing, we can't bring my grandparents back, we can't do a rewind, we can't do anything else, but the reality is the only thing you can do really is financial compensation.

Q. Kia ora, Lee. I'm going to finish it there. At this stage I'm going to ask you to make some closing comments, because you asked if you could have the opportunity to do that. So I'm going to invite you to do that now.

A. Thank you. Yeah, what arrived - I- just really wanted to, really wanted to make it clear about the ongoing torture, as far as I'm concerned, that my grandmother went through, to have her eight children removed from her custody, to be given electric brain treatment and whatever else. You know, I've seen her in some bad situations, she's not on the planet, and just now too before I forget, I just got reminded. You know, I've had the misfortune of having to visit her in places like Kingseat Hospital, which I understand today is a tourist attraction called Spookers. I find that very insulting and highly offensive, because all the trauma that's been suffered in that place by not just my family members but many other family members, for them to turn around and make a dollar out of what is called dark

tourism, it's just adding insult to injury to the memory of all those people that have come through those wards.

Q. Lee, you wanted to make some acknowledgments - do- you want to do that now? And then we'll hand the rākau back to our Commissioner chairing?

A. Yeah. Sorry, Tracey, the scope has just gone so big, and I was a bit worried about that, I'm feeling overwhelmed and it's sort of hard to centre myself, but I've just got so much to say, I've waited, we've waited, our family's waited so long to finally have this opportunity and to have so much you want to fit into this little space, it's, yeah, it's overwhelming, to say the least, let alone all the other things that we've had to navigate through forward.

So I apologise if I come across a bit scattered at this time, but engari mō tēnā, this is me. I, for the life of me, at the moment, Tracey, I can't recall the acknowledgments that you were referring to.

Q. Well, perhaps then I'll do mihi out to your mother and to your aunties who are watching today and I will do a mihi to Stuart who has been by your side and offering you tautoko and awhi. And I want to thank you for your kōrero today. Kia ora, Lee.

A. Thank you, Tracey.

Q. I'll hand the rākau back to the Commissioner chairing.

A. Sorry, just before you do, Tracey, sorry, can I just say something before you pass it on?

Q. Kei a koe (up to you).

A. I'm just a bit scattered, but I know myself growing up I've felt misplaced and blown around in the wind, you know, going through the different traumas that I obviously haven't had time to share today, but at times I've felt just blown - I've- felt like a bit of a weed sometimes, you get overlooked, you've fallen through the cracks. No doubt my mother's generation have felt like that too, misplaced in the different places and the different homes that they've been put into that they didn't belong either, and feeling scattered to the winds. So there's a song that I learned in my childhood and bear with me, I just want to sing one verse of it. I'd like to dedicate this song to my mum and her generation and all the survivors out there really.

Q. Kia ora, Lee.

A. Little desert seed blown by winds of me rise to find your hidden promise, your water is real, all the world will feel your power and your inspiration. Desert flower, desert flower. Kia ora.

Q. Kia ora, Lee, and I'll hand the time back to Commissioner Erueti now. Kia ora.

COMMISSIONER ERUETI: Kia ora, Ms Norton, (kia ora, kei te mihi atu ki a koe, Whaea, me ō kōrero kua takoha mai.

[English: I want to salute and acknowledge you whaea for furnishing your kōrero about these matters.] We are now at the point where I want to ask my fellow Commissioners to make any comments on your observations that you've provided for us. I'll start with Commissioner Steenson, Julia Steenson.

COMMISSIONER STEENSON: I really just want to mihi to the Harris whānau, ki te whānau Harris e mihi ana i tēnei kōrero nui i tēnei wā. (to the family, the Harris family I salute you). I had the pleasure of meeting with Joyce and actually she was one of my first private sessions with a survivor when I first started with the Commission- and – sorry, my power just went low on my device- –- and I got to meet the beautiful Joyce and Te Enga and they were understandably quite, you know, nervous and suspicious of -the Commission at the time and you can't blame them at all for that. So we are so lucky to have had you all come forward and speak to us and as a whānau hearing those harrowing experiences, just beyond, just beyond.

So I do want to acknowledge all of your whānau and I want to acknowledge, Lee, your koro and nanny, Joseph and Mareta, you know, you spoke of your nanny, she really suffered her own trauma and both your koro and your nanny they worked so hard to keep your whānau and keep their children, and they couldn't even get a loan, you know, let alone keep their children in such an oppressive environment they were living in. And your whānau has unpacked that so well for everybody today.

And of course, that left all of their children so vulnerable, and everybody who has spoken today and acknowledging all the people who haven't, you know, they're not here to speak for themselves, and that's been so important to hear as well. So ngā mihi nui anō,e te whānau. Tēnā koe Joyce, tēnā koe Te Enga, tēnā koe Mereani, tēnā koe Stuart, tēnā koe Lee, piki te ora. (My greatest thanks to the whānau, Joyce, Te Enga, Mereani, Stuart, Lee, be well).

COMMISSIONER ERUETI: Tēnā koe, Commissioner Steenson, I will take the opportunity to pass now to Commissioner Gibson, Paora Gibson. Paora, do you have any comments or questions?

COMMISSIONER GIBSON: Kia ora, just a comment, thank you so much for everything that you have all shared today, the five generations of State care, of the harm that's been done to successive generations, intergenerational, and we hear the cry, we don't want our babies to be hurt anymore. Kia ora.

COMMISSIONER ERUETI: Tēnā koe, Paora. I have no pātai but I do want to take this opportunity on behalf of the Inquiry to mihi the Harris whānau today, and then close with a waiata tautoko.

Ms Harris, kua tae mātou ki te mutunga o tō tātou huihuinga i te rangai nei. Nō reira, me mihi ka tika ki a koutou katoa kua eke nei me ō koutou whakaaro rangatira. Ahakoa he kaupapa taumaha, haere ake ana, tērā te moemoeā, kia eke panuku. Tērā te haeata, tākiri ana mai i te pae. Me ō tātou tamariki , mokopuna, i te āhuru mōwai o te aroha me te whakapono. Kia tāwharautia ngā whānau katoa. Nei rā te whāinga matua, kia whakaohooho i a mātou, hui e, tāiki e.

[English: We have come to the end of this session today, therefore it is only right to give thanks again to you guys who furnished- these very heavy statements. --There is the sun that comes shining through the dark, shining upon to protect all the families, this is the main goal, to awaken us all.]

I just want to finish with some observations about today Whaea for your whānau. I want to first of all just acknowledge what Whaea Te Enga said at the very beginning of this morning about her disappointment in not being able to be here kanohi to te kanohi, and I have to acknowledge that, and how disappointing that is for all he purapura ora and also for the Inquiry to not be able to meet at this time.

I do want to note, though, as this pandemic, the worst of it begins to subside, we're hoping there are more opportunities for us to wānanga kanohi ki te kanohi with rōpū, whānau, hapū and iwi throughout the country.

I want to note one of the very first striking impressions from today's evidence was the lack of DSW support for the whānau and the potential that there really was in the beginning really for the Harris whānau, when the sisters Te Enga, Joyce and Mereani this morning spoke about, in particular Te Enga and Mereani, about the joy that they had when they were living together with their whānau and with their mum, and also Stuart about how he talked about the option of staying with his grandparents instead of being moved into foster care.

And it was just due to the shock of the struggle that your —- -Te Enga's mum, your grandma had through the death of her father and the depression that followed, that really meant that what was needed there was enough support and tautoko for her and for your whānau to keep them together instead of scattering them to the four winds.

I want to know too, it's striking, the failure of the extended whānau to step up and take care of the whānau too, and to have left the whānau to fend for themselves effectively through the State care system.

Another theme that we've been hearing all throughout today but also for the past two weeks are the dangerous placements that have been made. We saw with Te Enga being placed with her uncle and the abuse, the beatings by Stuart in the foster home, there's no real thought or care being put into finding appropriate placements for your whānau.

Another important theme was social work practice of neglect, of leaving children like Stuart 12 years old, 12, 13 alone in a Police cell in Police custody and how that continued throughout the following year at the age of 13, as a young tamariki.

The lack of accountability, Ms Harris, you brought up, I thought was very important kaupapa here about the lack of accountability for the sexual violence, for the abuse, the impunity, although reports were made to officials, DSW staff, to Police, no followup, nothing there to help to heal those who have been harmed, and instead in the void what we saw is just this disbelief of the children who couldn't be believed by even their own whānau and the fracture that that created within the whānau too.

One of the fundamental kaupapa too has been intergenerational harm, the ongoing effects throughout successive generations in terms of loss of cultures, Te Reo, the loss of whānau to care, to the care system and how it perpetuates. But we also saw promise there in the words of Stuart, the sisters, and I think also to you Ms Harris about the determination, the determination to ensure that tamariki now are cared for and loved and safe and keeping the whānau together and ensuring that there's proper redress from the State. We can't invent a time machine, but the State needs to step up and provide holistic redress, which is what we sought to emphasise in our report, and is beyond just monetary compensation, but support in the fullest sense for the whole whānau and for the survivor.

So I'll close there. There was so much in the evidence today, we'll spend all night talking about it when we reflect and debrief after the hearing tonight, but I just want to say from the bottom of my heart on behalf of the Inquiry, Ms Harris, ngā mihi mahana ki a koe, ngā manaakitanga ki a koe me tō whānau, tēnā koe. (Greetings once again, thank you and God bless you and your whānau).

A. Kia ora.

(Waiata Whakarongo mai ki te reo e tangi nei, e ringihia mai ana, mai i aku kamo, ngā roimata e. Whiti mai te rā, ngaro ana te mamae. Ngaro noa te pouri, kaua e mau riri, anei anō he rā. Maranga mai e te iwi, o ngā hapū Ngāpuhi. Kia mau, kia ū, kia pupuri ai ki

ngā akoranga nui. Takahia te ao kia kitea te iwi, e tū tangata mai tātou, ngā uri o rātou kua mene ki te pō. Tēnei te mihi ki ngā kai āwhina e, ki ngā whāea, ngā mātua. Anei rā ko ngā hua e puāwai ana mai.

[English: Listen to the voice that is crying and see pouring out from my eyes the tears, as the sun shines, the pain disappears, the sadness falls away. Do not hold any anger, for this is another day. Rise up all you, the subtribes of Ngāpuhi, hold firmly and securely, the great teachings. As you travel the world, it will be seen by everyone that we are a people who stand proud, we the descendants who have been lost, this is the thanks we give to you, to our aunts and uncles, our mothers and fathers, here we are, the fruit of your labour. Rise up, the subtribes of Ngāpuhi. Hold firmly and securely to the great teachings. Rise up, arise, rise up.]

COMMISSIONER ERUETI: Kei mihi atu ki a koe whaea me tō whānau. Ka huri ahau ināianei ki a koe, Mr Rikihana.

[English:I'd like to thank you again, Whaea, to you and your whānau. I wish to turn back to you, Mr Rikihana.]

MR RIKIHANA: Tēnā anō e te tūru. Kua tae tātou ki te mutunga o te rā (we have reached the end of the day.) Āpōpō, ka tīmata anō tātou ki te karakia a te 9.45am. (Tomorrow we will begin with a prayer at 9.45 am). Tomorrow we will start with a karakia at 9.45 am and our day will commence proper at 10 am.

COMMISSIONER ERUETI: Tēnā koe, so we will return here at 9.45 am āpōpō and we'll be starting with our panel of speakers who are reflecting on our evidence over the past two weeks. We're really looking forward to that session, looking for some great whakaaro and exchange during the morning. I'd like to thank all our witnesses for today, the Harris whānau again and also to the team here today for your amazing work and support.

I'll ask for to pass the rākau now to Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, rangatira Taiaha if you could please close for us with karakia and waiata, kia ora.

KAUMĀTUA TAIAHA: Tēnā koe te whare. E te whānau Harris, tēnei te whakataukī a rātou ngā mātua, ngā tūpuna ka ūhia ki runga i a koutou; waiho i te tokat tū moana. Ahakoa i te ākinga o tai , ahakoa ngā hau āwhiowhio, kei te tū tonu koutou. Kei te tū tonu koutou. Ahakoa ngā mamaetanga, ahakoa te kino me ngā whakawhiu o te wā ka pā ana ki a koutou. Kei te haramai te wā. Kei te haramai te wā kia hikina ērā o ngā hara, ā, kia āta puta koutou ki te wheiao, ki te ao marama. Nō reira, ko tēnei a Tumutumuwhenua e mihi nei, e tangi nei ki a koutou mō ngā kōrero katoa kua whārikihia, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, ā, mā te Runga Rawa koutou e manaaki, e tiaki. Ka tākina ko te kawa.

[English: Thank you to the house, to the Harris family, this is the proverb of our ancestors, leave the rock to be crashed by the waves and no matter what hits it, it will stand, it will stand regardless of the pain and the sufferings you have endured, the time will come when those burdens will be lifted and you will be led to the world of light, so this is Tumutumuwhenua thanking you for furnishing your statements. May God protect you. Now I will invoke an ancient incantation.]

(Karakia: Unuhia, unuhia. Unuhia ki te uru tapu nui, kia wātea, kia māmā, te ngākau, te tinana, te wairua i te ara takatā. Koia rā e Rongo, whakairia ake ki runga kia tina! Tina! Hui e! Tāiki E!

[English: Let it be so, that all the heaviness in our hearts, our minds, be lifted and for Rongo to uplift us, it is done. A song please.

(Waiata: Whakataka te hau ki te uru, whakataka te hau ki te tonga. Kia mākinakina ki uta, kia mātaratara ki tai. E hī ake ana te atākura he tio, he huka, he hauhū, Tīhei Mauri ora.

[English: cease the winds from the west. Cease the winds from the south. Let the breeze blow over the land, let the breeze blow over the ocean, let the redtipped dawn come with a sharpened ear, a touch of frost and a promise of a glorious day. 'Tis the breath of life.)

Tērā kōrero i waihotia mai e ngā mātua, e ngā tūpuna. Āpiti hono, tātai hono, rātou, ngā mātua, ngā tūpuna kua huri ki tua o te pae o maumahara ki a rātou. Āpiti hono, tātai hono tātou ngā mōrehu e tau nei i roto i te kaupapa o tēnei rā. Tēnei ka mihi, kei aku mana nui, kei aku tapu nui, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā rā tātou katoa.

(Also this proverb which connects us to those gone by, also connects us, the living, attending this Inquiry, thank you, thank you, one and all.)

Hearing adjourned at 5.00 pm to Friday, 18 March 2022 at 9.45 am