

**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'imuumua  
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 Kerry 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:** 15 March 2022

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**TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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**INDEX****HARRY TUTAHI**

Questioning by Ms Norton	463
Questioning by Commissioners	494

**WAIANA KOTARA**

Questioning by Ms Spelman	496
Questioning by Commissioners	516

**REV DINAH LAMBERT**

Questioning by Ms Castle	521
Questioning by Commissioners	544

1 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tēnā koutou katoa, welcome back everyone. Just to confirm that  
 2 our tech people are kapai? All good, okay. So we have Counsel Assisting the Royal  
 3 Commission, Ms Spelman, in Ōtautahi to assist with the evidence for our next survivor,  
 4 Whaea Kotara, Waiana Kotara. Tēnā koe.

5 **MS SPELMAN:** Tēnā koe te Heamana otirā ki ngā Kaikōmihana katoa (greetings to you, the  
 6 Chairman and to all Commissioners). It's my privilege, Commissioners, to introduce the  
 7 evidence today of Whaea Waiana Kotara. He uri tēnei o Ngāti Hako, o Ngāti Maniapoto, o  
 8 Ngāi Tahu, o Ngāti Kōtirana hoki. Waiana, ka nui te mihi ki a koe. Otirā, ki ō mātua tīpuna  
 9 e noho nei ki tō tātou taha, ā whakaāhua nei, ā wairua nei. Tēnā koutou, tēnā koe.  
 10 [English: She's a descendant of Ngāti Hako and Ngāti Maniapoto, from Ngāi Tahu and  
 11 Scotland. Waiana, my acknowledgments to you, to your ancestors sitting with us, that are  
 12 here with us today in picture form and in spirit. Thank you.]

13 Waiana, I want to acknowledge you before we start today and also your whānau  
 14 who are here in the room with us. He mihi tēnei hoki ki tō rōpū tautoko, tēnā koe [English:  
 15 this is an acknowledgment to your supporting team, thank you] Whaea Cheryl, Jo, and also  
 16 to Maia Wikaira and Waimirangi Mihitea who I know have worked in supporting today,  
 17 and also Dell, so tēnā koutou ki te rōpū tautoko katoa). Thank you to the supporting team).

18 Whaea, I know we're going to hear shortly about these taonga that are sitting here  
 19 with us, but firstly we're just going to go through some formalities. And so I know you've  
 20 got in front of you your statement and that's the one that you finished on 17 February 2022  
 21 and that statement is with the Commissioners, they have read that and I know that's what  
 22 you'll be speaking to today. And as discussed, we're just going to pass back now to  
 23 Heamana Erueti (to Chairman Erueti) who will give the affirmation in te reo Māori.

24 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tēnā kōrua. Ms Spelman, just to confirm that for our kōrero  
 25 starting now, that what we'll do is we'll take a later lunch break at 1.30, so kōrero for an  
 26 hour and then resume back at quarter past 2.

27 **MS SPELMAN:** Kapai.

28 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Kapai. Okay, so Whaea Kotara, I'll start with the affirmation.

29

30 **WAIANA KOTARA (affirmed in te reo)**

31 **QUESTIONING BY MS SPELMAN:** Kia ora Whaea. Now I'm just going to shift myself as  
 32 discussed over to this other turu here so I'm at a socially safe distance from you and I'll just  
 33 move myself and then ka hoatu te rākau ki a koe (English: then I will pass it over to you)

1 pass the rākau over so you can introduce yourself. So I'll just move over here now. Kia  
2 ora.

3 A. Kia ora.

4 **Q.** So I'll pass over to you, Whaea, if you want to introduce yourself for us today and also  
5 who's here in the room with us?

6 A. Kia ora koutou, ko wai au? Ko Waiana Kotara tāku ingoa (greetings, who am I? I am  
7 Waiana Kotara). I've brought with me today my tūpuna (my ancestors). So this is my  
8 nanny from Maniapoto, her name is Pohiwairoa Heri Weterere(?), my grandfather from Ngāti  
9 Hako, ko John Whataiwe Kotara, my great grandmother Tereo Ngaperera and this this  
10 fearless woman is my mama, ko Hineata Raewyn Ruru McNaughton Kotara. I also bought  
11 my dad along. My dad is still very much here and lives down the road from me, but I felt it  
12 important that he was also present. Kia ora koutou.

13 **Q.** Tēnā koe, tēnā koutou. Kia ora mō tēnā Whaea, thank you for that and for starting us off in  
14 that way. I'm going to turn now to your written statement and I know that it's important for  
15 you to have this whakaaro from Dr Rangi Matamua about markers of time. So I wonder if  
16 that might be a good place for us to start today?

17 A. Kia ora Julia. I guess by just saying it, Matariki marks 20 year long (inaudible) indicating  
18 that there is more than one marker of time. Ko mihi ki a koutou (I want to acknowledge  
19 you all), my name is Waiana Suzanne Kotara and this is my story, my marker and in my  
20 own words, I want to acknowledge my marker and in my own words.

21 It's important for me to tell my story in my own words because much of my life has  
22 involved other people interpreting and telling my story through their eyes, of Police,  
23 therapists, ACC workers, staff at the care facilities I was placed in. They were often wrong  
24 and almost always judgmental. Me telling me my story from my perspective is part of me  
25 holding authority over that story.

26 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Aroha mai Whaea and Ms Spelman. We just - just- to let you  
27 know, this happens all the time, that we've got our signers here and transcriber, so if you  
28 could just take a breath and take a bit more time to talk to us, that would be appreciated  
29 whaea. Tēnā koe.

30 A. Kia ora rā.

31 **MS SPELMAN:** Tēnā koe, and I'll give you a little reminder if we start speeding up at all. We're  
32 just taking a moment to make sure we can (inaudible). Just to check if we can both be  
33 heard okay now at the marae end?

34 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** We can hear you clearly.

1 **QUESTIONING BY MS SPELMAN CONTINUED:** Tēnā koe. Whaea, I want to turn now to  
2 the part of your statement where you talk about painting a picture. And I know this is  
3 important for you because this is the way that you want to tell your story in your own  
4 words. So taking us to that time marker, when you were a 12 year old girl, could you tell  
5 us about that particular period where we'll start our kōrero.

6 A. Kia ora, I guess first and foremost it has - it's- important for me to start at 12 in order to go  
7 back and look back. I have to start at that - that needed to be my point of reference, and  
8 I guess also because it was so impacting, you know. So- the picture I want to paint as a 12  
9 year old- girl is I was desperate to escape the attempted assault from an older neighbour,  
10 conflicted by the route I took to school, bypassing gang houses, often being in trouble for  
11 late attendance. As a -result - and avoiding close friends because of previous sexual  
12 assaults by a friend's uncle. I was scared of the unwanted attention and my only means was  
13 to run away and to get away from prying eyes and to allow myself time to sit back and  
14 reflect on what my next step was going to be. I was trying to get my head around what had  
15 happened and how to deal with that, who do I tell, all those questions. Unfortunately,- I  
16 was reported missing and subsequently picked up by the Police and taken to Strathmore  
17 Girls' Home.

18 **Q.** Tēnā koe. So that paints a really vivid picture for us of you as a 12 year old kōtiro (girl)  
19 and you've mentioned the police taking you to Strathmore Girls' Home. So I just want you  
20 to take us back there to tell us what it was like for you when you first arrived at Strathmore  
21 Girls' Home?

22 A. It was fearful. I was told that it was safe, that I was in a safe place and then I was put into a  
23 cell. So it neither felt safe nor did I feel cared for. And the only real - I- have two  
24 memories, and one is the dormitory that I was taken to next, the window that I knew was  
25 my escape, and the second image comes much later and that's when the Ferry Road fires  
26 happened and the seven children that where street kids died and two of the children were  
27 my nieces, Jenaya and Trisha. And my thought on that was they never had the chance to  
28 escape, they were locked in from the outside, so the door couldn't open, and we buried both  
29 of those girls along with the others, yeah.

30 **Q.** And we're going to return to that kōrero about the fire a bit later on.

31 A. Okay.

32 **Q.** I know - thank- you for that. You talked about getting put in a cell when you first arrived  
33 and how that didn't feel safe or cared for. Do you remember how long you were kept in  
34 that cell, what happened after that?

- 1 A. It felt like an eternity. But in reality I think the timeframe was no more than 24 hours. I  
2 don't really know how long, I just know it wasn't longer than 24 hours.
- 3 Q. And you mentioned in your statement that you didn't understand why you couldn't go  
4 home, or no one had really explained to you why you were there. What was your memory  
5 of what was explained to you, if anything, about being there?
- 6 A. I was a truant, I was a runaway. That was the reason that I was there. That was the reason  
7 given.
- 8 Q. And throughout that time, your memories were centred around your need to get back to  
9 your whānau?
- 10 A. Yeah.
- 11 Q. And trying to run away, is that right?
- 12 A. I was never - I- didn't run away from home, I left, I left home, I was running away from the  
13 abuse of neighbours and the abuse that was happening with a friend's uncle. I was running  
14 away from that, not --
- 15 Q. Not from home?
- 16 A. No, no.
- 17 Q. Tēnā koe. Well I think that's a time then where we could turn to look at what was it like at  
18 home for you when you were growing up with whānau before the State became involved  
19 and before you went into Strathmore Girls' Home. So could you tell us, just looking at  
20 paragraph 15 here, about your whānau life in those early years?
- 21 A. Well, you can read that, that my parents both moved down to Christchurch during the  
22 period of urban migration for employment. My mum was born here, but had gone up north  
23 and then made her way back. So my father was a construction worker and my mother was  
24 a cleaner for the courts and the police station, a position of trust. My mother also was a  
25 carer of other children with Matua Whāngai and a support person on a voluntary basis with  
26 the Women's Refuge.
- 27 My dad has a big family, so there were always gatherings and in those gatherings  
28 there were marquees and kegs. And I remember them being, you know, very whānau  
29 orientated, you know, because it was a big family and I remember the kids playing, we had  
30 a Housie game that the adults constructed for us, so we had our own Housie while they had  
31 a game of Housie that went on, or game of Poker. And they had a house kete, so money  
32 went into the kete to save for tangi and any other expenses that came along, but mostly for  
33 tangihana (funeral services), and the rest was left for the house, you know, to provide for  
34 the kai and stuff. So those were the kind of gatherings that we had.

- 1 **Q.** And you mentioned that you felt really connected to your taha wairua (spiritual side)  
2 growing up.
- 3 **A.** Yeah, mum was a really advocate, she was a really good and strong force to provide as  
4 much I think in that urban setting as she could with those things Māori. You know, so she  
5 enrolled us in a kapa haka group (Māori performing arts), Te Kotahitanga, and had us  
6 involved in whānau. And I think a lot of that taha Māori (Māori side) was with the family  
7 itself, you know, with those gatherings, with - mum- would take us over to Lyttelton, over  
8 to Rāpaki, over to Port Levy. So we were always involved with other whānau from other  
9 areas.
- 10 **Q.** Kia ora mō tēnā (thank you for that). That's helpful to paint that picture for us for that part.  
11 You speak about when you were about 7 years old, the time your parents separated and  
12 how your mum at that point was caring for you all. I just wonder if you could tell us about  
13 that part about what happened, what it was like for you and your siblings after your parents  
14 separated?
- 15 **A.** I think part of that separation was that my nana passed away, and my memory of nana  
16 passing away is taking my shoes off at the door instinctively and going up and kissing my  
17 nana goodbye and telling her that it would be okay. I remember that. And I think the  
18 impact was that my dad was now grieving, you know, he was grieving the loss of his  
19 mama. **GRO-B**, my older brother, is intellectually disabled. So mum struggled to care for  
20 him and she had lost a child previous to me, so I'm named after - I- carry her name,  
21 Suzanne and Suzanne's passed away. So mum was carrying a whole lot of grief and in  
22 between that dad had had an accident at work and was made redundant, when the tower  
23 came down around him and that put strain financially on the family. So there were - it- was  
24 tight for mum and dad, and I'm getting stuck a little bit.
- 25 **Q.** Kapai. I was just going to ask you, I know we've just spoken about your brother and I'll  
26 just refer to him as your brother. But I know you've spoken about some things happening  
27 that led to him being removed from your mum's care and that his removal from your  
28 whānau by the State along with the loss of your sister, as you've just told us about, led to  
29 your mum really having a tough time when she got taken to Sunnyside Hospital.
- 30 **A.** Mmm. So prior to that happening mum reached out and tried to get help through her  
31 doctor, and she was prescribed I think they're called Valium, which were referred to as  
32 mama's little helper, and then sent home. So the help that she got was in form of a tablet.  
33 But she reached out, you know, she knew that she was struggling with **GRO-** and, as a

GRO-B

1 consequence of that, mum became violent towards [GRO-B] and the system was quick to  
2 intervene on that.

3 **Q.** So she didn't get the support that she really needed but instead your brother was taken from  
4 her care?

5 **A.** Yeah.

6 **Q.** And then when your mum went to Sunnyside Hospital --

7 **A.** Which was about the same time.

8 **Q.** Yeah, what happened with you in terms of Social Welfare?

9 **A.** We were all split, so [CBO-R] was taken indefinitely, me, [CBO-R], [CBO-R] and

10 [CBO-R] were put into both Glenelg Health Camp, Cholmondeley Health Camp and I  
11 don't know where my older brother went, he went into foster care for a time, yeah.

12 **Q.** And just as a reminder, whaea, I'll just try and refer to your siblings just as that.

13 **A.** Sorry.

14 **Q.** Kei te pai tērā (that's fine). But you've just mentioned to us about the health camp, so  
15 I wonder if you could tell us about what it felt like when you were there. Because I know  
16 you've mentioned in the statement that, you know, initially it was feeling scared and that  
17 you weren't sure how you could speak out. But just tell us about how it was for you when  
18 you were at the health camp and children's home?

19 **A.** I didn't understand why, why we were taken. I didn't understand that my mum was sick and  
20 that she needed to be where she was. I didn't know if we were ever going to go home, and I  
21 was just afraid, I was a scared kid.

22 **Q.** And no one really explained to you what was happening with your mum?

23 **A.** No. I knew that she was sick, I think what we got told was she was sick, and I don't know  
24 who that was that told us, I don't know if that was dad, I don't know if that was the home,  
25 but that was as far as the explanation went, that she was sick and...

26 **Q.** And you've described what it was like at the home in terms of being quite strict with the  
27 tasks that you had to do around the dormitory, that sort of thing?

28 **A.** Yes.

29 **Q.** Could you tell us about that?

30 **A.** Making the beds, learning how to line them so that the blanket and the pillow matched, the  
31 lines; doing corners on the bed, so you learned to tuck the bed into the corner. I remember  
32 if we didn't follow, if we didn't follow the rules we'd be stood at the end of the bed and for  
33 an indefinite amount of time. And they used what they called the coat hanger if we were



- 1           naughty, so we got the coat hanger over our knuckles if we were deemed to be doing  
2           anything naughty, like answering back or no, or not fast enough.
- 3   **Q.**     And you've mentioned about trying to run away from that place to get back to your mother.  
4           What happened when you ran away from there?
- 5   **A.**     I run away on two occasions from both places and tried to go home, so Glenelg Health  
6           Camp, with my brother, we made it to the bottom of the hill to the dairy and that's as far as  
7           we got. From Cholmondeley Home I made it to Rāpaki before I was picked up by staff in a  
8           car because I had nowhere to hide.
- 9   **Q.**     And so that was - then- that takes us up to the time when you went to Strathmore Girls'  
10          Home, as we've spoken about.
- 11 **A.**     Yeah, but prior to that, part of the running away and trying to get home was I just wanted to  
12          go home, I did not understand why I couldn't go home and I tried to get back to my mum.  
13          But the bigger pull also was that there was abuse happening in there and it was not being  
14          talked about, and it was being shoved under a blanket of laughter or good cheer or, you  
15          know, and I'd been - I'd- tried to tell the staff that I was uncomfortable with one of the  
16          characters that were there and I was made fun of. I was laughed at and they seen it as  
17          nothing more than I was afraid of Father Christmas, you know. So whether they actually  
18          knew or not I don't know, but they never listened. And that was part of the getting away  
19          from there. Wherever I got put I was getting hurt, yeah.
- 20 **Q.**     And even when you tried to raise it with them and tell them what had happened, they just  
21          didn't take it seriously?
- 22 **A.**     No. And so I left and tried to go home.
- 23 **Q.**     Yeah. And is there anything else that you wanted to share with us about that period of  
24          them going to Strathmore Girls' Home before you transferred to Kingslea? I know that's  
25          taking us up to when you're about 12 or 13 at the time when you transferred, isn't it?
- 26 **A.**     Yeah, so while I was at Strathmore, part of the process was that we were now  
27          turning - going- into Kingslea, so it was not just me, it was all of us. So Strathmore  
28          transferred over to Kingslea Girls' Home and I transferred with that. So when I arrived  
29          there I was one of the youngest. When I left I was one of the oldest, yeah.
- 30 **Q.**     Yeah. And you've mentioned that when you first arrived at Kingslea Girls' Home that you  
31          were put into secure unit and that you spent quite a bit of time in that secure unit while you  
32          were at Kingslea. Would you just describe for us so we can get a sense of what that secure  
33          unit was like for you?

- 1 A. A 4 x 2. So a cell with a toilet area that bolted to the floor, a silver sink if you were lucky  
2 enough to get a sink in there, the window on the clothes side, which is where I spent most  
3 of my time, had a window the size of a letterbox slip. So my outside world was through a  
4 lens, mmm.
- 5 **Q.** And when you got out of that secure, you know, the first time to arrive into Kingslea, what  
6 was the welcome that you received from the other girls there?
- 7 A. Oh it was real cool. They let me know who was who, and that there was a strata that  
8 existed and that I was to fall into line or not. I did not, mmm.
- 9 **Q.** So there was a hierarchy there, but you didn't fit in with what their hierarchy was?
- 10 A. No, they were bullies. And I seen them bully kids that could not defend themselves against  
11 that, and so I started to defend people because they were bullies, and that in turn meant  
12 there were a lot of fights and I became that violence, you know, the violence that I was  
13 trying to avoid, I actually became it because I became it, because I'm in the jungle.
- 14 **Q.** And that was how it was?
- 15 A. Yeah. You had to fight to survive.
- 16 **Q.** Once you had been at Kingslea a little while and realised that's what it was like there, how  
17 did it make you feel, how were you feeling about home at that point?
- 18 A. I just - I- was still on the same page that I was right from the word go, you know, I never  
19 ran away from home, I want to go home, I want to go home, I want to tell my parents what  
20 happened to me. And as time went by, I lost the ability to tell them and then more stuff  
21 happens on top of. So yeah, it just got compounded, and I would always find an escape.  
22 So part of my stay in Kingslea and in secure was escaping a lot of times.
- 23 **Q.** What did that look like, that cycle when you were running away?
- 24 A. What do you mean what did it look like?
- 25 **Q.** If you were --
- 26 A. I got a ring in my ear.
- 27 **Q.** Yeah, I think we're okay, we can carry on.
- 28 A. Sorry.
- 29 **Q.** Me too. I was just asking about when you would run away and then be brought back to  
30 secure, which in turn you talked about would make you want to run away more and getting  
31 into a bit of a cycle with that?
- 32 A. It wasn't so much that that made me run away more, I was just running.
- 33 **Q.** Yeah.

- 1 A. I didn't know what else to do. And I didn't feel like I had a place, you know, I couldn't go  
2 home. I wasn't wanted there, nobody wanted to hear what this child had to say.
- 3 Q. And you've told us in your statement, whaea, about how most of the girls at Kingslea were  
4 Māori and that most of the staff were Pākehā. Can you tell us a bit about what your  
5 experience was in terms of those dynamics at Kingslea from staff?
- 6 A. It wasn't so much an obvious racism that was going on, but there were certainly undertones.  
7 And there was a correct way of doing things, and the way I was doing it was not correct; or  
8 the healing model that was presented to me, which was a cell, you know, it was this way or  
9 the highway and I was to fall into line and I was to conform, or I would never see home  
10 again.
- 11 So the staff I think for the most of it, most of them were loving, caring people. But  
12 there was the undertone of "this is the right way to do things, and you're to fall into line and  
13 do it".
- 14 Q. And you've given some examples of the physical pressure, I think is the way you put it, in  
15 terms of how the staff interacted with you. What was that like?
- 16 A. Well, I was a rebellious teenager, so anything's kind of, you know, bring it on. Forceful. It  
17 was brute force and a lot of times those methods, like arms twisted up our backs and  
18 marched to a cell, being chased down in the city street as a runaway by staff from the girls'  
19 home, you know, which became a norm, we seen that as a norm, not they're working  
20 outside the box or whatever. It was just normal to be a runaway and then to spot a staff  
21 officer looking for you, yeah.
- 22 Q. And you've mentioned at this time in your life about what your mum was going through in  
23 terms of her own life and about how the staff at Kingslea did not appreciate that and had  
24 some very judgmental attitudes towards it. I'm just looking at about paragraph 42 of your  
25 statement.
- 26 A. Sorry, okay. Yeah, so mum --
- 27 Q. Tell us about that.
- 28 A. Mum was gay, mum had found a new freedom, what she considered freedom, and at that  
29 point in time it was not appreciated. So my mum was labelled by the system first as a gang  
30 affiliate, then as a lesbian, and neither one were acceptable. It was not acceptable, it was  
31 not acceptable that I agreed with her lifestyle, and they told me that she was unfit because  
32 of it to have me.
- 33 Q. And obviously you were still just wanting to --
- 34 A. Go home.

- 1 **Q.** -- get back to your mum?
- 2 **A.** Yeah.
- 3 **Q.** And then being brought back to the home by Police each time?
- 4 **A.** Yeah, so eventually I realised that I couldn't go home, and my mother had been told that  
5 having me there was considered harbouring a fugitive, a criminal. And she could be done  
6 for that. So I kind of took that on to - and- realised that I couldn't go home, I could no  
7 longer go home. I couldn't stay in Kingslea, I couldn't go home. And the only option that  
8 left me was the streets, yeah.
- 9 **Q.** And your next part of your statement you tell us about that when you were still running  
10 away from Kingslea but actually then running to the streets, and I know that you've got  
11 some of your kōrero which is a bit later in your version. I'll just at this point, for the benefit  
12 of everyone watching, just explain that we're just going a little bit later in the statement to  
13 about paragraph 63 and then we'll return back to where we were up to. Do you want to just  
14 take us through this part in terms of what happened when you were running away to the  
15 streets, what were those experiences?
- 16 **A.** Well, I guess the best picture is to put you in the picture as to what it was like on the streets.  
17 So we had the Dawn Raids, we had protest marchers, we had gangs that were present on  
18 every corner. And that fueled fear as a runaway. It really fueled fear into us, that the  
19 likelihood of us being chased down by numerous amounts of Police was not just a  
20 possibility, it was going to happen if they saw us.
- 21 **Q.** And you talk about I know a specific incident where you were being chased by Police close  
22 to the cathedral, you ended up getting stuck; could you tell us a bit about that?
- 23 **A.** Sure. The cathedral is kind of shaped like a V, so on one road were the Police and I was  
24 already running from them. On the other side were two staff from the -- two male staff  
25 from the girls' home chasing us, and it was quite - it- was a frequent occurrence that the  
26 staff would actually come out from Kingslea and look for runaways on the streets and try  
27 and take us back.
- 28 So I was getting chased by the Police and staff and they were cornering me, as I ran  
29 around the corner of the cathedral, a car door opens and I'm told to get in. I'm not looking,  
30 I'm running and when I got into the car a steel boot was put on top of my head and I was  
31 taken to gang headquarters and I was repeatedly raped, and I was held for three days at that  
32 house and by the end of it not only did I think I was going to die, but for a moment there  
33 I wanted to. Had I not been chased I may not have ended up in that situation.
- 34 **Q.** Thank you for sharing that with us, whaea.

- 1 A. Kia ora rā.
- 2 Q. You've spoken about how you were able to get out of that situation eventually after the  
3 three days. How did you manage to find your way out of there?
- 4 A. I had -- one man had a conscience and he came into the room and threw me a bush shirt and  
5 said to me that he was whanaunga and told me to follow him, and led me down the corridor  
6 past all the drunk sleeping bodies to a door at the end of the corridor where I froze and then  
7 he told me to run, which I probably did, and I scaled a 6-foot fence, jumped down on to the  
8 other side, ran, kept running down Armagh Street and ran right into the arms of a neighbour  
9 that lived across the road from me. She took me to the hospital. The hospital checked me  
10 over under her name, I believe, and when they said to me did I want counselling, did I need  
11 to speak to somebody, as they went to get them I ran from there and I ran back home and  
12 I stayed with mum long enough to catch my breath, didn't tell her. Just caught my breath  
13 and knew I had to leave there again, and ended back up on the streets where ultimately  
14 I was re-arrested and taken back to Kingslea.
- 15 Q. When you did get taken back to Kingslea, were the staff aware of what had happened to  
16 you?
- 17 A. Yeah, I think one of the staff members - can't say her name, sorry, but she ended -up -- two  
18 of them ended up working for ACC. So they were able to say in their statements that they  
19 were aware that this had happened to me. I think that part of it was my behaviour too. You  
20 know, like I just didn't want to be touched; don't touch me, don't come near me, I need to  
21 scrub in the shower, just lock me in a cell and leave me alone.
- 22 Q. And did they give you any medical care or anything like that when you came back?
- 23 A. There were tests that were done on me at some point because the rapes weren't - it- wasn't  
24 just a one time thing, you know, so in between it there were blood tests done and cervical  
25 smears and I guess that's how I learned about gonorrhoeas, VD, syphilis, hepatitis A and B, I  
26 don't think hepatitis C was present at that point. So when my bloods came back they came  
27 back abnormal but could not be quantified as to what that actually meant. And I believe  
28 that it's because hepatitis C was not known about at that point.
- 29 Q. Tēnā koe.
- 30 A. Kia ora.
- 31 Q. I know you talk about some other times you ran away from Kingslea and when of those  
32 was when you went to Wellington for a short time. Do you want to speak anymore detail  
33 about that time?

1 A. I was given a plane ticket by an older man who was 27 and for me he was my knight in  
2 shining armour, he was freedom. And he presented me with a plane ticket that I could fly  
3 to the other way, end of the world, which was the North Island, but to me it was the other  
4 end of the world, and I was far away from here as I could get. I ended up being forced to  
5 stay in the house, beaten, couldn't leave. And eventually I was able to - I- had to go to  
6 work with his friends, they were made to watch me. And at the home the sisters were made  
7 to watch me. So part of my protection I think was for them, if I left they would wear it.

8 So it took me a long time to actually leave because of that. But when I eventually  
9 did and I said - I- just said to them "I need to go" and go I did. But that also goes into  
10 another story because he's a stalker and I see that man will appear in my life  
11 every -- whenever he feels like it. So three years, five years can pass and he will turn up on  
12 my doorstep, mmm.

13 Q. So at that time when you managed to escape back to Christchurch, I know you were --

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. -- went back to your mum for a short time, but as you've described for us you weren't able  
16 to stay with your mum by that point.

17 A. No.

18 Q. And that meant that you ended up back at Kingslea again?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. And then in your statement, whaea, you've spoken about how just before your 16th  
21 birthday, just a few weeks before, was when you were cut loose from State care, as you've  
22 put it. This is just on your page going back to paragraph 50.

23 A. Okay, so we're going backwards again, yeah. Awesome, okay.

24 Q. I know this is an important point to make clear because this is about a time when you tried  
25 to ask for help knowing that you were getting to the end of your time at Kingslea. Could  
26 you just tell us about what happened when you had that discussion with the matron of  
27 Kingslea?

28 A. I approached her, I approached the matron and I felt afraid for my life, I knew that they  
29 were going to be releasing me, and I was afraid. I believed that something bad was going  
30 to happen to me and I wanted something different. I wanted change and I had observed  
31 over time that what they call the wait house was a transitional house that was provided for  
32 the kids in care, in particular us, that was provided as a transitional house to move forward.  
33 So I hoped that that would be available to me.

1           When I approached her and told her of my fears and asked if that was a possibility, I  
2 was flatly told no, that it wasn't a possibility. And when I asked why she responded that  
3 because I was a recidivist runaway, a bad influence. And I walked away from there feeling  
4 black, feeling let down and feeling alone, like I had been held, I had been held against my  
5 will and then I had been thrown back out to the dogs and I couldn't go home. By then  
6 I could not go home, because the trouble followed me.

7 **Q.** And you've described that being a real crossroads for you of trying to get some help --

8 **A.** Yeah.

9 **Q.** -- from Kingslea, them saying no, knowing that you couldn't go back to your mother's.

10 **A.** Dilemma.

11 **Q.** And so what happened after that?

12 **A.** I ran to the streets. Two weeks prior to my 16th birthday I made the decision to hop into a  
13 stolen car and leave Christchurch after I had heard that the Mongrel Mob were on the hunt,  
14 which is a term they use, "hunt", that they were on the hunt and we are who they hunted,  
15 runaways. So I told my friend that the Mob were looking for runaways and that we needed  
16 to leave and we hopped into a car. As it crossed the Waimak bridge the car swerved, we  
17 crashed into a pole and my friend Nickola Burns never made it home and I ended up in  
18 hospital.

19 **Q.** Thank you for sharing that, whaea, I know this is a very painful part to talk about.

20 **A.** I think part of that is that responsibility, you know. And the decision making. Yeah, but  
21 I'll sit with that one.

22 **Q.** And I know you've acknowledged what happened to your friend who passed, but you also  
23 had significant injuries coming out of that accident and you spent quite a lot of time in  
24 hospital, right?

25 **A.** Mmm.

26 **Q.** Tell us about that.

27 **A.** I had head injuries, I suffered from a cracked pelvis. That wasn't picked up straight away,  
28 you know, so the reports first read, one of the reports is I am a runaway, another report is  
29 that they realised after doing a CT scan, I don't know how long that it was in between, but  
30 after doing a CT scan, after I had told them I can't walk because I can't walk, and they had  
31 told me it was psychosomatic, is that the word? Psychological, that I was making it up, it  
32 was all in my head. And I just kept pushing with it because I cannot walk and I cannot feel  
33 my body on the right side. I had head injuries, so my memory was shot.

1           Eventually the CT scan showed the fracture and then I could focus on what I needed  
2 to do next. So I was given rehabilitation, which was water and walking frame and walking  
3 sticks, and I had to go to the gym and walk along the bars and things like that. That was  
4 over a period of time. I still suffer now from lower back injuries. My pelvis will go out on  
5 me every - so- often when I've been over-exerting or under stress, you know, the two areas,  
6 one is stress and one is overdoing things. And I can be a bit of a workhorse, so I don't  
7 know when to sit down. I'm learning. But my pelvis will still go out today, and so the last  
8 time it went out I showed my doctor, when I went there, hobbled; because I usually go to  
9 the hospital and they will give me an injection and they will send me on my way again, a  
10 steroid shot, yeah.

11 **Q.** So back at that time you did sort of months and months of rehab with the walker.

12 **A.** Yeah, six months.

13 **Q.** And then the stick.

14 **A.** Another six months.

15 **Q.** To get back to being able to walk again?

16 **A.** Yeah.

17 **Q.** And that's just the physical side of it, but I know you've spoken also about what impacts it  
18 had in terms of your memory and your mind. Could you tell us a bit about what that meant  
19 to you in terms of you've mentioned not being able to recognise people very well?

20 **A.** I think for about a year and a half I suffered from amnesia, but for the first instance it was  
21 complete, I didn't know my mother who was sitting at the end of my bed, I couldn't feel her.  
22 I didn't know who she was. So I had to learn to walk, I had to learn to think, I had to learn  
23 to talk again, and as those memories slowly came back, I was put in compromising  
24 positions. I didn't know who to trust and I was trusting all the wrong people. People would  
25 tell me they were my friends when they were not and I would - so- I was not only getting  
26 raped on a regular basis, I was getting tortured, you know, in here, mmm.

27 **Q.** And is it right, whaea, that during this time while you were still trying to recover from the  
28 accident when you were 17, that they then charged you, the Police charged you with being  
29 a passenger in the car?

30 **A.** Yes.

31 **Q.** What happened after you were charged?

32 **A.** That was called recall. So what had happened was I had actually gotten charged for being  
33 in another stolen car. When the arresting officer took me back to the station we went to an  
34 elevator, and went up to I think it was the 4th floor and I remember all the computers being



1 around and I remember the windows facing the city. And I was wondering why I was there  
2 by myself with him, and then he sat me in a chair and he made it known that he could make  
3 the problem go away, and that's what he said, "I can make this go away." And I knew  
4 exactly what that meant and I looked around, there was no one else on the floor, -no one  
5 else in the room. I headed straight back -for - I- got up, walked towards the elevator, said  
6 the words "fuck it, just charge me" and hoped I would get to the elevator unscathed. So  
7 they charged me and I ended up going to Borstal for three months. But not before he had  
8 tried to abuse me.

9 **Q.** Yeah. Thank you for sharing that. I know we've got just a little bit of time before there's  
10 going to be the lunch break, but I just wanted to ask you, before we finish this part, about  
11 another incident that happened when you were charged with grievous bodily harm and how  
12 that impacted in terms of, as you've said, the despair and addiction that followed from that  
13 incident. So just before we finish up for this part, could you tell us a bit about what  
14 happened with that?

15 **A.** I had had an altercation with a friend, and my two friends were fueled up on a drug called  
16 Rohypnol which made them very violent and they became violent towards me. I had  
17 already been abused by another woman and was finding that really hard. Men, I got;  
18 women I did not. And so I was finding it really hard to deal with that, and then all of a  
19 sudden I find myself in this situation in my mother's house in my mother's bedroom. I was  
20 locked in and forcibly made to stay and watch as they acted out, and when I tried to remove  
21 myself I was beaten with the axe handle, and then when I tried to remove myself a second  
22 time I was again beaten with the axe handle and this time a spanner. When I reached out to  
23 the windowsill, I grabbed what was on the windowsill, which happened to be a knife, and  
24 hit back and, yeah, so I ended up at the police station charged with grievous bodily harm.

25 **Q.** And you've spoken, whaea, about this period when you hit an emotional rock bottom and  
26 started having blackouts around this time. Could you tell us about how that impacted on  
27 you?

28 **A.** Well, by that point I didn't trust anybody, you know, the trust in humanity had gone  
29 completely. The despair of not being heard, of being abused, of forever trying to get up,  
30 get up, get up, stand, stand, stand. And I believe that my life wasn't going to take another  
31 direction, this was it, this was the direction my life was going in. So I considered taking  
32 my own life and was not successful at that either. And that is what threw me in more  
33 despair, is that I could not even take my own life and I couldn't live and I couldn't die.  
34 Yeah. So I ended up in rehab instead.

1 **Q.** Tēnā koe. Thank you for what you've shared so far in terms of this experience. I know  
2 you've just foreshadowed for us the next part is about your experience with rehab. But  
3 I wonder, Commissioner Erueti, if this might be a good time to have the lunch break?

4 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Yes, tēnā koe Ms Spelman, I think we'll take the break now at  
5 1.30 and then return at 2.15. So 45 minutes. Ka pai whaea? Kei te pai tēnā?

6 **A.** That's fine.

7 **Q.** Okay, we'll see you again soon.

8 **MS SPELMAN:** Tēnā koe.

9 **Lunch adjournment from 1.29 pm to 2.25 pm**

10 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tēnā koe whaea, welcome back. Back to you Ms Spelman.

11 **QUESTIONING BY MS SPELMAN CONTINUED:** Kia ora. Kia ora anō Whaea Waiana. We  
12 will carry on with where we left off and you'd mentioned just before we stopped for kai  
13 about when you started rehab. So we're just looking at around paragraph 74 of your  
14 statement. In 1996, and I think you were about 30 years old at this point, so if you could  
15 just tell us about what happened once you arrived at that rehab?

16 **A.** The first thing I wanted to do was turnaround and go back. But I clearly knew I needed to  
17 be there. By then my life had spiralled out of control, the addictions were on top of me and  
18 I had no control over my mind, nor my heart. So I was given the opportunity to do the taha  
19 Māori programme in Queen Mary Hospital, which I took. And Bill Phelps referred me  
20 from Te Rito Arahi to - I mentioned -names - to- the taha Māori programme and I met two  
21 women there, Lilly Luafutu and Pokekaia Wehi and they were instrumental - you all know  
22 who you -are - they- were instrumental in advocating change, and doing it from a Māori  
23 world view. So I learned about the Māori world view model and how that - and- how I can  
24 incorporate that into my daily life and look back at my past and bring it back into the  
25 present and then move forward. So I learned about those models of healing, which really  
26 worked.

27 And the taha Māori programme was also part of the Queen Mary Hospital. So we  
28 had the tauwiwi programme and the taha Māori programme working side by side. So it  
29 wasn't just a talk, it was an action that showed two world views living side by side and  
30 making it work. And everybody loved coming over and doing the waiatas and all that. So  
31 yeah.

32 **Q.** It sounds, whaea, like that was a real turning point for you, the experience you had there?

33 **A.** Yeah, it was, it not only brought me back to myself, but it was the first time that I felt  
34 heard, and, that I felt worthy, you know. So they instilled into me my worth and showed

1 me that there was a different way of doing, that the way I was doing things was not correct  
 2 and that there was another way to travel the road. So I took that, I picked up that wero and  
 3 I ran with it.

4 And one of the healing models there was psychodrama. So I got to revisit the past  
 5 briefly, which is where I am now, so I got to revisit this stuff, and then put it down, because  
 6 there was so much more in front of me that is not on these pieces of paper that I also had to  
 7 deal with before I could come back and do this. So I've cleared all that other wreckage now  
 8 and it's brought me to here. But that's thanks to the taha Māori programme, 1996.

9 **Q.** And I know that since that turning point you've described you've come to a point of  
 10 reflecting on some of the failings that had happened, and I know it was important for you to  
 11 name some of those from paragraph 79 onwards. Some of those reflections that you had  
 12 found when looking back on your own life, I just wondered if you wanted to share some of  
 13 those with us?

14 **A.** Okay, so like I've done in the writing, it's not so much about assigning blame to any one  
 15 person, I understand they had a job to do and the parameters and the scope does not rest on  
 16 them alone. The system I felt let me down, and some of those failings were of Police using  
 17 extreme force to hold and detain me. I was denied care at a critical point in time at  
 18 Kingslea and told it was my own fault. I was labelled a repetitive offender leaving me  
 19 without a home and on the streets. Being a State ward left my mum inadequate and  
 20 powerless to defend me and when the system failed her, she chose avenues that they had  
 21 already accused her of. She was being a protective mother and I cannot fault her on that.  
 22 She tried to protect me, the system did not.

23 I have one more. And that's I was not viewed as a victim and I was treated like a  
 24 hardened criminal and not a victim, left me exposed and vulnerable. I guess all the rest is  
 25 down here. We were displaced because of Government legislation, and I really want that  
 26 put there. My rights as a child were impeded through managed isolation, and I'm going to  
 27 leave that there.

28 **Q.** Thank you for that. And I know you've got the quote that you included there just in the  
 29 next paragraph from Mark Twain that was important for your kōrero as well.

30 **A.** Kia ora. Mark Twain said "what I did to myself was far worse still." So today is not so  
 31 much about running the gauntlet as it is about putting it down.

32 **Q.** Kia ora. If I could turn now, whaea, to ask you just following on in your statement about  
 33 your experience when you tried to seek redress and accountability for what happened with

1 you when you went to ACC and back in 1991. Could you tell us a bit about what that  
2 experience was like for you with ACC?

3 A. I was told that voyeurism is not an accepted claim. I was told that the evidence with the  
4 police officer, that it was insufficient; nobody bothered to get any. And I was told that  
5 because I had been raped once was traumatic. After that, the trauma had lessened and that  
6 I could not feel the same pain as I did the first time. So yeah, I was made to feel a piece of  
7 shit, and that again, it reinstilled that my life does not matter and that I have no worth. And  
8 this is them trying to help me.

9 Q. And that experience, which obviously you've described which sounds terrible, you actually  
10 applied to review their decision --

11 A. I did.

12 Q. -- of what had happened. So tell us a bit about that.

13 A. That is when I was -- actually that's the point that I was told that voyeurism was not  
14 coverable, and that insinuated that I took part in what happened to me. Dr Brian Duvell  
15 stated as a redress to that, as a counter to that, that, well, that it was not voyeurism and that  
16 I was not an active participant and I wasn't an active player in it. I felt that I should not  
17 have had to defend myself like that. There was enough evidence there, there was enough  
18 evidence from the past there.

19 Dates and times have been varied. A lot of that has not been by me, it has  
20 been - I- have followed, because I get sick of telling the story, I get sick of having to be  
21 accountable, and as a young adult I went along with whatever was said. So if someone got  
22 it wrong, I went with it, because I didn't want to have to explain to them again and have to  
23 go over the story again of how a steel cap boot was held on my foot and dogs were put over  
24 me, I didn't want to do that again.

25 So the review process was daunting. It was cold, and it left me feeling more  
26 vulnerable than when I started. So part of me looking back at that came from the taha  
27 Māori experience, you know, in order to move forward we must first look back and the two  
28 conflicts, the two points I got from that was one, I could let it go and move forward, or two,  
29 I could go back, redress, and then move forward. So I chose to do both, and part of that  
30 redress is what I'm doing now, you know. So for me this is about laying down the gauntlet  
31 and getting freedom. You know, I want freedom from my past. I no longer want to  
32 survive, I want to live. I want to live and I want to have everything that has been given  
33 freely for me to do that. Everything that we should have in our lives, I can have that, I need  
34 to put this down.

- 1 **Q.** Ka pai. Kia ora mō tēnā whaea, thank you for that. I know in the next part of your  
2 statement you talk about some of the impacts that your time in care had on you, both in  
3 terms of when you were younger and you've touched on that a little bit. But also through to  
4 today, some of those impacts that you are carrying with you. I just wonder if you want to  
5 share anything more about that. I'm looking here just from about paragraph 85 onwards in  
6 your statement.
- 7 **A.** Okay. So can I just read?
- 8 **Q.** Mmmhmm.
- 9 **A.** "Social Welfare placed me in institutions for my care and protection, but there was nothing  
10 caring about being removed from my whānau. There was nothing caring about the staff  
11 telling me that my mother was bad because she was involved with gangs. As a child when  
12 I was running away, all I ever wanted was to go back and be with my mother. Because as a  
13 child that's the only place where I knew love existed, and I didn't get that love from any of  
14 the care places I was put into. I got that love from my mother, the one person that  
15 I couldn't return to.
- 16 **Q.** And so those experiences in terms of building up this lack of trust you've said or distrust of  
17 others, has that been an impact that has carried on through your life?
- 18 **A.** Yeah, and still today. Like I have to give myself permission to trust on a daily basis. I  
19 have to tell myself that the picture's not always what I think it is and that not everybody is  
20 out to hurt or get. So the trust has been something that I've worked on, and the first thing  
21 I trust is my own intuition, you know. I don't allow other voices to persuade that. So I'm  
22 very clear, I hold on to these as guides, you know, like I'm always talking to my tūpuna.  
23 I'm always talking to my mama, I'm always asking for that guidance. So my spiritual house  
24 is full in that respect. My physical, it's a bit wobbly, but I pull on the spiritual to get me  
25 through.
- 26 **Q.** Another way you've spoken about it is how - to- this day still having nightmares and  
27 needing to be very aware when you're in a room or a new environment, can you tell us  
28 about that?
- 29 **A.** Yeah, even as we're sitting here I know there's two exits, so the first thing I do when  
30 I - and- I know my way out of this apartment already and I know where the stairs are to go  
31 down them because I've already checked while we've made our way up, I'm checking where  
32 the exits are. So one of the things that I had to do as a child was always look for an exit. I  
33 was always having to escape from something or somebody. I still do that. The door over

1 there I know is - I can open it,- I can climb out if I have to and climb down there. But I'm  
2 always looking for a way out and I still do that today.

3 Sometimes I don't want to have to, you know, I don't want to have to feel like I'm in  
4 a war zone, I don't want to have to feel like I always have to find the exit of a room I'm in,  
5 where I want to feel safe and I'm the only one, I guess, that can give me that. So I've  
6 learned through the taha Māori experience, through opening up to other people, through  
7 letting people into my world that trust is a two-way street and it's a valuable taonga to have  
8 at both ends.

9 **Q.** Kia ora whaea. I'd like now, if it's all right, to move to your thoughts on recommendations,  
10 because I acknowledge in your statement you ask a very powerful question in relation to  
11 your own experience, this is just at paragraph 100 about when you were at your most  
12 vulnerable if things had have been different what that different outcome might have looked  
13 like for you. I know that connects to your whakaaro about recommendations for the future  
14 and what needs to change. So I wonder if you want to share with us about that?

15 **A.** I guess the first thing to point out there is that I'm not exempt from any responsibility of my  
16 past or my own action. So I'm not trying to do that, I'm actually trying to own whatever I  
17 have done and make that path correct. I do ask a question, though, at my most vulnerable  
18 had the formula in front of me been different, had the people not chased me down into a  
19 car, what would the outcome have looked like for me now.

20 So my experience of the time in care were compounded by social attitudes of the  
21 time, for example the Dawn raids, the Springbok tour. Through my own experiences I've  
22 recognised that racism is not always in the front of overt actions and that covert racism is  
23 equally detrimental. I think that something needs to be done to educate people in Aotearoa  
24 about the colonial history to address or redress racism. I was often pushed away and  
25 brushed to the side by adults I tried to speak to when I tried to speak to them about the  
26 abuse I was suffering. Tamariki need to be given safe and effective spaces to voice their  
27 concerns.

28 I know that and I'm aware that a lot of what I'm talking now has already happened  
29 and that there are - there've- been visionaries throughout time, and that all I'm really doing  
30 is I'm an echo of those voices that I've always said mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge),  
31 what works for Māori will work for everybody. So I guess I just want to say that  
32 everything else is in writing, yeah.

33 **Q.** Tēnā koe whaea.

34 **A.** Kia ora rā.

1 **Q.** Thank you for that. Before we pass over to Commissioners to see if they have some  
2 questions, was there anything else you wanted to add at this point?

3 **A.** Thank you. I just want to mention that this is my dad, C P O R. Throughout my  
4 statements I have not really referred much about my time with my father because the point  
5 in question, most of that time I was either in State care or I was with my mother. So for  
6 that reason, for that being one of the reasons. The other reason is that I believe that the  
7 voices of our mothers need to be heard right now. So I'm standing for the voice of my  
8 mother when she did not have a voice. I am it. Something just came through my ear and it  
9 put me off.

10 **Q.** Kei te pai, you were just telling us about being a voice for your mother and for others.

11 **A.** Yeah, I guess I'm just going to leave it there because something happened and I've gone off  
12 track and I lost it and I can't kind of bring it back because I was in that moment. But that's  
13 basically what I wanted to say, is that I'm just aware that I am only one voice in a legacy of  
14 voices and I am only - I- have the ability to sit here and to speak and to speak my truth as  
15 I see it.

16 I know that a lot of our whānau do not have that ability, but I know that they are  
17 with me and I am with them and that we are one voice. I know that my fearless mum is  
18 with me right now and is holding me and has got me up on her shoulders and telling me to  
19 keep going forward. My dad as what my original kōrero was about, I've spent a lot of time  
20 with my father and I've worked in a lot of places, I've lived with him and we've worked side  
21 by side and do things like apple picking and grading, and I just wanted to mention him for  
22 that as well and to say to both my mum and my dad I love you dearly, yeah.

23 **Q.** Beautiful. We spoke earlier about the poem for your mum. Would that be something you  
24 wanted to share now?

25 **A.** Kia ora rā. So I wrote this poem for my mother's 65th birthday. And it kind of - it- says  
26 how I feel about my mum, because my mum - I- guess it was a moment for me to show my  
27 mum that I could hear her, I knew that she loved me, and to know that I love her back so it  
28 goes like this.

29 "A while back now, mum, when I was only three I fell off the go cart, cut my toe  
30 and I skinned my knee. You said you could make it better by blowing me a kiss, I'm sure  
31 I screeched even louder, mum, because I know you miss. And then again when I was 10  
32 the woman down the road, she hit my head. You came down rolling thunder, you came  
33 running from the roof(?). You saw me still and lifeless, you thought that I was dead. She

1 went running for cover but not fast enough and the cop that she called, well he too run out  
 2 of puff. In the car that the I crashed, mum, when I was 15, to look at it through your eyes,  
 3 mum, and what you must have seen. And the studded belt you tore in half when I was 21,  
 4 you said to watch me beaten, you would take that from no one. So when you say you're  
 5 sorry, mum, for not protecting me when I was three, a kiss on the head, a lullaby, a song  
 6 sung out of key, these are memories of my mum and they're not so hard to reach.

7 So when you ask me to forgive you, mum, for not always being there, there is a  
 8 message in this bottle that I would like to share. When the road's been long and I've  
 9 stumbled and the path has not always been clear, when I've reached out for comfort it's my  
 10 mother's voice I hear. In my sorrows and my triumphs it's you I hear yell loudest, and I ask  
 11 you to forgive me too because, mum, it's of you that I'm most proudest."

12 **Q.** Tēnā koe whaea.

13 **A.** Kia ora rā, thank you.

14 **Q.** E mihi ana ki ngā kupu aroha ki to mama (I acknowledge the lovely words to your mother).

15 Heamana Erueti, that concludes the kōrero at this end, if I could pass over to you.

16 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tēnā koe. E mihi ana ki a koe me tō whakaurunga ki tēnei

17 huihuinga i tēnei rā, tēnā hoki tō māia ki te haere mai ki te takoha i kōrero ki a mātou, ngā  
 18 mihi nui ki a koe

19 [English: -I want to acknowledge you and what you've added to this hearing and the gift  
 20 that you have given, and thank you very much.] I want to -if it's kapai for you to take a few  
 21 questions from the Commissioners, whaea? Kei te- pai?

22 **A.** Kia ora.

23 **Q.** Kia ora. Okay, I'll pass to my fellow Commissioners to see if they've got any questions for  
 24 you. Starting with my colleague here, Commissioner Steenson.

25 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Tēnā koe whaea.

26 **A.** Kia ora.

27 **Q.** Tēnei te mihi ki a koe. You've really summed up quite clearly how, if you were poor or  
 28 Māori with any kind of antisocial behaviour, the likelihood of being taken into care was,  
 29 you know, extremely high and made you extremely vulnerable to all manner of abuse and  
 30 impacts. So thank you for articulating that so well.

31 I just wanted to check one thing around what ACC said to you about how the first  
 32 rape that you experienced you talked about how - they- said that after that the ones after  
 33 wouldn't have been as traumatic, was that what was told to you?



- 1 A. Yeah, if not that word, a similar. But the trauma, the impact would not be the same is what  
2 they said.
- 3 **Q.** Was that an ACC doctor or counsellor or was that one of their kaimahi?
- 4 A. I believe it was a kaimahi (staff).
- 5 **Q.** And that was all that I wanted to check with you, thank you so much once again.
- 6 A. Kia ora.
- 7 **Q.** Tēnā koe.
- 8 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tēnā koe Commissioner Steenson. Commissioner Shaw.
- 9 **COMMISSIONER SHAW:** Kia ora anō. I have no questions for you. Just an acknowledgment,  
10 a grateful acknowledgment for the pain that it's taken and you've suffered by having to tell  
11 us again. I just want you to know it's really important, so thank you so much for that.
- 12 A. Thank you.
- 13 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tēnā koe Ms Shaw. Commissioner Alofivae.
- 14 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Talofa lava whaea. I have no pātai (questions) for you, but  
15 I just also want to acknowledge just the beautiful and poignant way in which you were able  
16 to hold yourself and to retell things that were so personal and private and so violating of  
17 your tangata (of your person). And when I was reading through your statement I was  
18 incredibly moved by how you'd named your narrative, claiming, claiming your marker and  
19 how you framed it in your own Te Ao Māori view and that was how you wanted to gift it to  
20 us to receive it, so fa'afetai lava for your courage, kia ora.
- 21 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Kia ora, Commissioner Paora, any pātai e hoa?
- 22 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Kia ora Waiana. I was struck especially by the beauty of that  
23 poem, I'm sure there's much more there. The lyrical way in which you express yourself is  
24 amazing to your mother.
- 25 My question, how can we better utilise the role of Mātauranga Māori (Māori  
26 knowledge) and support for people like both your mother and your older brother with the  
27 intellectual learning disability who went into care, what's the future of support and how we  
28 care, like in your eyes, for those people?
- 29 A. Wow, that's a big question, I thought I'd be asking you that. I guess to wrap around more  
30 services, kaupapa Māori (Māori driven) would be the way forward that I can see, if those  
31 institutions had have been available to my mum back then, the outcome for her may have  
32 been also different. Did I - do- all right?
- 33 **Q.** Kia ora, no further pātai, thank you.
- 34 A. Thank you.

1 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tēnā koe whaea. It's my honour on behalf of the Inquiry to thank  
2 you for coming before us today to give your evidence. Your evidence contained so many  
3 things. I think what is important in particular is the wāhine Māori (Māori women)  
4 experience of being in the State homes and the family homes, and while there are  
5 commonalities with Tāne (men), for example the discrimination, the use of secure, there are  
6 a lot of differences we need to be aware of as well, that the wāhine Māori experience is  
7 different. I want to thank you for that.

8 A. Kia ora.

9 **Q.** I want to thank you too, whaea, for so clearly demonstrating the difficulty of accessing  
10 proper, robust counselling and care, and finding people that you can trust after all that  
11 you've been through, and how hard that is for you and how it's a two-way street, and how  
12 you've reached out and sought spiritual solace in the taha Māori experience and I'm really  
13 pleased to hear that, whaea.

14 A. Kia ora. Thanks.

15 **Q.** I think it was really important what you say about the need for love and care, it's something  
16 that we've heard that's a recurring theme for tamariki who have been in care, is  
17 fundamentally what they deserve is love, care and respect.

18 A. Yeah.

19 **Q.** I think with your account of secure, again, is searing for us and reminds us of the impact  
20 that the use of secure has on our tamariki, and I think you put it to us that it was pretty  
21 much the norm for you when you were in those homes?

22 A. I became accustomed.

23 **Q.** Āe, āe yeah. The kawa of the institution (the way of institution). The need for us to  
24 understand more profoundly the impacts of sexual violence against wāhine Māori, and  
25 I want to say to you, whaea, that I know your mum was a strong advocate and voice in the  
26 mahi that she was doing, and I want to acknowledge too your strength of character and  
27 voice in coming here and speaking to us and to the New Zealand public about what you  
28 experienced. Ngā manaakitanga ki a koe, whaea, me to whānau. Ngā mihi nui ki a koe

29 [English: protection on to you and your family, thank you very much.]

30 A. Kia ora. Thank you.

31 **MS SPELMAN:** Tēnā koe e te Heamana (thank you Mr Chairman). Just before we finish up here  
32 I know it's important for Whaea Waiana to also acknowledge our hosts at the marae, Ngāti  
33 Whātua Ōrākei. Nō reira, nei rā te mihi i tō manaaki i tēnei kaupapa ahakoa te aha. Emihi  
34 ana ki a koutou.

1 [English: I want to acknowledge you for looking after these proceedings no matter what,  
2 thank you very much.]

3 Whaea, ete wahine toa, he toka tūmoana koe. Nōku te hōnore te noho i tō taha i te  
4 rangi nei. Emihi ana ki aua kupu i takoha mai mā mātou.

5 [English: te reo Māori whaea, the strong woman, it is my honour to sit with you  
6 today and listening to the words that you shared with us.]

7 Thank you, whaea, for having me sit with you today, it's been my privilege and for  
8 the words and wisdom that you've generously shared with us.

9 I know that you want to conclude our time now with a waiata and you've just asked  
10 me to lay out some context for that before you begin while you're getting ready with your  
11 guitar. So for our Commissioners and those who are watching, Whaea Waiana has referred  
12 in her evidence to the Ferry Road fire at old Strathmore Girls' Home, and we've heard that  
13 Waiana was previously placed there at age 12, that was the significant marker that we  
14 began with at the start of this kōrero, and that fire took the lives of seven street kids,  
15 including two of Waiana's nieces. This waiata was composed about the incident and whaea  
16 is going to share that with us today.

17 A. Thank you. This waiata is called Ka Tae te Pō and it was given to me by a wahine Jenny  
18 Apirana(?) who I'd met in 2002 as she had come through our programme. When she heard  
19 my story, she gifted me this waiata. So the waiata itself is about basically what happened,  
20 what happens to the children when they leave and they go out into the dark and the cold of  
21 night. "When night falls" -I'll- read what my friend had written.

22 "When night falls people die in the dark, our children get lost in these times by the  
23 winds we see them blown through some troubled time, the darkness took my truth. By the  
24 wind again I was blown along, a vast knowledge I arrived at, the pain and the tears of the  
25 places I have been, like many of our generations in the four winds, in this turning, churning,  
26 changing world."

27 So now I will play it in te reo. (Waiata: Inaudible). Thank you for listening.

28 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tino ataahua (beautiful). Ngā mihi whaea (thank you whaea).

29 Kua tae mātou ki te wahanga o tēnei,- ki te mutunga- o tēnei wahanga ināianei.

30 [English: So we have come,- we have reached the conclusion of this part.] Is it time for a  
31 break here while we prepare for our next witness? Okay, so how much time do we need?  
32 15, okay, -15 minute- break, whānau, before we return for our third witness for the day.

33 **Adjournment from 3.00 pm to 3.17 pm**