

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
LAKE ALICE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT UNIT INQUIRY 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: Judge Coral Shaw (Chair)
Ali'imuamua Sandra Alofivae
Mr Paul Gibson

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Ms Ruth Thomas, Ms Finlayson-Davis, for the Royal
Commission
Ms Karen Feint QC, Ms Julia White and Ms Jane Maltby
for the Crown
Mrs Frances Joychild QC, Ms Alana Thomas and Tracey Hu
for the Survivors
Ms Moira Green for the Citizens Commission on Human
Rights
Ms Susan Hughes QC for Mr Malcolm Burgess and Mr
Lawrence Reid
Mr Michael Heron QC for Dr Janice Wilson
Ms Frances Everard for the New Zealand Human Rights
Commission
Mr Hayden Rattray for Mr Selwyn Leeks
Mr Eric Forster for Victor Soeterik
Mr Lester Cordwell for Mr Brian Stabb and Ms Gloria Barr
Mr Scott Brickell for Denis Hesseltine
Ms Anita Miller for the Medical Council

Venue: Level 2
Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry
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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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Hearing opens with waiata and karakia tīmatanga by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei

[9.39 am]

CHAIR: Ata mārie koutou ki te rā mutunga o tēnei wiki. Nau mai haere mai. Morning
Mr Molloy.

MR MOLLOY: Kia ora Kōmihana, kia ora katoa. I'm going to hand over again, ma'am, to our
friends Ms Joychild and Ms Thomas.

CHAIR: Mōrena kōrua.

MS A THOMAS: Tēnā koe e te Kaiwhakawā otirā koutou katoa ngā Kaikōmihana, āe ko ahau
tēnei ā matua rā e tika ana kia mihi ki to tātou Pāpā, nāna i para i te huarahi kei mua ia
tātou, mai i te tīmatanga o tēnei wiki, tae atu ki tōna whakamutunga, kua tae tātou ki te ra
whakamutunga e tautoko ana au i āu kupu e te Kaiwhakawā, me taku mihi ki ā ia ko Ngāti
Whātua tēra e pupuri ana i te taha tikanga Māori me te tika hoki o tātou noho kei
wāenganui i tēnei whare, no reira, i runga i te ra.

It is my privilege to introduce the two speakers we have this morning. So the
Commissioners are aware, these two witnesses are a mother and a daughter. Ms Sharyn
Collis is a survivor of Lake Alice and will be speaking to her experiences that she has set
out in her statement.

We will then move to Amy Bethune who will be speaking to the intergenerational
trauma, but also as a voice to those whānau members that have also been affected and she's
here to represent them today.

So I just wanted to thank you both for coming today, I know there's a lot of risk
involved with you coming and also sacrifices that you've both made to be here today. So
we all thank you for your presence and for the kōrero you're about to share. Before we get
started I will pass it over to our chair for the affirmation.

SHARYN COLLIS, AMY BETHUNE

CHAIR: Hello.

MS COLLIS: Hi.

CHAIR: How would you like me to refer to you, is it all right if I call you Sharyn?

MS COLLIS: Yeah.

CHAIR: Good, what about you, Amy is it alright if I call you Amy?

MS BETHUNE: [Nods].

CHAIR: Thank you for coming. I'm just going to ask you if you'll take the affirmation before you
start giving your evidence. And I'll ask you both at the same time and just ask you to agree.
Do you both solemnly, sincerely, truly declare and affirm that the evidence you give today

1 to the Commission will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Sharyn?

2 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, I do.

3 **CHAIR:** And Amy?

4 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes.

5 **CHAIR:** Thank you very much. I'll leave you with Ms Thomas.

6 **QUESTIONING BY MS A THOMAS:** Thank you ma'am.

7 Like we spoke about, Sharyn, we're just going to go through the statement that you
8 have prepared. And just take your time, pause when you need to, and both of you if you
9 need to take any breaks at any time, feel free to do so. So do you have your statement in
10 front of you Sharyn?

11 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

12 **MS A THOMAS:** Could I take you to paragraph 1 starting at "I am"?

13 **MS COLLIS:** My name is Sharyn Collis. I was born in Napier 1958. I'm 62 years old. I have
14 six children and I am now a great grandmother. I am a survivor of Lake Alice. Do you
15 want me to read the whole page?

16 **MS A THOMAS:** Now to paragraph 3.

17 **MS COLLIS:** My parents are --

18 **MS A THOMAS:** You don't have to say those names.

19 **MS COLLIS:** Okay. I was born in Napier but we moved around a lot because of my father's job.

20 **[Mic issue]**

21 **MS A THOMAS:** The first home at paragraph 3.

22 **MS COLLIS:** The first home I remember was in the Manawatu. Do you want me to continue?

23 **MS A THOMAS:** **[Nods]**.

24 **MS COLLIS:** I have two older sisters and two younger brothers. I don't have much to do with
25 them and I'm not very close to them at all. I was the only one that was sent to Lake Alice.

26 **MS A THOMAS:** Paragraph 6.

27 **MS COLLIS:** In 1973 my mum sent me to live in Napier with my aunt and uncle, not blood
28 related, they were friends of my parents. While I was there I was taken off the streets with
29 two other girls I had met at a festival on Marine Parade -- how do I read that out?

30 **MS A THOMAS:** You don't have to say those words there.

31 **MS COLLIS:** Okay.

32 **MS A THOMAS:** I might just ask you the question, is that okay?

33 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

34 **MS A THOMAS:** So you say in your statement here that while you were living down there you

1 were gang raped, is that right?

2 **MS COLLIS:** Correct.

3 **MS A THOMAS:** Continue on with the paragraph.

4 **MS COLLIS:** I reported this to the Police but nothing ever happened and they weren't charged at
5 all, in fact they said that I was a willing participant. I was 14. After that I was sent back
6 home and my mother's attitude was that it didn't happen and I was lying or I deserved it.

7 I started acting out like running away and not attending school. I was disruptive at
8 home and swearing all the time, but that was typical of a rape victim, I guess.

9 **MS A THOMAS:** Can I just pause you there, Sharyn, just for a moment. Because I know you're
10 going to start talking about how you get into Lake Alice. But I just wanted to pull up an
11 exhibit. If we could pull up Exhibit 344003 and this is a report that was done by a
12 psychologist on 30 April 1973. So that was before you were in Lake Alice, wasn't it?

13 **MS COLLIS:** No, I went into Lake Alice in March I think it was.

14 **MS A THOMAS:** That's not on the record, isn't it?

15 **MS COLLIS:** No.

16 **MS A THOMAS:** Yes. So what I wanted to point out in this report, if we could highlight the
17 third paragraph "In January". This is what you were talking about in your statement, isn't
18 it, while you were staying with relatives you were indecently assaulted?

19 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, correct.

20 **MS A THOMAS:** So they were very aware that this happened to you and that you were
21 struggling?

22 **MS COLLIS:** Correct.

23 **MS A THOMAS:** And if we could just then go to the third page of this report. The last page.
24 And the second paragraph starting "This girl". This is one of the conclusions or the
25 recommendations and it says, "This girl faces an adolescent identity crisis and severe
26 emotional disturbance, apparently originating in family relationships."

27 So again they're aware that the struggle you're going through is from home and
28 those behavioural issues are coming from the experiences that you went through.

29 **MS COLLIS:** Correct.

30 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you Sharyn. If I could just take you back to your statement. Paragraph
31 8.

32 **MS COLLIS:** It was my GP who decided it was time for me to get help. I also think he was the
33 one that agreed with Leeks to send me to Lake Alice. I asked him for my medical notes
34 one time and he said he didn't have any. I find this hard to believe because he was always

1 my family doctor before Lake Alice and after Lake Alice. In March 1973 he sent me to
2 Manawaroa to have counselling sessions with Leeks for the rape and the fact I wasn't
3 coping after it. Do you want me to continue?

4 **MS A THOMAS:** Yes continue, thank you Sharyn.

5 **MS COLLIS:** So I started going to Manawaroa to see Leeks for counselling. It started as family
6 counselling and then become one-on-one sessions with Leeks these were mostly one-sided
7 sessions, him talking and me screaming and walking out. These sessions went on for about
8 a month and then I was sent to Lake Alice.

9 Leeks kept telling me when I was in Manawaroa that I would end up in Lake Alice
10 if I didn't behave. He used Lake Alice as a tool to threaten me. I felt trapped and I did not
11 have any protection at home either. Leeks, my GP, my mother and others were all part of
12 sending me to Lake Alice.

13 I was at Lake Alice between 1973 and 1974. I have never been able to find a copy
14 of my full nursing notes. There are only two pages. My records say that I was admitted on
15 3 August 1973. But they also say that I was discharged on 2 August 1973. They are -- I
16 can't even read that word.

17 **CHAIR:** Obviously.

18 **MS COLLIS:** -- wrong. I recall being discharged in April 1974, Grant Cameron second
19 statement paragraph 95. I recall being there for Christmas as I recall decorating the tree
20 and going home for Christmas so I was there for at least eight months. It felt to me to be
21 much longer than that.

22 **MS A THOMAS:** Can I just pause you there for a moment, Sharyn. So your point in that
23 paragraph is that your notes can't be trusted because you remember being there for eight
24 months but the dates provided are incorrect?

25 **MS COLLIS:** Correct.

26 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you. Continue on to paragraph 12.

27 **MS COLLIS:** I recall talking to a woman at the Whanganui District Health Board in the records
28 section about 20 years ago when I was trying to find my nursing notes. She said they didn't
29 have them but she did say "You do know you were admitted twice." I said I didn't know
30 that. But I do recall being sent to Lake Alice a few weeks into the school year, around
31 March 1973. That date sticks in my head. So the August admission may have been my
32 second admission. In any event, I was 14 years old on my admission. No-one should rely
33 on our medical notes to find out what truly happened at Lake Alice. What we say is what
34 happened and we want people to believe us.

1 I clearly remember the day that I was sent there. I had just run away from home and
2 had come back again. I would do this quite a bit when I was this stage as I just didn't want
3 to be home with mum and dad. A Police car arrived at our home and my mother started
4 packing my bag. She told me I was going to Lake Alice and I just lost it. I remember
5 bolting for the door to escape but I couldn't get it open. I knew that Lake Alice was full of
6 crazy people and there was no way that I wanted to go there.

7 I ended up blacking out and when I come to I was at Lake Alice. I don't remember
8 arriving there, I just come to in an office with a lady sitting there. I can't remember if I was
9 assessed or anything like that. The first day I was locked up in my room and stayed there
10 for most of the day. I was locked up in my room for the next three to four days coming out
11 only to be taken to have food.

12 I don't understand why I was there. I thought it was because I got raped and that
13 I kept running away.

14 **MS A THOMAS:** And you don't have to read that paragraph 16. I might just put that to you, is
15 that okay Sharyn, and you can agree or not?

16 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

17 **MS A THOMAS:** So in your statement it says, "Dr Leeks recorded me having a reactive
18 depression and antisocial character disorder. Dr Fernando recorded me having an
19 adolescent personality disorder. In one file record Dr Leeks is recorded as saying he only
20 wanted me at Lake Alice for two weeks for abreaction treatment. If that didn't work
21 I would be sent to Porirua Hospital. Maybe that was to reassure the Education Department
22 that it was safe to send me there." That's what you say?

23 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

24 **MS A THOMAS:** Continue on to paragraph 17.

25 **MS COLLIS:** I do not believe I was mentally ill and in need of being locked up and given
26 unmodified electric shock and antipsychotic medication. I was an unhappy teenager due to
27 a difficult relationship with my mother and once I had been gang raped and not listened to
28 or believed I became angry, difficult teenager. I needed love and support and appropriate
29 sexual abuse counselling, not to be imprisoned in a mental hospital and treated like a
30 worthless bad person. Dr Leeks' counselling was worse than useless. The only mental
31 health problems I have now are as a result of the treatment I got in Lake Alice. Problems
32 today include depression, trauma, migraines, memory loss and nightmares. It's got here I
33 was in villa 6, but that's not right.

34 **MS A THOMAS:** Would you like to correct that?

1 **MS COLLIS:** I was in villa 7, they changed the numbers on the villas, so originally it was villa 7
2 that I was in.

3 **MS A THOMAS:** Villa 7?

4 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

5 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you Sharyn.

6 **MS COLLIS:** There were four or five girls there and about six or seven adult women. Some were
7 long-term. One had come and went and was a married woman. She was kind to us and we
8 called her mum. There was quite a high number turnover of girls, about four or five left
9 and new ones come in my time. I remember an adult woman in our section who come from
10 GRO-B who was accused of GRO-B. She was found not guilty but sent to Lake Alice.
11 She was in with us sometimes and the nurses would say to us if we didn't do what we were
12 told we would be put in the room with her. That was frightening, it was psychological
13 abuse.

14 You could go into the laundry of our villa and see the maximum security people and
15 you could see the boys in the cage with the men that were in there for murder. My
16 understanding is that they were put there as punishment, more psychological abuse. It was
17 terrible to see that because we thought we were going to get that too.

18 I was given the contraceptive pill every morning as part of my medical treatment.
19 We were forced to have it and the nurses would check that we swallowed it. I was not, by
20 consent, sexually active.

21 I got Paraldehyde on about three occasions for punishment. One was for smoking
22 and another was for damaging a lounge chair. I also got ECT for that the next day.
23 Paraldehyde was given as a punishment to boys and girls often and I'm not sure why. My
24 statement to Grant Cameron does not refer to this. I would have told the interviewer, I
25 think it is an omission.

26 **MS A THOMAS:** Can I just pause you there, Sharyn. Are you able to describe -- and if you don't
27 remember that's absolutely fine -- how you felt when you got Paraldehyde?

28 **MS COLLIS:** It would knock you to the floor, it was so painful, and it would leave a horrible
29 taste in your mouth. But it would be sore for a couple of days on the site where you got it.
30 Find it hard to work when you -- walk when you had it, because it was given on the top of
31 the thigh or into the buttocks.

32 **MS A THOMAS:** Do you remember how many times you were given Paraldehyde?

33 **MS COLLIS:** About three or four.

34 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you Sharyn.

1 **MS COLLIS:** What are we up to, 23?

2 **MS A THOMAS:** 22.

3 **MS COLLIS:** There was a huge drying room on the site and sometimes we were put in there for
4 punishment. I recall after a few minutes the heat was absolutely horrible and distressing
5 and I would be near to fainting.

6 In my statement to Grant Cameron I set out my experience with getting ECT. I will
7 briefly explain here but all the detail has already been set out in my previous statement.

8 I received ECT while I was in Lake Alice both modified and unmodified. This
9 means either with or without anaesthetic to put you to sleep. This started about six weeks
10 after I arrived at Lake Alice. I was to be taken by the nurses down to these side rooms in
11 villa 7.

12 **MS A THOMAS:** So that should be villa 7 too?

13 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, yeah.

14 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you Sharyn.

15 **MS COLLIS:** There were a number of these side rooms and they weren't used for sleeping, they
16 were used for torture. We were tortured in that place. I know that if Leeks come in with
17 his trolley and a tray I was going to be put to sleep by injection and get ECT. If he come in
18 with just a trolley and no tray, I was going to get ECT and not be put to sleep. I would hide
19 under the table when they come to drag us to give us shock treatment in the small side
20 rooms. It was always Leeks that gave me ECT. The pain was like my head was exploding.
21 Sometimes I would wet myself, sometimes I would vomit and I would get the shakes
22 afterwards.

23 We would get ECT as punishment. I got it a lot. The first time I got ECT it was
24 because we had picked a door lock with hairpins and we got up to mischief because it was
25 so boring being there. There was nothing to do. Another time was because we had
26 damaged a lounge suite.

27 **MS A THOMAS:** Could I just pause you there again, Sharyn. Just when you say "we", are you
28 talking about you and some of the other girls in the villa?

29 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, two other girls.

30 **MS A THOMAS:** Paragraph 27.

31 **MS COLLIS:** I remember when they brought boys into our place to get ECT, we would have to
32 clean up the urine and vomit after their treatment. About seven to ten boys were brought
33 over to villa, should be villa 7, when ECT was happening. There were more Māori boys
34 than Pākehā boys. Mostly they were around 13 and 14. One was 19 and some were

1 younger.

2 My dad told me later that they never signed anything for me to get shock treatment.
3 They didn't know anything about it. But I remember telling my mum about it after about
4 eight weeks of being there. She thought I was lying and making stuff up just to get out of
5 Lake Alice.

6 I don't know what was worse, receiving ECT or having sessions with Leeks where I
7 was raped. I don't know what the --

8 **MS A THOMAS:** If you go to paragraph 32 thank you Sharyn.

9 **MS COLLIS:** In my statement to Grant Cameron I set out the sexual assaults that I suffered in
10 Lake Alice. First witness statement --

11 **MS A THOMAS:** You don't have to read that.

12 **CHAIR:** You don't have to read the bits in brackets.

13 **MS COLLIS:** I believe I was raped by Leeks and give full details in my earlier statements. This
14 happened many times. He would take me into the small side room, get the nurses to tie me
15 down with leather straps and give me a needle of drugs to put me to sleep.

16 I don't remember a lot of what happened because of the drugs he would inject into
17 me. The first time he did this I woke up and he was standing at the end of my bed, my top
18 had been pulled up over my breasts and my jeans were down to the top of my thighs. He
19 put me back to sleep again and when I woke up for the second time he was gone. I was
20 sore and sticky between my legs. I felt drunk and ready to pass out. I knew that he had
21 raped me.

22 He continued to have these sessions right throughout my stay at Lake Alice. I knew
23 he was raping me each time we had our sessions because my vagina was swollen and
24 bruised and there would be a sticky discharge when I woke up. I told the staff what Leeks
25 was doing to me but all they said I was lying. And I kept telling them but they just didn't
26 believe me. A nurse told me it was my imagination playing up because of the drugs I was
27 on. After the third or fourth time of him raping me I gave up telling anyone.

28 While out of Lake Alice I'm not sure I got taken to where --

29 **MS A THOMAS:** You don't want to say that paragraph?

30 **MS COLLIS:** I don't know what -- no, I'll leave that out.

31 **MS A THOMAS:** Let's go to paragraph 39.

32 **MS COLLIS:** I was so depressed and tortured in Lake Alice. I would often contemplate suicide.
33 I discussed these things in detail in paras 88 to 93 of my second statement for the Grant
34 Cameron proceedings. I would talk about it with the girls I shared a room with and we

1 would talk about how we would do it and what would happen if we did. We thought about
2 running away but we just couldn't escape. We would get so angry we would end up tearing
3 our clothes and crying ourselves to sleep. At night time I would hear girls screaming.
4 They were missing from the rooms and I think they had been taken by the male nurse and
5 raped.

6 Dr Leeks always gave me the creeps even at Manawaroa. He was sadistic. I don't
7 remember all the names of the staff at Lake Alice. Most of the nurses in my villa were
8 women. There was at least one male nurse that would come in in the evenings. Sometimes
9 I would see Dr Fernando but it was mainly Leeks.

10 We did not really have counselling out there. We had group therapy sessions but
11 they were nothing, no-one said anything. How could you when the people who are abusing
12 you are running the group therapy sessions.

13 There was a school at Lake Alice and it started at 9 am. Most of the kids went. I
14 was not allowed to go the first few days of being at Lake Alice because I was locked up.
15 The second was in another villa close to the boys. We would do pottery and art but not
16 much else, we were only just mucking around.

17 **MS A THOMAS:** If you could go to paragraph 46 please Sharyn.

18 **MS COLLIS:** Dad visited me a few times and he brought my sister once. I found out later that
19 they had tried to actually come inside to see where I was living but they weren't allowed to.
20 They had to stay outside and I would just talk with them out there. I guess this was so they
21 couldn't see how horrible it was inside and how we were being treated. Mum come once
22 and I told her I had been raped by Leeks. And she told me to stop lying and I yelled at her
23 to never come back.

24 **MS A THOMAS:** Can I just pause you there, Sharyn, because we're about to go into the part of
25 your statement after Lake Alice which I think is very important as well. Is there anything
26 that you want to say about your -- anything else you want to say about your time in Lake
27 Alice before we move on?

28 **MS COLLIS:** No, not that I can --

29 **MS A THOMAS:** Okay. Let's go to paragraph 48.

30 **MS COLLIS:** I don't know why I was eventually let out. Maybe it was because I kept threatening
31 to kill myself if I wasn't let out. I come out and lived with my parents for a small time but
32 that didn't last long as I couldn't put up with my mum's abuse again. I had to work in shop
33 factories because it was all I could get as a job, even though I wanted to be an accountant. I
34 had lost all my education as a result of my time at Lake Alice.

1 Shall I just leave out that next bit?

2 **MS A THOMAS:** Yeah, paragraph 51.

3 **MS COLLIS:** Between the years 1978 and 1989 I had six children, three miscarriages and one
4 abortion. I was not a very good mother to my children, I was distant and unaware of how
5 to raise my kids. When I was bringing up the kids we moved all over the place. This was
6 because of the abusive relationships I was in but ultimately it was because of what
7 happened at Lake Alice.

8 I currently get ACC compensation for my neck injury which I hurt in 1994 at work
9 when I was lifting a cabinet. In 1995 I reinjured my neck and had to give up the job I had
10 altogether. In the more recent years I was employed as a carer and now I do voluntary
11 work at the Salvation Army. In another three years I will be of National Superannuation
12 age.

13 In about 1995 I become heavily depressed and at the same time I was having
14 problems with my son and was suicidal. I ended up seeking professional help. This is very
15 hard for me to do. I find it hard to trust anyone going back to hospitals and psychiatric
16 institutions brings back all those horrible memories.

17 It got so bad that I couldn't even look after my children and I ended up sending them
18 away so I could carry out a treatment plan. I was put on medication to help me but after
19 about 18 months on the medication I ended up taking it all and overdosing. The ambulance
20 was called and I wasn't taken to hospital. I told everyone it was a mistake, but I think it
21 was a genuine suicide attempt. The only thing that stopped me from trying again and
22 thinking that Leeks would win if I died.

23 Other staff members also need to be held accountable, not just Leeks. It's about
24 getting justice for what happened to us and what happened to our families. Why we were
25 sent there in the first place, very few of us would have actually had mental health issues.

26 I went back to the hospital in 2005. I had asked if I could go inside and they agreed.
27 All the villa numbers had been changed but I still recognised my villa number, it was no
28 longer numbered villa 6.

29 **MS A THOMAS:** 7; correct?

30 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, 7. In my statement to Grant Cameron I set out how Lake Alice had an
31 overall effect on my adult life. I think I had kids to compensate for what happened to me at
32 Lake Alice. I do have the biggest heart and I don't think I would have treated my kids the
33 way that I did if I had never gone to Lake Alice. I was controlled in Lake Alice and I think
34 I sought that out in my relationships with men. I've been on my own for a while now and

1 that's better.

2 The stigma associated with Lake Alice is horrible as well. I can Google my name
3 and everything that happened to me is all over the internet. How do I tell my story but then
4 deal with all these people judging me? I want some process to help me with that.

5 I got addicted to prescription medication within six months of leaving Lake Alice. I
6 had been prescribed a morphine-based tablet DHC. I was also on Pethidine for my severe
7 migraines.

8 I have been suicidal many times. I have been so depressed over the years constantly
9 reliving what happened to me there.

10 I have regular nightmares about what happened in Lake Alice. I don't sleep well. It
11 has been very hard trusting anyone and even harder to ask for help to deal with the trauma I
12 was suffering from. I have been on and off medication for years, but I hate being on
13 medication because I don't feel safe on it.

14 My memory is terrible and I can't recall much what happened before 13 and I can't
15 recall much about my kids growing up. I have short-term memory loss and it is a horrible
16 thing to have. I get migraines all the time though less than I used to. I didn't have them
17 before Lake Alice but have had them ever since. They are triggered by stress which I am
18 constantly under. I get nervous around people. I don't go out much, I hate being in the
19 public and don't really have many friends. I don't like having people near me and feel safer
20 by myself. I guess that's why I isolate myself.

21 As I said, the only thing that kept me from actually committing suicide in those
22 really dark times was the thought of finally seeing Leeks pay for what he had put us all
23 through at Lake Alice.

24 I am a great grandmother now. I love my grandkids and I think they love me too,
25 but it has been a hard road. They are the only positive thing that I have in my life and I am
26 so grateful to have them.

27 What I went through in Lake Alice has had an impact on my ability to think and to
28 process just simple things. I struggle to remember things every day.

29 **MS A THOMAS:** These next sections, Sharyn, I think are very important because it shows how
30 in the past years you've tried to hold people accountable and you've actually been very
31 brave to go to the Police and lay complaints but you haven't seen any justice yet. So I'd like
32 to have you start reading from paragraph 67 to explain please.

33 **MS COLLIS:** I was involved in the Grant Cameron proceedings. I prepared two statements. One
34 in 1998 and one in 2000, second statement of Sharyn Collis dated 28 December 2000.

1 They were done over the phone by staff. I saw Justice Gallen and told him about what had
2 happened to me. I think I received \$35,000 in the hand and had been awarded 60. Grant
3 Cameron's law firm got the rest. I am grateful to Grant because without him no-one would
4 have known whatever went on. I don't believe what I got was true compensation for what
5 happened to me and I don't believe we should have had to pay for our legal fees. After I
6 had gone through that process all my trauma was back and I just wanted the case to be over
7 and I didn't care, I was willing to accept anything. My husband brought a truck with the
8 money and gave me \$1,000.

9 I am still angry that Leeks hasn't been prosecuted. Around 2002 I went to the Police
10 and laid a complaint of sexual abuse against Dr Leeks. It was horrible doing the Police
11 statement. I had a support person but it was not very nice. I felt like the Police were not
12 listening to me.

13 **MS A THOMAS:** Can I just pause you there, Sharyn. So in 2002 you went to the Police and laid
14 a complaint of sexual abuse. Do you remember which Police Station that was?

15 **MS COLLIS:** I think it was the Palmerston North Police Station.

16 **MS A THOMAS:** And that was in 2002?

17 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, yeah.

18 **MS A THOMAS:** Carry on thank you.

19 **MS COLLIS:** On October 1, 2004 my lawyers wrote asking to get a copy of the Police complaint
20 and report. The Police had not kept records of my complaint. They never came back to me
21 asking for further interviews. Why is Dr Leeks not been jailed for all the horrible things he
22 did? Lake Alice ruined not only the people that went there but their whole families.

23 **MS A THOMAS:** And I'll just pause you again there, Sharyn, because I do want to bring up the
24 exhibits that show the attempts by your lawyer at the time to get some sort of response from
25 the Police. So the first document we're looking at is dated 1 October 2004 by Steve
26 Winter?

27 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

28 **MS A THOMAS:** And he says there that he has been advised by you that you made a complaint
29 of sexual violation at Lake Alice and he says, "I would be grateful for urgent advice as to
30 the progress of the inquiry into whether a prosecution is likely and if so whether it is
31 imminent." So that's 1 October 2004?

32 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

33 **MS A THOMAS:** Go to the next exhibit. So six days after that, 7 October 2004, this letter --
34 sorry, this one is the response from the New Zealand Police, it's a fax cover sheet from the

1 New Zealand Police dated 8 October 2004.

2 **MS COLLIS:** Where was that sent to?

3 **MS A THOMAS:** This is a fax cover sheet from the Police to the prosecution -- sorry from, the
4 prosecution's clerk looking for your file, so they're asking, trying to follow-up. And what
5 they say is after speaking -- "I could find no information on our system relating to either
6 Collis or Leeks." So that was on 8 October, four days after your lawyer asked for the
7 information.

8 **MS COLLIS:** Okay.

9 **MS A THOMAS:** And the next exhibit is a letter from Crown Law to your lawyer saying that
10 they received the letter and they say, "This office has not been instructed by the New
11 Zealand Police to provide any advice in relation to a complaint by Sharyn Collis in respect
12 of Leeks. I advise you to pursue your inquiry with the Detective Inspector of the Police
13 Commissioner's office." So that's Crown counsel, Crown Law saying they have not been
14 instructed on that.

15 **MS COLLIS:** Okay.

16 **MS A THOMAS:** And then the next exhibit -- and this is just to show --

17 **MS COLLIS:** I haven't seen these.

18 **MS A THOMAS:** Aah, well, I will show you to them right now and after this as well. And then
19 the next one is dated 12 October 2004 and this is from your lawyer again, Winter Woods
20 and they say:

21 "I advise again that I act for Sharyn Collis who has asked me to inquire into the
22 progress of your allegation that you were raped. Various people have been written to and
23 the last correspondence I have is from Crown Law suggesting I contact you."

24 So again, this is your lawyer trying to follow-up as to what is happening with this
25 complaint that you made.

26 And then the last exhibit in this bit, Sharyn, is dated 2 February 2005 and it is an
27 e-mail from Detective Superintendent Larry Reid to your lawyer saying, "I now have your
28 correspondence relating to Sharyn Collis and her assertion that she has made a complaint to
29 the Police alleging rape." He says "I have no record of that complaint, though I do have
30 some other documents from former Lake Alice patients alleging mistreatment."

31 And that was the end of that complaint that you made, wasn't it, nothing happened
32 further?

33 **MS COLLIS:** No, nothing at all. Then Kevin went to see this lawyer. I didn't realise he did more
34 work, never went back to him.

1 **MS A THOMAS:** And never heard anything else from the Police?

2 **MS COLLIS:** No, nothing.

3 **MS A THOMAS:** And just to clarify that complaint that you did make to the Police when you
4 went in to the police station, it was a full interview --

5 **MS COLLIS:** I think so, yeah.

6 **MS A THOMAS:** -- of all the evidence that happened in your allegations.

7 **MS COLLIS:** [Nods].

8 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you, Sharyn, I think that was important to clarify.

9 So just taking you back now to your statement.

10 **MS COLLIS:** What are we up to?

11 **MS A THOMAS:** We are up to paragraph 69.

12 **MS COLLIS:** I also made a complaint to the Victorian Medical Board where Dr Leeks was
13 practising. I was going to give evidence against him but before the hearing he agreed to
14 surrender his licence to practise. I received a letter about this on 20 July 2006. I was very
15 disappointed that yet again Dr Leeks had avoided a public inquiry into what he did to us.

16 I was also involved in the 20/20 documentary series investigation. I think it was in
17 2006 or 2007 and was organised by CCHR. I wanted people to know what happened to us
18 all there and I was doing the best I could to bring Leeks to justice. It was hard to be
19 involved in that and to share everything about what happened to me, but I was lucky to
20 have the support of another survivor of Lake Alice. And I were interviewed for the
21 Evening Standard. I believe that through all of our efforts the Government are starting to
22 listen and it is the main reason why this Inquiry has been set up.

23 I got ACC cover for the rape but not for Leeks raping me or the ECT. I did not use
24 counselling through ACC as I was already getting counselling through the mental health
25 services.

26 I believe we should all get compensated for the horrors we saw and went through at
27 Lake Alice, but that is just the beginning. The Government should set up support groups
28 for all the families that are connected with Lake Alice survivors. The help is just not there
29 for us or our families at the moment and it needs to be.

30 I think the Lake Alice survivors who got ECT and other traumatic things such as
31 drug treatment should all have ACC cover for medical misadventure. We should receive
32 compensation for this and for the awful adult lives we have had from it.

33 Even if we don't get this we should all have full mental health support for ourselves
34 and our families. The Government needs to believe the kids, the survivors that went

1 through Lake Alice.

2 I want to see Leeks pay for what he did to all of us. The Police said they wouldn't
3 extradite him because of the cost to make that happen. But how can that be right, he needs
4 to be held accountable and for everyone to see what a monster he is.

5 I feel the same way about all the nurses and the staff that helped him so what he did
6 to do so many kids that went through Lake Alice. Is that it?

7 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you Sharyn. Is there anything else you want to add to that statement?

8 **MS COLLIS:** I want ACC to accept our claims and I'd like my fees back from Grant, but -- and
9 that needs to come from the Government, not from Grant, because he did all he could, yeah,
10 I don't know what else I want.

11 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you for sharing that kōrero and we have had other survivors tell us that
12 they appreciate the attempts you've made going to the Police which was really brave in and
13 of itself, so thank you for sharing that with us Sharyn.

14 **MS COLLIS:** That's all right.

15 **MS A THOMAS:** Ma'am, would you like us to go to Amy now before any questions?

16 **CHAIR:** I've got a couple of questions I'd like to ask Sharyn but I'll just check with my
17 colleagues. Do you mind if we ask you a couple of questions?

18 **MS COLLIS:** Sure.

19 **CHAIR:** We'll start with Sandra Alofivae.

20 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Good morning, Sharyn. Thank you so much for being so
21 generous in sharing the details of everything that you went through. I just want to ask a
22 couple of peripheral questions around your family, because you sound like you came from
23 a big family, but you don't have much contact with them now.

24 **MS COLLIS:** No.

25 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Was that as a result of what happened at Lake Alice and
26 everything that followed afterwards?

27 **MS COLLIS:** I think so. It just changed the whole family dy -- you know, the way the family
28 was. I've got two older sisters and two younger brothers. I only really had contact with one
29 sister. I don't see much of the others at all. But, yeah, it changed completely when I come
30 back out of there.

31 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** So before that were you quite a tight-knit family, did lots of
32 things with siblings?

33 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, we were. But, yeah, I just left home so young and just fended for myself,
34 so...

1 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** When you were in Lake Alice, I know that your mother visited
2 you, were you able to have any other visitors?

3 **MS COLLIS:** Not for the first six weeks, which I think that needs to be changed. When you go
4 into an institution or a home, they had a six week thing where you weren't allowed to
5 contact anybody. So it would have been after the six weeks that I saw her and I only saw
6 her once. My dad come out and my sister but they weren't allowed in the villas. So, yeah.

7 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** So it was very hard.

8 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, yeah.

9 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Thank you very much Sharyn.

10 **MS COLLIS:** That's all right.

11 **CHAIR:** Sharyn, I've got a couple of questions about things that you talked about in Lake Alice.
12 Do you mind me something a bit of detail?

13 **MS COLLIS:** It's all right.

14 **CHAIR:** Please say so if you don't want to answer okay? This is really important to fill in the
15 gaps, you know, we're building a picture of what life was like for you and all the other
16 people admitted there. But a couple of things that I want to ask you about.

17 The first is, and it's back in paragraph 19, and that is you said that you'd go into the
18 laundry of the villa. I'll just check, go through it with you. Go to the laundry and you'd see
19 the maximum security people and then you say you could see the boys in the cage with the
20 men who were in for murder. Now when you said that I could see you were upset by that,
21 so I don't want to upset you further. But are you able to tell us what you meant by "the
22 cage"?

23 **MS COLLIS:** It was -- you had the villa and connected to the villa was an outside area that they
24 could go for -- they used to go out there. It was actually connected to the villa. It was like
25 an exercise yard but it was all caged.

26 **CHAIR:** Right.

27 **MS COLLIS:** You couldn't get out of it at all.

28 **CHAIR:** Roughly how big was it?

29 **MS COLLIS:** About the size of a double bedroom.

30 **CHAIR:** Oh, I was going to say compared with this room.

31 **MS COLLIS:** No, very tiny. It would be about the size of a double bedroom.

32 **CHAIR:** So it was an outside exercise area attached to the men's?

33 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

34 **CHAIR:** Maximum security area?

- 1 **MS COLLIS:** [Nods].
- 2 **CHAIR:** How many people would be in that area, do you remember?
- 3 **MS COLLIS:** Sometimes when they put the boys over there they'd put them out -- they'd be out
4 in the exercise yard with somebody from actually in from the secure unit, because they
5 were totally separate from -- they never come out like we did.
- 6 **CHAIR:** Right.
- 7 **MS COLLIS:** We could leave our villas but they couldn't, they were -- it was locked up 24/7.
- 8 **CHAIR:** With the male or the adult who had been put in the maximum security area?
- 9 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, they'd be -- the boys would be put in to the cage with a patient from
10 maximum security.
- 11 **CHAIR:** And you say that was punishment?
- 12 **MS COLLIS:** It was. It was a sweat, it was a sweat that we listened to because we witnessed it,
13 what they did to them.
- 14 **CHAIR:** Thank you for that detail. The other thing you talk about was the drying room.
- 15 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, it was a big -- it's a laundry room and you could shut the door and it would
16 lock on the outside and they'd lock you in 5 or 10 minutes. It was just -- yeah, you could
17 just about faint with the heat.
- 18 **CHAIR:** So this is a room where they were drying clothes or laundry or something?
- 19 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, yeah, it was just a drying room.
- 20 **CHAIR:** With heat fans or something in there?
- 21 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, yeah I think so. I don't know where the heat come from.
- 22 **CHAIR:** Yeah, you were put in there?
- 23 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.
- 24 **CHAIR:** Do you remember why?
- 25 **MS COLLIS:** It would be just either smoking or talking back to the nurses, minor things, yeah.
- 26 **CHAIR:** And the last point, sort of technical but I think it's important. You weren't -- some of the
27 young people who were put in Lake Alice were put there under the care of the Social
28 Welfare or CYFS, but I don't think you were under Social Welfare?
- 29 **MS COLLIS:** No, I wasn't, my mum told me it wasn't until I was 18 but then I found out that
30 I wasn't, I wasn't under Social Welfare care at all, but they would just come and visit, social
31 worker would come out to the home. I think the Special Education service come out as
32 well.
- 33 **CHAIR:** Did they talk to you, did they come and talk to you?
- 34 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, it was a family thing when they come out, decided how my schooling was

1 going to go. That was before I went to Lake Alice. So they played a part in me being
2 admitted there.

3 **CHAIR:** That's very interesting. So it was -- you said it was your -- Leeks, it was the GP and
4 your mother, but you're also now saying that there were other Government agencies
5 involved, like special ed?

6 **MS COLLIS:** Special Education, yeah, they were involved as well because they did a report as
7 well.

8 **CHAIR:** Yes, I saw that.

9 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, and it was after that that I was sent out there.

10 **CHAIR:** Okay. And did the special ed people visit you while you were in Lake Alice?

11 **MS COLLIS:** No, I had no visitors beside my father.

12 **CHAIR:** And so just to clear it, and no social worker ever came to see you?

13 **MS COLLIS:** No, none.

14 **CHAIR:** All right, that's really helpful. I'm sorry to have to --

15 **MS COLLIS:** That's all right.

16 **CHAIR:** -- dig down but that was very helpful evidence, thank you.

17 **MS COLLIS:** That's all right.

18 **CHAIR:** Now I'm going to hand you over to somebody I think you know already, is that right?

19 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

20 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Sharyn, it's great you've come forward again with the courage
21 which you've always displayed to talk to us here today. A couple of questions. Do you
22 know who prescribed the contraceptive pill to you?

23 **MS COLLIS:** It would have been Leeks I think. Yeah, I don't think it -- no, it would have been
24 Leeks that would have prescribed that.

25 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** And you're about 14 years old at this time?

26 **MS COLLIS:** Correct.

27 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Including when what happened to you, you describe as raped?

28 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah.

29 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Looking throughout -- you didn't read all of your statement.

30 **MS COLLIS:** No.

31 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** But having heard your story and it's embedded in me forever, you
32 believe there are other girls there?

33 **MS COLLIS:** I believe so.

34 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Including one who you think left the place pregnant?

1 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah. I believe there were other girls that he done it to. We'd wake up some
2 nights and at the end of our dorm the door was locked and you'd wake up and a girl would
3 be missing and you'd try and go out but the dorm doors were locked. You couldn't get out,
4 but you could hear them screaming, they come back and they were crying. Yeah.

5 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** And also at times were you and other girls were made to punish
6 girls who had run away?

7 **MS COLLIS:** One girl ran away and when they brought her back we were made to give her a
8 bath and made to cut her hair off. Yeah, we used to have to clean up after people who had
9 shock treatment.

10 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Yeah. Thanks Sharyn, really appreciate your answering.

11 **CHAIR:** Now we're going to hand over to Amy.

12 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you for that, Sharyn. Are you okay to continue now Amy?

13 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes.

14 **MS A THOMAS:** So if you could start at paragraph 1.

15 **MS BETHUNE:** My name is Amy Bethune, I was born in 1983. I am the third of six children
16 and the only girl. My mother is Pākehā, my father is Māori. I am -- my tribe is Ngāti
17 Porou. I call myself a New Zealand Māori.

18 My mother Sharyn Collis who spent time in Lake Alice as a teenager. I am giving
19 this evidence to show how her experience at Lake Alice affected me. But I'm also speaking
20 for the other children of the survivors in Lake Alice.

21 I have also included some of my ACC notes and Oranga Tamariki notes which I
22 think are relevant. They are listed in the table at the end of this statement.

23 I would describe my childhood as miserable and unhappy. It was very difficult,
24 I didn't have a carefree childhood. I was born a baby but immediately become an adult.
25 My mother had major memory problems and was nearly always out to it and not able to
26 care for us children properly. She was very distant unemotional and cold. I was aware of
27 this as early as I was a pre-schooler.

28 I have blotted out a lot of what happened to me in my childhood and adolescence
29 because it was too painful to keep remembering. The biggest feelings I had was that I had
30 to take responsibility for my younger siblings.

31 **MS A THOMAS:** Can I just stop here.

32 **MS BETHUNE:** Can you read that.

33 **CHAIR:** Two things, first of all would she like to take a break, and secondly maybe if this was
34 easier if you were to read her rather than her having to read it all out.

1 **MS COLLIS:** Can we take a break?

2 **CHAIR:** Would you like to take a break Amy?

3 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes please.

4 **Adjournment from 10.35 am to 10.50 am**

5 **CHAIR:** You okay?

6 **MS BETHUNE:** Yeah, I'm fine thank you.

7 **MS A THOMAS:** Amy is going to read her statement herself.

8 **CHAIR:** If that's what you want to do, very happy.

9 **MS A THOMAS:** Let's start at paragraph 4 when you're ready, Amy.

10 **MS BETHUNE:** I would describe my childhood as miserable and unhappy. It was very difficult.

11 I didn't have a carefree, happy childhood. I was born a baby but immediately had to
12 become an adult. My mother had major memory problems and was nearly always out to
13 lunch and was not able to care for us children properly. She was very distant unemotional
14 and cold. I was aware of this as early as a pre-schooler.

15 I have blotted out a lot of what happened to me in my childhood and adolescence
16 because it was too painful to keep remembering. The biggest feelings I had was I had to
17 take responsibility for my younger brothers, my younger siblings, and make sure they were
18 okay. I was always away --

19 **MS A THOMAS:** I think that's supposed to be aware isn't it?

20 **MS BETHUNE:** I think so. I was always aware that there was no-one to support me in my times
21 of need as a child and adolescent.

22 Mum was always forgetful. She always seemed to be taking one or other of her
23 prescription drugs. That seemed to make her more vacant. Her lack of memory created
24 many dangerous situations for us children. For example, I recall once when a cousin was
25 staying he had pushed the heater that was on against the couch which it had melted the
26 couch but if it caught fire it would have burnt the house down. My mother hadn't noticed
27 it. In an ACC psychiatric recommendation report in 2016 I described the way I was
28 parented.

29 **MS A THOMAS:** And you don't have to read the brackets, so just go on to paragraph 7, thanks
30 Amy.

31 **MS BETHUNE:** When I was 10 years old I had a deeper realisation that mum was far from all
32 right. She had taken us to the shops to buy ice cream and lollies and as soon as we come
33 back home and walked in the door she suggested that we go to the shop to buy ice cream
34 and lollies. When I told her we had just been, she had no memory of it.

1 I recall mum telling me as a child that she had been in Lake Alice and had been
2 raped by Dr Leeks. She had woken up and was alone with him on top of her and he had put
3 her back to sleep. Also she had been gang raped --

4 **MS A THOMAS:** And you don't have to say the name there thank you.

5 **MS BETHUNE:** Because of the way my mother was, I did not have a childhood as other children
6 did. I was a good kid. I never ran away from home or got up to mischief. I spent my time
7 caring for my mother and my three younger brothers and looking out for my mother.

8 I would see my younger brothers were clothed, washed and fed and had what they
9 needed for school and other activities. I would make sure they got to bed on time. I had to
10 look out for and protect my brothers from my mum's forgetfulness. She was always
11 forgetting important stuff in their lives and was unaware of dangerous situations. I always
12 felt that I had to protect my mother and my brothers.

13 **MS A THOMAS:** And you don't have to finish that sentence.

14 **MS BETHUNE:** Another very damaging feature of my childhood was how many times we
15 moved as a family. We moved from Taihape to Tauranga to Palmerston North to
16 Whanganui to Te Puke to Palmerston North to Auckland and many more moves. My
17 parents were constantly separating and then getting back together, and that precipitated
18 many of our moves. It was hard to develop friendships and to have a steady schooling.

19 Police not protecting my family from violence. I remember once when I was 11 or
20 12 years old just about killed my --

21 **MS A THOMAS:** Blank name.

22 **MS BETHUNE:** Yeah, just about killed my brother when he threw him down the stairs.

23 Someone called the Police and when the policeman turned up he said "You didn't touch him
24 did you?" The Police knew he had but were protecting him from any consequences for his
25 domestic violence. We felt totally powerless and voice less as children. There was no-one
26 to help us.

27 **MS A THOMAS:** Take your time, it's okay, just let me know if you'd like me to take over.

28 **MS BETHUNE:** I was first sexually abused as a 5 year old. It went on for at least a year. The
29 abuser was --

30 **MS A THOMAS:** Someone you knew.

31 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes. I could not tell my parents. I recall my mother taking me to the GP
32 regularly because I was always sore and he told my mother that it was a urine infection.
33 Mum took me just about every two weeks.

34 I recall telling my aunt when I was 5 that I was being abused and the Police were

1 brought in. I was made to have an extremely painful smear test. The abuser was never
2 brought to justice. The Police said that they did not have enough evidence.

3 I was abused by two other boys when I was 11.

4 **MS A THOMAS:** Go from "there".

5 **MS BETHUNE:** There had been problems with him for several years and he had been placed in
6 foster care homes in Auckland. It was when he come home in between those placements
7 that he would abuse me. It was terrifying and he would hold knives to my throat.

8 My mother was so out to it she wasn't aware what was happening and I was not able
9 to defend myself. I knew that if I told her she would not have been able to help me
10 anyway. I didn't tell anyone in the family until six years ago. It had been agony having
11 him around my family, around the family gatherings over the years, I hated being in his
12 presence. I had to always keep looking out for my own children if he was around. After
13 I disclosed the abuse, I now make sure that I am not around him and I do not coincide with
14 him at family events. The second abuser was my brother's friend.

15 My parenting of my younger siblings took a serious toll on my education. I was
16 tired in class and would often fall asleep, especially at secondary school. I went to four
17 different high schools between the ages of 13 and 15. Te Puke High School, Mount
18 Maunganui High School, Queen Elizabeth High school and Whanganui College.

19 **CHAIR:** There's a difference between Whanganui College and Whanganui Collegiate, it was
20 collegiate?

21 **MS COLLIS:** Yeah, yeah, it was.

22 **MS BETHUNE:** I was absent a great deal and the schools did not understand that this was not
23 because I was wagging but because I was at home looking out for my younger siblings,
24 particularly my younger brothers.

25 From the age of 13 I half attempted to kill myself. In 1997 when I was 14 I went to
26 the doctors and told the doctor that I felt like killing myself and that I needed counselling.
27 It was in that context that I first disclosed to anyone that I had been sexually abused. The
28 doctor helped me apply for ACC. However, ACC would not process my claim as I was
29 underage. As they would state in my file it was because I was only a child and that was
30 common back then. On 6 December 2017 they gave me a written apology for not giving
31 me the support I needed as a young teenager. They had told me at the time that it was
32 common practice not to provide cover for children and young persons who had been
33 sexually abused.

34 In 1998 by the age of 15 I was homeless. It come about after my mum said to me

1 one day in front of my cousin something like "Amy, do you remember when you were
2 abused as a 5 year old?" I had a huge reaction and shouted "How dare you tell everyone
3 about my abuse." A week later she told me to fuck off and leave. I rung dad and told him
4 and mum had thrown me out. He said he wouldn't take me in. I ended up flatting and I was
5 given a youth benefit by the Department of Social Welfare. Being alone in the world and
6 left to fend for myself at 15 was incredibly traumatic and stressful.

7 About a month later my father rang and told me that there was a letter waiting for
8 me. The letter is in my document bundle.

9 **MS A THOMAS:** I'll just pause you there Amy, it might be good if you have a bit of a break as
10 well.

11 **MS BETHUNE:** Thank you.

12 **MS A THOMAS:** Amy and Sharyn do want us to bring the letter up on the screen and I've been
13 asked to read just a few passages from this letter. So this is from Sharyn to Amy. If we
14 could go to the second page of the letter please. That was provided at the time.

15 Before I do read these parts of the letter out, I do want to say that Amy and Sharyn,
16 it's great to see that you have really strengthened your relationship again and for you both
17 to be sitting here today together is really beautiful. So I will just read these passages. If
18 you want me to stop just let me know. So this is a letter from Sharyn to Amy, basically
19 saying that she will be leaving to concentrate on her health. These are some of Sharyn's
20 words.

21 "I know you will be pretty angry and hurt by now, but I think I'm doing the best for
22 everyone here. You, I hope, will forgive me one day. The longer I stay in your lives the
23 more I mess it up. One day I will explain and hope like hell that you will understand why I
24 am doing this. You have done nothing wrong and you never have. You have been the best
25 daughter in the world and you are going to make the most wonderful mother. Much better
26 than me. Don't be like me. I will come back into your lives but it will be a long, long time
27 away. When I find myself and heal inside and when I am a strong person I might be able to
28 repair the damage I have caused you kids but please Amy let me go. I need this for me.
29 I need to find some sort of peace and understanding. I can't have my sanity as well. I am
30 so mixed up inside, I am hurting you kids. I have to do something now before I destroy
31 you."

32 And that continues but I think we can leave it there and that's the letter you're
33 talking about Amy?

34 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes.

1 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you. If you return to your statement at paragraph 21. Actually, sorry,
2 we can go to paragraph 22.

3 **MS BETHUNE:** I had also been kicked out of school by 16. I'd been absent so much because I
4 was looking after my younger brothers at the time. The youngest was only 3 or 4 at the
5 time. I recall turning up to school one day at Queen Elizabeth High and the teacher asking
6 me why I was there, saying that they had signed me out a week earlier. No-one asked me
7 why I was not at school or thought I might be a young person in need. I just left. I stayed
8 in a flat with my brother's ex-girlfriend for a year and then I tried to do a nanny course for
9 four months but could not finish it. By 17 I was also very sick with endometriosis and
10 needed surgery. After that I moved in with a boyfriend.

11 I took an overdose at 17 and was taken to hospital where my stomach was pumped
12 out. I was sent home a week late with no mental health assessment or support -- assistance
13 or support.

14 When I was 17 in 2000 I heard a conversation between my flatmate and my --

15 **MS A THOMAS:** Blank.

16 **MS BETHUNE:** -- who had sexually abused me at 11. I told them what he had done to me and
17 they supported me to make a complaint to the Tauranga Police Station. However, the
18 Police told me there was nothing they could do.

19 When I got the Police records of my complaint six years ago, I was advised by the
20 Pahiatua Police that there was no record of me ever having stepped foot into the Pahiatua
21 Police Station or making that complaint.

22 When I was 19 in 2002 I moved to Palmerston North with a man who become the
23 father of my four children. I have lived in that area ever since and owned my own home in
24 Pahiatua for the last 15 years.

25 I have six children who are ages between 2 and 17, three boys and three girls. The
26 four oldest are to the same father, the two youngest have different fathers. I have recently
27 separated from the father of my youngest child.

28 In my own parenting I have tried very hard to parent my children in a way that
29 I wanted to be parented as a child and learn not to repeat the mistakes my mother made. I
30 am proud of my children and that I have achieved -- and what I have achieved with them.
31 For example, they have all gone to Pahiatua Primary School and Tararua College. They
32 have had continuity of education and have been able to develop friendships. They have
33 lived in the same home for the last 15 years. My oldest, we moved to Pahiatua when my
34 oldest was 3. They have had a stable home but with their ups and downs from their parents.

1 I have never left my children and I am down -- when I am down (sic) and upset.
2 I explain to them why I am upset and down. They are very loving and supportive of me.
3 I do not have any educational qualifications but when my children are older I want to do
4 something, possibly looking after foster children.

5 As an adult I carried extreme hurt and anger that I had not protected -- that I was not
6 protected from sexual abuse and that no-one protected my family from family violence.
7 Also that I did not have a childhood. I felt everyone was against me, my parents, the
8 Police, ACC, I never had a voice anywhere.

9 I had a near break-down in 2015. I told my mother of the sexual abuse of me as an
10 11 year old. I then rang my father and told him. That --

11 **MS A THOMAS:** Led to.

12 **MS BETHUNE:** That led me to making an ACC claim and I have been in counselling ever since.
13 I believe I have come a long way in the last six years. I have come to understand that the
14 abuser was very likely sexually abused himself when he was in the care of the State before
15 he abused me. I still hate having any contact with him and do not trust him around my
16 children.

17 I suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder but also from major depression and
18 anxiety. On 17 August 2016 I was assessed by Peter Claman for ACC and he concluded
19 that I had a permanent mental injury. I also had a -- sorry, I can't say that -- PTSD
20 assessment on 23 January 2018 from Milly Hanlon. I would like to do art therapy now to
21 help with my mental health issues. I don't know how to spell or read or write using proper
22 grammar because I have had so little schooling. Even when I was at school I couldn't
23 concentrate because there was so much stress in my childhood. At that stage I had
24 undiagnosed PTSD, anxiety and depression stemming from my own abuse. I felt
25 continually angry about the abuse I suffered and the memories that I have been left with,
26 which haunt me every single day of my life.

27 I was very annoyed reading an ACC note that suggested my trauma was hereditary
28 from my mother. It is trauma brought on -- brought about because of having a mother who
29 was out to lunch her(sic) whole childhood, which allowed awful things to happen to me and
30 I believe she was out to lunch because of the terrible experiences of drugs, electric shocks
31 and abuse at Lake Alice.

32 In the last few years I received a backdated lump sum compensation from ACC for
33 sexual abuse as a child. It took me four years of struggle to get it. I was almost suicidal by
34 the time I was granted it. It took so long. They made me go through two reviews and only

1 granted it before the District Court hearing. I am currently supported by ACC on the
2 minimum level of loss of potential earnings. ACC-funded my counselling.

3 Many years ago mum apologised to me for not being a proper mum. When she
4 heard of the sexual abuse she apologised for not protecting me. Our relationship now is the
5 best it has ever been. She's moved back in with me -- she moved back in with me since
6 before Christmas and we are getting on very well. She supports me with the care of my
7 children.

8 It was only in the last visit --

9 **MS A THOMAS:** You don't have to read that paragraph if you don't want to, Amy, and go
10 straight to paragraph 37.

11 **MS BETHUNE:** I would like there to be a public apology from the Government. I want the
12 apology to be filmed and include the names of every person who wants to be acknowledged
13 for what they had suffered in the care of the State.

14 I would like all children who were in the care of the State to be given parenting or
15 grandparenting support and any other support they require, for example trauma support and
16 treatment for mental health issues.

17 By the late 1970s the Government knew something terrible had happened at Lake
18 Alice. All children born to a parent who had been in Lake Alice should have been
19 monitored and followed up on. The parents should have been supported and given help to
20 get over their mental trauma.

21 I was a child bringing up children because my mother could not properly parent.
22 She had to struggle on the best she could, but it was not good enough. She also could not
23 get herself out -- there was no-one there to protect or support me or my siblings.

24 What happened to me was that all my trauma my mother went through got
25 transmitted to me in all the ways that made my childhood a hell. I believe all children of
26 parents who were in Lake Alice should be offered counselling and trauma support. I
27 understand from my mother's conversations that a lot of them found it very hard to be
28 proper mum or dads. These children will have suffered like I did. The children shouldn't
29 have to prove sexual abuse to get trauma support and ACC counselling.

30 Counselling should be available to children in all primary schools and they should
31 be able to choose the gender of their counsellor. I have a friend who could not disclose his
32 sexual abuse at school because the counsellor was a female. I think the same would go for
33 race. I would like to give this evidence at the Royal Commission in Auckland. I'll just
34 leave it at that.

- 1 **MS A THOMAS:** Thank you so much Amy.
- 2 **MS BETHUNE:** You're welcome.
- 3 **MS A THOMAS:** I think it was good to hear the statement from you, so thank you very much.
- 4 Commissioners may have some questions for you.
- 5 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** No, just a comment thank you, Amy. I was going to ask what
- 6 support you felt children like you and what you'd experienced needed and I think you've
- 7 outlined it beautifully in terms of the supports because you were in so many schools. Was
- 8 there anything else that you wanted to add to that? It's not just about providing the
- 9 counselling, because you also got a benefit from the Department of Social Welfare, was it
- 10 the independent youth allowance.
- 11 **MS BETHUNE:** Sorry, what was that?
- 12 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** What other supports apart from the counselling do you think
- 13 would be really helpful to children like yourself whose parents went through Lake Alice?
- 14 **MS BETHUNE:** It's a bit hard to think, because so many people failed myself, so many people
- 15 that should have from teachers to even counsellors back when I was in school. But there
- 16 needs to be more than what there is, a lot more, and the kids need to be listened to. They
- 17 need to be heard and not, well there's not enough evidence or made to feel like they were to
- 18 blame.
- 19 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** So actually those who are in positions of making decisions
- 20 about what supports go into schools should be talking a lot more to young people like
- 21 yourself --
- 22 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes.
- 23 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** -- who actually experienced to be able to inform better?
- 24 **MS BETHUNE:** They should, yes, yes, definitely because it's also not just me, it's my children as
- 25 well. My kids can go on the internet and read up about their nan now. My kids are pretty
- 26 hard and resilient, but I do know that they're at home watching. And they're going to need
- 27 someone to talk to, seeing all this, and realising what their grandparents or parents have
- 28 gone through. The deeper impact of it, people need to realise the deeper impact of what
- 29 Leeks and everyone else at that hospital done to those children and how it has affected their
- 30 whole lives.
- 31 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Yeah, so that's the intergenerational effect that you're
- 32 describing?
- 33 **MS BETHUNE:** Yeah.
- 34 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Very beautifully there for us. Thank you, Amy, you are an

1 incredible, incredible young lady.

2 **MS BETHUNE:** Thank you.

3 **CHAIR:** I can't add to that, Amy. And I won't ask you anymore questions but I'll just hand you
4 over again to Commissioner Gibson.

5 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Thanks, Amy, for sharing as well today and again, reiterating the
6 context you alongside your mother, such a powerful connection, powerful story. We're
7 looking at redress for people who were abused in care. And one of the questions is about
8 how to address intergenerational impacts. What you've talked about, redress should cover
9 the children of people who are in State care. And some important components like how to
10 be a good parent for people who have gone through State care, that's something else that
11 you're --

12 **MS BETHUNE:** Parenting course or, you know, there needs to be set parenting courses where --
13 and counselling and the support to parent.

14 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Not just for people who have been through State care themselves
15 but also the children of those people as well?

16 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes, the children of those people. My counsellor said I'm one of the lucky
17 people in the way that I haven't -- I'm still here. They're still here, the children of the
18 survivors from what I have heard have had a hard life as well and they're still here.

19 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** There was a suggestion that there should be part of the redress or
20 setting up processes so that people who survive these places could connect back together,
21 some kind of informal networks?

22 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes.

23 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Do you think children of those survivors as well need something
24 similar?

25 **MS BETHUNE:** Yes, because you -- it's hard -- I can talk to someone else that's been abused
26 because they know where I'm coming from. I can't have a conversation with someone that
27 has had an awesome childhood life. I can't connect to those people. So yeah, that would be
28 great to set up something like that, support groups for the kids and the grandkids to
29 understand ways to help them process, this has happened to my family. My girls are a bit --
30 they're coming in that age where one of them, she will need someone to talk to to process
31 what me and her nan have just done, talked about. So yeah, definitely.

32 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Thanks, I think that's all for me now to thank you. I've heard a lot
33 of private sessions but, Sharyn, what you have shared particularly I think has impacted on
34 me, on many of us over the time. I'm not sure how many times you've gone back to try and

1 seek justice for what happened to you?

2 **MS COLLIS:** Too many times, shouldn't have happened that many times.

3 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Hopefully this will be the last time, there there'll be some
4 resolution out of it.

5 **MS COLLIS:** Hopefully.

6 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** It is powerful, is what I've heard is that the letter, that was
7 amazing, that was something in itself, that the connection, the striving to return to
8 something, connection with family. You've been courageous over many years to come
9 forward and seek justice. And again, I hope this is the last time that there will be justice
10 from this. So really appreciate what you both have given today. We've seen the
11 intergenerational impacts and we've heard what you've told us, thanks so much for sharing.

12 **CHAIR:** That was going to be the last word but having heard that your children are watching,
13 Amy, can I just say to them, you've got a wonderful nana and a wonderful mum and they're
14 very brave. So thank you.

15 **MS COLLIS:** Thank you.

16 **MS BETHUNE:** Thank you.

17 **CHAIR:** Let's take the adjournment thank you.

18 **Adjournment from 11.22 am to 11.51 am**

19 **MS JOYCHILD:** Good morning Commissioners.

20 **CHAIR:** Good morning Ms Joychild.

21 **MS JOYCHILD:** We now have in the seat to give evidence Malcolm Richards who is a survivor
22 of Lake Alice and Malcolm, if you take the affirmation from the Chair of the Commission
23 and then we'll start your evidence.

24 **MALCOLM RICHARDS**

25 **CHAIR:** Just before I do that, welcome to the hearing Malcolm, thank you for coming. I've just
26 been told that you don't want to go anonymous, that you'd like to have your name
27 mentioned, is that right?

28 A. Yeah, that's fine.

29 **Q.** Excellent. We'll probably hear about that later on. Malcolm, if you could just answer the
30 following. Do you solemnly, sincerely, truly declare and affirm that the evidence you'll
31 give today to the Commission will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

32 A. I do.

33 **Q.** Thank you very much. I'll leave you have with Ms Joychild.

34 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD:** Malcolm, would you like to start reading at paragraph 1.