

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE 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)
Dr Anaru Erueti
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Mrs Fiona Guy-Kidd and Ms India Shores for the Anglican Church

Ms Maria Dew KC, Ms Kiri Harkess and Mr Lourenzo Fernandez for the Methodist Church and Wesley Faith

Mr Brian Henry, Mr Chris Shannon and Ms Sykes for Gloriavale

Ms Sarah Kuper and Mr Matthew Hague for the Presbyterian Church

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Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry
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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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10 Ms Sharkey, I invite you to start with the introductions, thank you.

11 **MS SHARKEY:** Thank you Madam Chair. Tēnā koutou katoa, malo e lelei, my name is Tania
12 Sharkey, I'm Counsel Assisting the Inquiry today. By way of visual introduction, I am a
13 female of Tongan-Palagi descent, I am wearing a green puletaha which is a Pasifika dress
14 with a black jacket and I have red glasses on.

15 I acknowledge all survivors who are present at this hearing today. I acknowledge
16 the survivors who are joining us on the livestream. I acknowledge your supporters, families
17 and friends and the community who have turned out in support at this hearing.

18 I specifically acknowledge survivors of abuse in the care of the Methodist Church
19 of New Zealand and the survivors of abuse at Wesley College. I acknowledge William
20 Wilson who is here today, he is the courageous Pacific survivor who bravely shared his
21 experience of abuse at Wesley College at the Pacific Peoples public hearing in July 2001 at
22 the Fale o Samoa in Māngere.

23 Whilst at the State institutional response hearing in August of this year we heard
24 evidence from the Ministry of Education and Education Review Office regarding
25 faith-based educational settings, including schools such as Wesley College. Today is also
26 an extension of the Pacific Peoples public hearing; as representatives from the Methodist
27 Church of New Zealand and Wesley College attend to publicly respond to abuse that
28 happened at Wesley College to survivors like William Wilson and others who have since
29 come forward.

30 The Pacific Peoples public hearing was called Tulou, Our Pacific Voices, Tatala e
31 Pulonga. Tulou is a term commonly used in many Pacific languages to show courtesy
32 when coming within another's personal space. It is used here to acknowledge the voice and
33 personal spaces of our survivors, their supporters, friends and their families.

1 Tatala e pulonga is a Tongan metaphor meaning lifting the dark cloud. This
2 metaphor is commonly used to demonstrate the lifting of darkness and in this context today
3 a dark history of abuse in care. This is the spirit within which this hearing day is being
4 conducted, it is why today's layout is different as we fofola e fala, roll out the mats
5 figuratively speaking, and engage in talanoa as best we can in these circumstances,
6 ensuring the survivor focus in receiving the responses of the Methodist Church and Wesley
7 College and also observing that over 350 students are sitting in class today at the school in
8 South Auckland, a school which is almost 75% Pasifika and 20% Māori.

9 The day will begin with Reverend Tautari, welcome, who is General Secretary of
10 the Methodist Church of New Zealand. Since the scope was expanded to include other
11 faiths including Methodist Church, this is the first time the Inquiry will hear publicly from
12 the Methodist Church.

13 After the morning break we turn our focus to Wesley College. We will have two
14 panel sessions focusing on themes relevant to historical, contemporary and future matters.
15 We will hear from representatives of the Methodist Church and their boards. I have invited
16 the Commissioners to take part with questions as we progress throughout the day.

17 In the afternoon sessions the Inquiry has invited a community voice to join the
18 panel, Sekope Kepu is an old boy of Wesley College, a former prefect and now
19 professional rugby player. He is a well-respected role model and leader in our Pasifika
20 community, in particular our children and young people, and he is passionate about the
21 prevention of bullying and violence in schools.

22 Finally, as the Methodist Church are inviting redress claims from survivors of abuse
23 at Wesley College and other care settings under the Methodist Church, the final session
24 today will focus on redress and recommendations.

25 I will leave my opening comments there, Madam Chair, as we have a lot to cover
26 today. I will now hand matters over to Maria Dew KC to make her opening statement and
27 introduce other witnesses.

28 **CHAIR:** Yes Ms Dew.

29 **OPENING STATEMENT BY THE METHODIST CHURCH AND WESLEY**
30 **COLLEGE**

31 **MS DEW:** Thank you. Tēnā koutou ngā rangatira mā e huihui nei ki te kaupapa. Malo 'etau lava,
32 talofa lava. Greetings Commissioners, and thank you on behalf of the Church and College.
33 They are very much looking forward to today's process. I'll describe my appearance, I'm a
34 female in her mid-50s with lightish hair and a red jacket on today.

1 So this morning, ma'am, we've been given the opportunity to make an opening on
2 behalf of the church and on behalf of the College. I'm going to deal with opening matters
3 because this is the first time that the Commission has had the opportunity to hear from, in
4 person, the Methodist Church and the College, and then once I've finished opening, an
5 opening submission, then Reverend Tara Tautari who is here in front of you today is going
6 to also make an opening contextual statement, some acknowledgments and apologies on
7 behalf of the church as well.

8 So I do have this opening submission of mine in writing. If you prefer a hard copy
9 I'm happy to make these available and to Ms Sharkey also. Just while that's being
10 distributed, I don't propose to read word for word all of this necessarily, but we want it to
11 become part of the record and you'll also see attached at the back is a chronology, and it ca
12 only be of some of the key events that we have selected, but we're hoping that this will be
13 helpful for the talanoa that we're going to be doing this morning and this afternoon, just
14 reminding ourselves of key dates of events, because --

15 **CHAIR:** That's really helpful, Ms Dew, we're grateful for that, thank you.

16 **MS DEW:** Yes, look I know myself when you're looking at such a mass of material sometimes to
17 have a summary chronology, I hope we've done justice to it. We have certainly mentioned
18 all of the survivor witnesses and the timing of their events at the school. So we hope that
19 that will be of some assistance.

20 The green highlights, you just may notice, are matters where the College and the
21 Church say these were efforts that were being made during the course of the abuse that was
22 being experienced. So we'll take you to those in the course of matters.

23 **CHAIR:** Just before we go on, because we need a version that is accessible to everybody, has this
24 been digitally sent through?

25 **MS DEW:** Yes, it has. I think we've just sent that this morning and there should be a copy online.
26 My apologies to the Commissioners for that.

27 **CHAIR:** I wonder if somebody could make sure that Commissioner Gibson gets an e-mailed
28 copyright now so that he's able to --

29 **MS DEW:** We'll make sure that a Word version is sent through now.

30 **CHAIR:** He needs to be able to follow it as we go.

31 **MS DEW:** Yes of course. My apologies, we probably should have done that yesterday. So would
32 you like to wait for that to come through or are you happy for me to read in?

33 **CHAIR:** We don't want to make too much of a fuss but if you could do that as soon as you
34 possibly can, that would be much appreciated.

1 **MS DEW:** It's on its way to you now.

2 **CHAIR:** Thank you.

3 **MS DEW:** So on the first page of opening submissions for the Church and College, the Church
4 and College have asked me in short form to make some acknowledgments;
5 acknowledgments that they have already made in a lot of the documentation produced to
6 the Commission over the last two years, but acknowledgments that they want to make in
7 public before the Commission, before survivors, and before all of those that might be
8 listening online who want to understand the Church's position.

9 So on behalf of the church and College, they wish to openly acknowledge before
10 this Commission to the public and to all survivors the pain and suffering of those who were
11 abused whilst in the Church and Wesley College's care. To all survivors the Church and
12 Wesley College boards wish to apologise unreservedly. These apologies will be provided
13 by the General Secretary of the Church, Reverend Tara Tautari and by the General
14 Secretary of Wesley College Trust Board, Mr Christopher Johnston who is also giving
15 evidence later today.

16 The Church and College want to openly acknowledge those who have bravely
17 provided evidence to assist the Commission and of course, as the Commission's rightly
18 pointed out, we won't be naming any of those people, but we've been conscious of not
19 grouping them together, so we wanted to specifically acknowledge individuals as best we
20 can.

21 The former Wesley College students and parents who have come forward to the
22 Commission and agreed to provide witness evidence. You are acknowledged today not as a
23 group, but as 11 brave individuals. Those who have suffered abuse in the Church's former
24 children's homes in Christchurch, Masterton and Auckland, you are equally acknowledged,
25 not as a group, but as 18 brave individuals who have each shared your own history of abuse
26 in care.

27 Those who have suffered abuse by a Minister or foster parents or in a parish setting,
28 you are also acknowledged, not as a group, but as three brave individuals who have shared
29 with the Commission the details of the abuse you've experienced.

30 Some of you are present today or are on the livestream. You are acknowledged.
31 We particularly note the presence of two survivors today who are happy to be referred to as
32 Ms M and Mr William Wilson who has already been named by my friend this morning and
33 has provided evidence. You are both present today, the Church and College want to
34 acknowledge your presence and bravery.

1 Finally, there are individuals who have not given evidence before the Commission
2 but have come forward to the Church to seek redress or may be considering doing so. You
3 are all acknowledged and encouraged to come forward to seek redress.

4 The Church will also deal with further particular acknowledgments of its failings to
5 be made this morning by Reverend Tautari in her statement.

6 In terms of the hearing today, the Commission will hear today from the Church and
7 College leaders who hold themselves responsible for the past and for the future change
8 needed. Giving evidence today will be Reverend Tautari as General Secretary of the
9 Church, who will give contextual evidence and then participate in both the looking back
10 and looking forward parts of the talanoa. Etuini Talakai, Vice-President of the Methodist
11 Church and a former student of Wesley College, will also participate in the Wesley College
12 talanoa panels. And for the College, Reverend Ian Faulkner, former principal and Tumuaki
13 of Wesley College from 2003 through to 2014, so a very significant period of leadership in
14 the school. Reverend Faulkner will participate in the Wesley College looking back panel.
15 And Mr Christopher Johnston is General Secretary of the Trust Board who's held that
16 position since 2005 and has delegated authority to represent the board today. And finally
17 Mr Brian Evans who is the current principal and Tumuaki of Wesley College, appointed in
18 2018, Dr Evans will participate in the Wesley College looking forward panel this afternoon.

19 As I've said, today's hearing is the commissioners' first opportunity to hear directly
20 from the representatives of the Church and College. They have provided a significant
21 amount of material, as all of the churches have, over the period of 2021 and 2022. I have
22 listed just more-- and I won't take you through them -- the more recent witness statements,
23 joint witness statements, supplementary witness statements and also you'll note at the
24 bottom of that paragraph the witness statement of Etuini Talakai who has been asked by the
25 Commission to come forward into the talanoa panels, so he has produced a short statement,
26 as has Reverend Ian Faulkner who's also been asked by the Commission to come forward
27 and be part of the talanoa.

28 So those statements, whether you have been able to have -- we appreciate they've
29 just been delivered in recent days, if you wish them to be read in the evidence for your
30 benefit then we'd be happy to do that, perhaps you can just indicate after the break.

31 To assist the Commission, this opening statement also addresses in brief terms the
32 Methodist beliefs, the structure and governance of the Church and the College, and the role
33 of Te Tiriti o Waitangi; the nature and extent of the abuse in the Church and care settings,

1 and the Church and College's responses to that abuse, monitoring, oversight, safeguarding,
2 complaints and redress.

3 The Church and College particularly look forward to today's talanoa. They
4 acknowledge that this is not a frequent event, that it's specific to Pasifika and they feel very
5 privileged to be able to take part in such a talanoa.

6 So dealing with the Methodist Church and its beliefs. We've set out, and I won't
7 read all of that, but the Methodist history dates back to the 1740s and the renewal
8 movement from England. We have, as a core to their structure of beliefs, is firstly do no
9 harm, secondly doing good, and thirdly, by attending upon all the ordinance of God.

10 And while those belief sentiments have been modernised, fundamentally, they
11 remain at the core of Methodist beliefs. Do no harm, do good, and attend to the ordinance
12 of God. These principles underlie the laws and regulations of the Methodist Church, called
13 the Law Book, which set out the beliefs of the Church and expectations of its members.
14 And they're publicly available on the Methodist Church website, the laws and regulations.

15 As to the structure and governance, the Church was established under the Methodist
16 Church of New Zealand Act 1911, so a little different from other churches in New Zealand,
17 which created an autonomous New Zealand Methodist Church separating it from the
18 Australasian Methodist Church. The Church in New Zealand operates as a national Church
19 responsible to its own Methodist Conference.

20 Conference is the primary decision-making body of the Church. It is the final
21 authority on all matters of the Church and exercises oversight over entities affiliated with
22 the Church. When Conference is not in session, its powers are exercised by the President.
23 So the Conference meets every two years and in the interim the President makes decisions,
24 but ultimately all those decisions are taken back to Conference, and matters within the
25 Methodist Church are very much done by consensus at Conference and they discuss until
26 consensus is reached on significant decisions.

27 Entities and organisations associated with the Church such as the Methodist
28 Missions, the Wesley College Trust Board and the former children's home have their own
29 constitutions and governance structures, but they are responsible for their own day-to-day
30 activities. However, they are connected to the Church through Conference and are bound
31 by its decisions.

32 Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It has been almost 40 years since the Methodist Church began
33 its journey to becoming a bicultural Church. In 1983 Conference established a joint
34 working committee starting this journey. In 1989 Conference approved and committed to

1 principles of Te Tiriti as the covenant establishing the basis of the bicultural partnership
2 between equal partners, te taha Māori and tauwi leadership within the Church. Under the
3 leadership of the Church, Conference is required to act in a manner consistent and having
4 regard to the principles of Te Tiriti and to make decisions which demonstrate partnership.
5 Decision-making at Conference is by consensus, in accordance with Methodist practice and
6 requires the agreement of both partners.

7 The partnership between te taha Māori and tauwi is also expressed through the
8 Council of Conference which is its visioning body for the Church and comprises ten
9 members appointed. And I'll take you over now to the Methodist Church care settings.

10 The primary care setting for the Methodist Church was formerly its three residential
11 children's homes, South Auckland, Papanui children's home opened in 1914 and --

12 **CHAIR:** I think that's South Island not South Auckland.

13 **MS DEW:** Sorry, South Island, my apologies, 1914 to 1987. Masterton children's home, 1921 to
14 1978 and Auckland's children's home, 1913 to 1975. So all of these children's homes are
15 now closed, but over the time they were open, records show that 4,342 children were
16 admitted to the homes between the 1950s and 1984. Those are records that have been
17 provided, including repeated admissions.

18 Children were placed in the homes by their guardians and/or by the State. The
19 homes each operated independently governed by boards and management committees that
20 were responsible and reported to Conference. In the 1970s the Methodist Mission took
21 over management of the homes and operated them as part of their regional community
22 services.

23 From the 1950s to the early 1980s the homes were involved in arranging fostering
24 placements for residents and other children with the assistance of the Methodist Mission
25 social agency. The missions later became the primary provider of foster care services
26 within the Church. Currently Wesley Community Action, Wellington Mission provides
27 foster care and other social caregiving services under contracts with the Ministry of Social
28 Development, now Oranga Tamariki.

29 As to the nature and extent of abuse, the Church acknowledges that some children
30 were horribly abused and neglected while in its care at the children's homes in foster
31 placements connected with the homes and in other foster placements arranged by the
32 Church. The majority of its redress claims received by the Church, currently 20 out of 28
33 redress claims that have or are in the process of being resolved. So 20 out of 28, obviously
34 a very significant number, relate to the abuse in the children's homes, and/or are connected

1 to foster placements that involve sexual and/or physical abuse by adults against children, as
2 well as emotional and psychological abuse, neglect and abuse of power by those adults.

3 The Church has received some abuse claims from residents of children's home
4 involving abuse by other residents. The Church has received a small number of sexual
5 abuse claims from survivors outside its formal care settings, but that involve ministers or
6 other members of the Church. The Church accepts that it is likely that there are other abuse
7 survivors who have experienced abuse in these settings.

8 As to monitoring, oversight and safeguarding, the Church exercised oversight of the
9 homes and missions through Conference. The Church accepts that this was insufficient for
10 the monitoring, oversight and safeguarding of those in its care and this enabled abuse to
11 occur. The children's homes and missions operated their own vetting, monitoring and
12 safeguarding processes. They were subject to legislative requirements, and State
13 involvement in the care of children as that expanded.

14 A key moment for the Church in relation to the care of children in their homes was
15 the Commission on Children's Homes Report delivered in 1961 to the Methodist
16 Conference. In 1959 the Church had appointed a Commission to examine the Church's
17 practice of care of children. Recommendations to the Conference included ensuring that
18 those providing care for children were adequately trained and resourced. These key
19 changes were not implemented through any consistent or 'All of Church' approach. This
20 was, the Church recognises now, a material missed opportunity.

21 The Church accepts that protection policies and procedures were required across all
22 its Church-related entities and should have been implemented earlier. In 2000 the Church
23 implemented Being Safe, Keeping Safe, protocols designed to keep children safe across all
24 Church-related entities. In 2008 the Church introduced mandatory Police vetting and
25 background checks into criminal records of staff and ministers, young people, anyone that
26 was working with young people and vulnerable adults, and the Police vetting every five
27 years is a requirement for all Ministers. Ministers who do not consent may be removed
28 from Ministry. Ministers are also required to have professional supervision.

29 The current position is that the Church, through the Methodist Alliance, provides a
30 child protection policy template for parishes which is available on the website and the
31 Church is consulting through the connection about an update to this child protection policy,
32 and this is an agenda item for the Conference in November this year.

33 **CHAIR:** Ms Dew, I'm anxious about time, but I'm also anxious that this is the only opportunity
34 the Methodist Church has to state its position. I think we've been through what has been a

1 very useful background with some important things about structure and where we're at etc.
2 We're going to be dealing with redress at the end of the day, and I'm just wondering in the
3 interests of time --

4 **MS DEW:** Absolutely, I'm conscious of that tension and I am mindful that there are the public
5 listening today and I know that the Commission do know this material. Having said that,
6 I take your point and --

7 **CHAIR:** It's a matter of summarising really if you can, and I think you will find, in fact I know
8 you will find that through the examination of your witnesses and the others that this
9 material will come out.

10 **MS DEW:** Yes, I'm happy to move forward to page 10 and perhaps just deal with Wesley College
11 now by way of a brief opening.

12 **CHAIR:** Thank you, I hope you don't feel I'm closing you down.

13 **MS DEW:** Absolutely not.

14 **CHAIR:** Because I know it will come out through the talanoa process.

15 **MS DEW:** I'm comfortable that the opening is there for the record and --

16 **CHAIR:** Well read and will go on the website as well.

17 **MS DEW:** Thank you, I'll take you through to page 10 and Wesley College. The focus of much
18 of today's hearing will relate to Wesley College, and I've referred to this chronology, we
19 hope you'll find that helpful.

20 In terms of the structure and governance of Wesley College, it was established in
21 1844 to cater for the education originally of Māori students. The College is New Zealand's
22 oldest registered secondary school, it has a role of some 360 children, boys, year 9 to 13,
23 girls year 11 to 13, it's a boarding and day school, and it is the only Methodist school
24 Church in New Zealand.

25 And I've dealt with some of the structure and governance there, I won't take you
26 through that, but I know from yesterday that you understood, through discussions with the
27 Catholic Church, this process of integration of the privately owned schools into State
28 integrated schools and Wesley College was one of the first colleges to take up the State
29 integration and has been a State integrated school since that time.

30 **CHAIR:** With special character.

31 **MS DEW:** Absolutely, and I know that you understand that difference for these integrated
32 schools, so I don't need to take you to that. But obviously we remain with a Proprietor
33 Trust Board who owns and operates the property and the boarding house, and we also have
34 a separate State operated School Board, and then the oversight of the Methodist Church.

1 Just over on page 11, the relationship with the Methodist Church, Wesley College is
2 affiliated to the Methodist Church which provides oversight of the Trust Board through
3 Conference. I will take you down further to paragraph 4.9 in relation to Te Tiriti o
4 Waitangi for Wesley College.

5 In accordance with the Trust Board's original purposes and integration agreement,
6 the board encourages Māori enrolment and achievement at the College. And we will hear
7 from Reverend Faulkner about the significant work that he did to re-identify, re-shape and
8 modernise the special character of the school in relation to the Methodist Church. And
9 there are documents that have been produced to the Commission on that.

10 Over at page 12 at paragraph 4.12 is a snapshot of the three largest ethnic groups
11 within the College. I just identify back in 1995 the ethnic composition of the school roll
12 was 28% Māori, 12% Tongan, 4% Samoan, and a much larger group of Pākehā. By 2015
13 the roll for Māori was 16%, 53% Tongan and 21% Samoan, and now in the current year the
14 roll includes 20% Māori, 41% Tongan and 15% Samoan. So you can see the College has
15 had a dedicated commitment to a school roll of Māori and Pasifika over its recent life and
16 dating right back to its creation.

17 The nature and extent of the abuse, I just deal with the first paragraph and then I
18 will leave it for the talanoa, but the College does not shy away from the difficult reality of
19 the survivors' evidence to the Commission. Abuse has been an ongoing issue for the
20 College. The College boards acknowledge that the physical, sexual, emotional and
21 psychological abuse inflicted on some students in the care of the boards has had significant
22 consequences for those students, their whānau and communities.

23 So you'll see in the chronology and in today's evidence that that abuse, there was a
24 significant period from 1983 through to 1994 when there is this cluster of witness survivors
25 who have come forward to the Commission. But the Church and the College do not shy
26 away from evidence of abuse outside of that period. But the Commission has certainly
27 received strong evidence of witness survivor accounts in this 1983 to 1994 period.

28 Over that period you had two different principals, Mr Cowley and Reverend
29 Faulkner and they were both making efforts, but you've got Reverend Faulkner here today
30 talking about significant efforts he made. But the College acknowledges that not all of that
31 worked and part of this Commission's work is to understand why, because it's not simple,
32 it's complex work that requires the minds and evidence before this Commission.

33 So at paragraph 4.18 I've just talked about that 11 year span where there is a cluster
34 of nine survivor witnesses. You have a total of 12 survivor witnesses. We know there are

1 others, we know they exist around that period, but this is a particular cluster and a difficult
2 period in the history of the College.

3 There are problems today. You have a witness statement from somebody from
4 2022. So this is an ongoing challenge for the College and the Church. They acknowledge
5 that.

6 So thank you, I will take you over to the final page, a summary. The Church and
7 College have been engaged with this Commission for just over two years since the first
8 Notice to Produce in September 2020. It has been a humbling experience for the College
9 and the Church to gather in one place, for the benefit of the Commission and survivors, the
10 evidence of how the Church and College have carried out their duties to care for children
11 and young persons over the past 50 years. The failings, the faults and serious harm are all
12 laid bare. The Church and College want to state clearly that they are committed to this
13 work and the outcome of the Royal Commission, and to the survivors that have come
14 forward and those who are still to come.

15 So thank you for indulging that opening on behalf of the Church and College. We
16 now have Reverend Tautari who is --

17 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Counsel, sorry, can I just use this opportunity just quickly to get
18 some information about the -- I just want to get a sense of the scale of the homes actually
19 that provide services to Oranga Tamariki, the number of children that are in those homes,
20 the scale of the foster care service.

21 **MS DEW:** Obviously you'll see from the opening that there aren't homes currently open, so it's
22 just services through the Methodist Mission. I don't have the figures of that to hand, but
23 happy to retrieve that in the break and we'll make sure we provide the number so you can
24 understand the extent, I can understand your question.

25 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Appreciate it, thank you, thank you counsel.

26 **MS DEW:** So now I'm going to invite Reverend Tautari to deal with her opening statement. It is
27 not new material, but it is a condensing of all of the statements and evidence that you've
28 received and some reflections and acknowledgments on behalf of the Church. So Reverend
29 Tautari -- does the witness need to be sworn in?

30 **CHAIR:** Yes, I'll ask Reverend to take the affirmation.