

**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 Kerryn Beaton QC for the Royal Commission
Ms Melanie Baker, Ms Julia White and Mr Max
Clarke-Parker for the Crown
Mr James Meagher for the Catholic Church
Ms Fiona Guy Kidd for the Anglican Church
Ms Sonya Cooper, Ms Amanda Hill as other
counsel
attending

Venue: Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Tumutumuwhenua Marae
59b Kitemoana Road
Ōrākei
AUCKLAND

Date: 8 March 2022

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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1 [9.52 am]

2 **KAUMĀTUA WYLLIS:** Kia ora. Ngā mihi o te ata ki a tātou katoa i tēnei wāhanga. Ka tīmata ki
3 te karakia, te waiata, te mihi me te waiata whakamutunga. Nō reira tēnā tātou, ā, me īnoi
4 tātou.

5 [English: Greetings. Good morning to everyone at this session. We will begin with karakia,
6 a song, acknowledgements and a song to finish. And so I greet you all. Let us pray.]

7 Tōmuri te pō roa, kua pokopoko whiti te rā. Te pō roa, te pō roa, te pō roa. I hīpoki nei koe
8 i te ao i tō korowai uriuri au ai te moe, i tau ai te wairua. I nunumi atu ai te tauā, i
9 tāromaroma atu ai te wehi. Whano ki uta, whano ki tai. Whano ki te iwi moe ai i te pō. Pō
10 nukunuku, pō nekeneke, pō waiwai te pō, ā, pōhirihiri te ao. Tariao riko, tariao whiti.
11 Tariao te ata hāpara. Tōia te rā kia whiti iho te rā. Ko pūmahanahana, ko pūwerawera. E
12 whiti e te rā e, pārore ki taku kiri. Kia rangi nui te rangi. Kia rangi roa te rangi. Kia rangi
13 pīataata te rangi. Whakakenakena mai rā taku manu ia ka kō. Kua ao, kua ao, kua awatea.
14 He waiata, e hono ana ki te taha wairua. He hōnore he korōria.

15 [English: Karakia: the speaker is reciting an opening prayer to open our hearing
16 today. A song, which connects the spiritual realm called He Hōnore He Korōria, honour
17 and glory.]

18 He hōnore, he korōria, maungārongo ki te whenua. Whakaaro pai e, ki ngā tāngata
19 katoa. Ake, ake, ake, ake. Āmine. Te Atua, te piringa, tōku oranga. Tōku oranga. Āmine.

20 [English: Waiata: honour and glory and peace on the land, goodwill to all people.
21 Forever and ever amen, our saviour, our saviour, amen.]

22 He hōnore, he korōria ki te Atua, he maungārongo ki te whenua, he whakaaro pai ki
23 ngā tāngata katoa. Āmine. Tēnei te tū ake ki te mihi atu ki a tātou, ki a koutou e mātakitaki
24 mai nei i tēnei wāhanga, ā, te rā tuarua. Koutou hoki e tū ana ki te kōrero i te rā nei. Ka
25 mihi rā, ka mihi rā, ā, kia tau te wairua ki runga i a koutou. Ki a tātou e noho nei ki raro i te
26 tuanui o Tumutumuhenua, ā, waimaria mātou ka noho ki raro i ōna parirau, i ōna
27 manaakitanga, i ōna tiakitanga. Nā tēnā, he maumahara tēnā, he tupuna tēnei e manaaki nei
28 i a mātou i tēnei wā. I manaakitia i a koutou, ō koutou kāinga, ō koutou wāhi noho. Nō
29 reira, i raro i tērā manaakitanga, kia tau, kia tau, kia tau te rangimārie. Ake, ake, āmine. He
30 waiata whakamutunga tēnei, ā, nō te whenua nei, nō te hau kāinga, Papaki Mai.

31 [English: Honour and glory to the Lord, peace upon the land and goodwill to all
32 people, amen. I advise to acknowledge everyone and to you watching this section of our
33 Inquiry, day 2, and I also wish to acknowledge those who are giving evidence today,
34 I salute you and may the spirits settle upon you and to all of us present in the ancestral

1 house of Tumutumuwhenua. We are fortunate to sit under this house's wings as it takes
 2 care of us and so it is in remembrance of this ancestor who is looking after us at this time
 3 and taking care of you in your homes and in your residences. And so, with that care in
 4 mind may peace reign, amen. And this is a concluding song pertaining to the local people,
 5 Papaki Mai.]

6 Papaki mai, papaki mai, ngā ngaru nunui, ngā ngaru nunui. Wawaratia, wawaratia,
 7 ngā tai rere, ngā tai rere. E ripo e, e ripo e, ngā ngaru nunui, ngā ngaru nunui. Te rehu tai
 8 hei konei rā.

9 [English: Waiata: the great waves crash as the tides flow. The great waves, the sea
 10 spray forever more].

11 Hei konei rā i roto i ngā mihi ki a koutou katoa, ki a tātou katoa. Mā te Atua tātou e
 12 manaaki, e tiaki i ngā wā katoa, ake, ake. Āmine. Mauri ora.

13 [English: And so, at this time as we acknowledge all of you and everyone present,
 14 may the Lord take care of us at all times. Amen. Behold the breath of life.]

15 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Tēnā koe e te whanaunga Matua Wyllis i tō karakia, nāu i ora
 16 ai i ngā kawa nei. (Thank you for your prayer who revived these kawa, these protocols).
 17 Ata mārie tātou, nau mai hoki mai ki Tumutumuwhenua o Ngāti Whātua o Ōrākei. (Good
 18 morning, everyone. Welcome back to Tumutumuwhenua of Ngāti Whātua o Ōrākei).

19 In order to ensure our hearing is accessible, if you joined us for the pōwhiri you will
 20 have seen that we have sign language interpreters. We've also got te reo Māori interpreters
 21 that are assisting turning it into English for the sign language interpreters and for the
 22 stenographer who is writing the closed captions for the transcripts of the hearing.

23 Mr Snelgar, mōrena (good morning).

24 **MR SNELGAR:** Mōrena. Hūtia te rito o te harakeke, kei hea to kōmako e kō? Ka rere ki uta, ka
 25 rere ki tai. Kī mai ki au, he aha te mea nui o tēnei ao? Māku e kī atu, he tangata, he tangata,
 26 he tangata. Haere tonu ngā mihi ki te hau kāinga i raro i te maru o tēnei whare tupuna.
 27 Tēnei te mihi, tēnei te mihi, tēnei te mihi. Te kaikarakia, te mana whenua o tēnei wāhi,
 28 Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, ka mihi, ka mihi, ka mihi. Ka mihi tēnei nohinohi nō Te Tai
 29 Tokerau, nō Whangārei Terenga Paraoa, nō reira tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.
 30 Haere tonu ngā mihi ki ngā mate kei runga i a tātou. Moe mai, moe mai, moe mai. Huri ki a
 31 tātou ngā toenga o rātou, tēnā tātou. He tika nei me mihi tonu ki ngā rangatira, inanahi i
 32 tīmata i tēnei huihuinga, arā, ko Tupua me Ihorangi, ā, nā rātou nei i whakatuwhera i tēnei
 33 huihuinga i roto i te reo o te rangatahi. Nō reira, ka mihi, ka mihi, ka mihi.

1 (Te reo Māori remove the heart of the harakeke, where does the Kōmako fly, it flies over
2 the seas and the land. I will say what is most important in this world? Tis people, tis
3 people, tis people. I wish to acknowledge once again the home people and this ancestral
4 house, salutations to you all.

5 To our elder who conducted a karakia, prayer, and to the Mana Whenua, Ngāti
6 Whātua, salutations and acknowledgments. I make these humble acknowledgements as a
7 descendant of Te Tai Tokerau, Whangārei Terenga Paraoa, and indeed everyone, I
8 acknowledge you all.

9 I also want to acknowledge all of our deceased, rest, rest and to we, their legacy, it
10 is appropriate that I must acknowledge the leaders yesterday who commenced this hearing,
11 Tupua and Ihorangi. They opened this gathering with the voice of the youth. And so,
12 I commend them).

13 The pāharakeke is a theme for today. It is a well-known whakataukī from Meri
14 Ngaroto from Te Aupouri that tells us about the centrality of whakapapa and whānau. That
15 without future generations, without the sound of tamariki, the Kōmako, we are lost. And it
16 reminds us that caring for our tamariki, the most vulnerable people in our society, is central
17 to our very existence.

18 Today the connection to whakapapa and ensuring safeguards for our tamariki in
19 care will be central themes. There will be two sessions today. The first is a whānau voice
20 who are giving evidence anonymously. The whānau will talk about their removal and
21 placement in State care and this will be our first collective whānau voice at the hearing.
22 We know that harm to whānau is a central pou of this hearing, so it is appropriate that we
23 hear from whānau.

24 The whānau will be giving their evidence from Huntly via video link and they will
25 be assisted by Ms Hill and Ms Cooper from Cooper Legal. The afternoon session we will
26 hear from Glenda Maihi. Ms Maihi too will discuss her numerous foster care placements
27 beginning at six years old. She will also talk about the impact of being moved around
28 various placements and the loss of her identity. Her recommendations will include that
29 there is a need for proper checks and screening for those that are most vulnerable, our
30 tamariki. Ms Maihi will be supported by Ms Spelman from the Royal Commission and will
31 be giving evidence remotely from Tāmaki.

32 Madam Chair, that concludes my opening comments for today's session. Tēnā koe
33 (thank you).

1 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Tēnā koe Mr Snelgar mō ō kōrero he timata tēnei rā. (Thank
2 you Mr Snelgar for your opening remarks). Kua rite mō te kai whakaatu tuatahi o te rā nei?
3 (Are we are ready for the first witness today?)

4 **MR SNELGAR:** Sorry, Madam Chair, we'll need to take a short adjournment, we're just having
5 some technical difficulties which I imagine many will understand are not surprising given
6 the various things in play, so if we could just have a short adjournment to make sure that
7 we'll be ready to go shortly.

8 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Certainly, apologies, we'll be back soon.

9 **Adjournment from 10.02 am to 10.13 am**

10 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Tēnā koutou katoa (greetings). Thank you for your patience.
11 We just had a technical issue, we wanted to make sure we had the subtitles on the
12 livestream and now we have that sorted, so thank you for your patience again.

13 Tēnā koe anō Mr Snelgar.

14 **MR SNELGAR:** Tēnā koe te Heamana (thank you Chair). I just want to check whether we are
15 good to go from the technical point of view.

16 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** I believe we are. Yes, I've just had the thumbs up so haere
17 tonu (please continue).

18 **MR SNELGAR:** Excellent. Āe, nō reira ko rite tātou timata i te reo o te whānau. (So, we are
19 ready to commence with the language of the family). Ms Cooper and Ms Hill will be
20 leading the evidence of this whānau who are appearing by AVL. This evidence will take us
21 through until the lunchtime adjournment. But we will have a break scheduled for morning
22 tea. So kei a koe te Heamana (That's up to you, Madam Chair).

23 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Tēnā koutou. Before we start, I just want to let you know who
24 is in the room. So, we can have our witnesses can hear us? Checking they can hear us with
25 technical, we have our AVL witnesses? We do, okay. That's great. So, we have you here
26 with us, tēnā koutou (greetings).

27 Before we start, I want to let you know just who is in the room here. In our whare is
28 myself and Commissioner Gibson and we've got haukainga (home people) and the tech
29 team, we've got our Māori investigation team and we've got, as I mentioned earlier, our
30 sign language interpreters and remotely, but at the marae listening are the te reo
31 interpreters.

32 Joining us by video we have the other Commissioners, Erueti, Alofivae and Judge
33 Shaw. We also have the panel who will be presenting on the last day, members of Sage and

1 Te Taumata, and of course we have Aotearoa and the rest of the world through the
2 livestream listening.

3 So, I'd now like to ask you all to take the affirmation please. Can we go to the AVL
4 room please tech. There we are. We can finally see you. That's lovely. So, would you
5 like to have the affirmation in te reo Māori or Pākehā?

6 **MS AK:** Pākehā. Pākehā please.

7

8

9 **MS AG, MS AH, MR AI, MS AJ, MS AK (Affirmed)**

10 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** E mihi ana ki a koutou (thank you). Kei a koe te wā Ms Hill
11 (you have the floor Ms Hill), over to you.

12 **MS HILL:** Tēnā koutou (greetings). I'm going to start off today by just introducing all of you and
13 going through your ages and the way that you are described in some of the documents,
14 because we're not using real names today, and it's useful to just connect those things up and
15 talk about the oldest in the whānau and who's youngest here today.

16 So, to begin we have Tessa who's born in 1987. In the documents you're referred to
17 as AK. Then we have Lisa who can't be with us today. She was born in 1988 and in the
18 documents, she's referred to as AH. And then we have you Peter, the boy of the whānau
19 born in 1990 and you're referred to as AI in the documents. And Jade, you're born in 1992,
20 is that right?

21 **MS AG:** Yes.

22 **MS HILL:** And you're referred to as AG in the documents. And the youngest of the siblings here
23 today, Rachel, born in 1994.

24 **MS AJ:** Yes.

25 **MS HILL:** And you're referred to as AJ but you're not the youngest of all the siblings, are you?

26 **MS AJ:** No.

27 **MS HILL:** And in all your statements, you've said that you're affiliated to Tainui, is that right?

28 **MS AJ:** Yes.

29 **MR AI:** Yes.

30 **MS HILL:** We're going to start by talking about your early home life and we'll start with Peter, as
31 the oldest, and we'll just get you to tell us a little bit about your mum and dad. Did anyone
32 speak te reo at home?

33 **MS AK:** No.

34 **MS HILL:** What was your dad like? What do you remember about him?

- 1 **MS AK:** He was a caring father. He looked after us well.
- 2 **MS HILL:** What about your mum?
- 3 **MS AK:** She was (inaudible) as well.
- 4 **MS HILL:** You've talked a little bit about some of the struggles that they had.
- 5 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 6 **MS COOPER:** What do you remember about struggles that mum and dad had in those early
7 years, when you were all together?
- 8 **MS AK:** All the arguing, fighting.
- 9 **MS COOPER:** Alcohol?
- 10 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 11 **MS COOPER:** And part of the whānau was related to gang life as well, is that right?
- 12 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 13 **MS COOPER:** And so quite young, Tessa, you go to live with dad and then Peter, you go and
14 live with dad too. Do you all remember that point in your lives where dad left the home
15 and two of you went and the rest stayed with mum?
- 16 **MS AJ:** No.
- 17 **MS COOPER:** You don't remember that at all. Do you actually remember everyone being
18 together, Rachel?
- 19 **MS AJ:** I don't, -no.-
- 20 **MS COOPER:** What are your memories, Jade?
- 21 **MS AG:** (Inaudible) they had an alcohol problem, they were good to us, but not good to each
22 other.
- 23 **MS COOPER:** One of the things that we were talking about, is if there had been a recognised
24 need to provide some support to mum and dad at that stage, what would have been
25 necessary? What would have helped mum and dad at that early stage in your lives? Peter,
26 you've got some points about that.
- 27 **MR AI:** Yeah, sorry, what was the question?
- 28 **MS COOPER:** What support could have helped mum and dad at that early stage?
- 29 **MR AI:** Support could have been, because they had alcohol problems, and they could have done
30 rehab or something like that, counselling to help them out, because they're going through
31 their own issues, and yeah. But my memory of my parents, they were pretty good,
32 regardless of what was happening between the two of them, we never got hit or anything,
33 we were loved.

1 **MS HILL:** The last thing you said there that you were loved, is that something that all of you felt
2 in those early years?

3 **MS AK:** Yeah, I do. It's hard to explain it when you're there at the time growing up, like you're
4 just so young, and you don't know what's going on around you.

5 **MS COOPER:** We'll move then to how you start the process into care. So the first thing that
6 happens is, so this is when Tessa and Peter are with dad, come to visit the rest of the
7 whānau at mum's place and complaints have been made about mum's care of those of you
8 who are at home, and so it just happens that you are all at home and a place of safety
9 warrant is put in place and you are taken out of the family home one day. And this is the
10 start, really, of you all going into care. So, we just want to look at a document now that
11 talks about how you were taken out of home, and just get you to talk to your memories
12 about that. So, it's WITN0705003. If we can call that out, page 1, the first paragraph.

13 **MS HILL:** One of the lawyers will put that up on the screen. It takes a little while at times. But
14 just while that's happening, let's just have a basis in terms of how old you were (inaudible)
15 1996. So, Tessa, you're not even 10. And Rachel as the youngest, you're two at this point,
16 so that's the age range between you. So still very young, so you probably don't have any
17 memories of this time, do you Rachel?

18 **MS AJ:** What time is that?

19 **MS COOPER:** When you were uplifted for the first time.

20 **MS AG:** Were we at McDonalds?

21 **MS AJ:** I don't remember.

22 **MS HILL:** It was from home, the first time.

23 **MS COOPER:** Have we got the document up?

24 **MS HILL:**(Inaudible) will help us with that.

25 **MS COOPER:** If that can't be brought up, I'm just going to read bits from the document so that I
26 can get you to comment on it. So, the first thing just setting out some of the background,
27 this is 9 February 1996. So, there are some discussions at CYFS, with the managers and
28 the lawyers, and then there is a decision made that you're all going to be uplifted from
29 home. And the next thing that happens is that 4.30 in the afternoon we have four social
30 workers and three police officers going to your mum's home to get you out.

31 So mum is told what is going to happen, she's upset and then each of you is slowly
32 taken from the house while your dad is asleep, one by one, and put in cars and your mum
33 gets to decide whether she comes or not, and she makes the decision to come. So, do any

1 of you remember, Peter, do you remember this first time you're taken from home given
2 you'd come to stay, and you'd been living with dad at this stage; do you remember this?

3 **MR AI:** Vaguely but not really, yeah, I can't remember that far back.

4 **MS COOPER:** Jade, not at all?

5 **MS AG:** No.

6 **MS COOPER:** Just thinking back, how do you feel now knowing that in your file it says that four
7 social workers and three police officers came and took you all out of home to remove you?

8 **MR AI:** I feel like, it's like somebody robbing your house when you don't know. Know that I
9 understand because I'm older, I feel like they just took us away, knowing that my father
10 was asleep and they did it while he was sleeping, I feel like that was real sneaky.

11 **MS HILL:** And GRO-B -we'll have to pause the livestream for a minute there because I've
12 used an incorrect name and I'll just let the AV people tell me when we can restart. We need
13 to pause the livestream because I used a name-.

14 My apologies, Commissioners, we'll just have to ensure that that goes backwards.

15 And if I can be told when we can start again that would be really helpful.

16 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Thank you, we're just waiting to see what the issue is.

17 **MS HILL:** The issue is that I've used the name and the livestream just needs to be paused.

18 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Okay, we're going to go to a break.

19 **Adjournment from 10.29 am to 10.34 am**

20 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Tēnā koe anō (greetings once again). Sorry about the break
21 that we've had, we were just working through some technical difficulties. As you could tell
22 the transmission wasn't up to the quality that we would have liked it to have been, so thank
23 you again for your patience.

24 So, if I can just now check that we can hear, that you- can hear us in your room?

25 (Affirmative). Wonderful, and can we just get a quick check that we can hear everybody?

26 I don't know how you want to do that, maybe just go around the room quickly and say

27 kia ora. (Sound test). Sorry, counsel, can you just say that again please-?

28 **MS COOPER:** Yeah, we did, kia ora.

29 **MS HILL:** Kia ora.

30 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Okay, I think that's a much better quality. So, we wanted to
31 make sure we give you the best opportunity, so thanks again for your patience. Okay, I'm
32 going to and that over back to you now, Ms Hill.

33 **MS HILL:** Thank you Commissioner.

1 So, where we left off, we were talking about the first time that social workers came
2 and took you from your parents, and we had been talking before the break about the
3 younger children being taken out of the house while your father was sleeping, and we were
4 going to talk to Tessa as the oldest. You weren't there when they took the younger kids,
5 were you?

6 **MS AK:** No.

7 **MS HILL:** Tell me where you were?

8 **MS AK:** I was at the shop, and all I remember was being taken from strangers that I didn't know.

9 The lady, this lady grabbed me, and she was manhandling me and she was dragging me into
10 the car, my face ended up hitting the window before she threw me into the car, and I was in
11 distress and everything, I was screaming, kicking, trying to get out of the car. And
12 I remember biting her to let go of me because she kept trying to just hold me,- hold me
13 down in the car-.

14 **MS COOPER:** And it's important to just say again, you were eight when this happened.

15 **MS AK:** Yes.

16 **MS COOPER:** Were you told what was happening, like as an eight year old, was it explained to
17 you why you were being put into a car and what was happening?

18 **MS AK:** No, nothing. Like I said, they were just strangers to me, they just came along and
19 dragged me into the car, didn't let me know anything, what was going on, didn't come and
20 talk to me about anything. I had no knowledge of nothing that was happening at the time.

21 **MS COOPER:** And eventually you all end up at the Tokoroa Refuge, where you stay for three
22 days. And we just want to go back a little bit to what's happening with dad at that stage,
23 because you've been uplifted while he was asleep in the house. And so, he's trying to find
24 out where you are.

25 **MS AK:** Yeah.

26 **MS COOPER:** And again, that's something you probably found out later.

27 **MS AK:** Yes, it was. When I did get to see my father, as I was only a teenager, he was telling me
28 about the time when we got uplifted, he woke up to us, to- everybody gone, his children
29 and our mum, our mother. And all he could do was try and look for us. That's all, he didn't
30 know what to do, he didn't know what was happening. It was kind of like if he was lost-.

31 **MS COOPER:** And then you have three days there and we're just, then- you start essentially
32 being split up and you start getting split up and coming back together. So, we just want to
33 call out another document at this stage if we can, WITN0705005 and the first full paragraph

1 please. And I'll start reading from that while that document is coming up. So, this is 12
2 February, and the heading is "Family removed from refuge-."

3 "Following calls received over the weekend from the Refuge workers in Tokoroa,
4 saying that the children had been out of control. It talks about what you were doing, the
5 family were picked up from Tokoroa this morning. The decision was made to remove the
6 children from mother today," and then this is the first time that you are all separated and put
7 in different placements.

8 Do you have any memory again of this time, bearing in mind that you are all quite
9 young at this stage, but do you have any memories of this?

10 **MS AK:** No.

11 **MS COOPER:** Jade?

12 **MS HILL:** I wanted to ask you too, the second uplift from your mum is because she didn't seem
13 to be able to control you. There's nothing in your record saying that she's (inaudible), that
14 you're at risk. How does that make you feel that it's a matter of mum controlling you and
15 you're taken?

16 **MS AG:** (Inaudible).

17 **MS AJ:** Maybe they should have looked at alternatives, like more support for her to help with us
18 instead of just taking us.

19 **MS HILL:** Peter?

20 **MR AI:** Yeah, (inaudible) it's a bit of an excuse I guess, (inaudible).

21 **MS COOPER:** Tessa, did you have something you wanted to add there?

22 **MS AK:** Can you repeat the question again please?

23 **MS COOPER:** It was just asking what could have been done differently at that stage, instead of
24 separating you all and putting you into different placements. We were talking about
25 support; more supports being perhaps given to mum at that stage.

26 And then you start,- then you have periods of time together, so you go to Huakina
27 Trust for a short time and then you're all split up again, two of you go to one placement,
28 Peter, you go to another placement, and then the young ones stay at the Huakina Trust.
29 And then you all come back together again for a short time, and then you have multiple
30 placements again. And this is going between 1996 through to 1998, really. Then the
31 younger ones of you go back to mum for a time. So, do you remember going back to
32 mum? This is in around about 1997, do you remember going back for a short time to
33 mum? -

34 **MS AJ:** No.

1 **MS HILL:** During this time too, Tessa, in your records, there's notes about contact with your dad
2 and him wanting to care for some of you, or all of you as well, but also not wanting his own
3 whānau to have a role with you. What do you know about your dad's history?

4 **MS AK:** He was also raised in the system as well. He was abused, and all that as well, and he still
5 suffers that today as an adult.

6 **MS COOPER:** Do you think that that meant that he was reluctant about where you went? He
7 wanted to be very careful about where you ended up, to make sure you didn't have his
8 experiences?

9 **MS AK:** Yeah, I understand that family wanted to take us, but my father didn't want that to
10 happen for us because of how he was raised with them. So, he didn't want us to go through
11 what he went through with his own family.

12 **MS COOPER:** Looking back now, would mum's side have been an option, if mum had, did- you
13 have grandparents on mum's side, or uncles, or extended- whānau who could have looked
14 after you?

15 **MS AK:** Yeah, we did.

16 **MS COOPER:** So, you've been all, well, you go eventually, and you all end up with a whānau,
17 that we will call, the Wharves, for the purposes of this hearing. So, the three of you go
18 there in September 1998, 9 September, by 17 September 1998, you're all there. This is a
19 place where you spent a good part of four years, some of you. And this is a place that you
20 all talk about a lot in your witness statements.

21 So, let's talk about that placement. So, you start off in a townhouse?

22 **MS AK:** Yes.

23 **MS COOPER:** So, talk about how many people were living in that townhouse. Jade, do you
24 remember?

25 **MS AG:** Yeah, yes, I do. There was my siblings.

26 **MS COOPER:** That's six of you?

27 **MS AG:** Yes, the whole six of us, and there was the caregiver's children's children, grandmokus.

28 **MS COOPER:** How many of them?

29 **MS AG:** A lot, it was a lot. It was only a three-bedroom home, but there was the six of us
30 (inaudible) and I remember it was packed, we were bumping into each other, yeah.

31 **MS COOPER:** And where did you sleep?

32 **MS AG:** We all shared a bedroom, top and tailed in one room, and then my brothers and sisters
33 and some of their grandmokus, or their childrens there. So, we all just, it- was cramped, it
34 was really cramped-.

- 1 **MS COOPER:** And tell us about how that was, what was life like when you were living in the
2 townhouse?
- 3 **MS AK:** I think it started out okay from the beginning. They seemed to be what I thought was
4 caring people and loving at the start. As the weeks went by, their whole demeanour and
5 everything just changed towards us.
- 6 **MS COOPER:** In what way?
- 7 **MS AK:** Not caring and not loving anymore, more forceful upon us, demanding, yeah.
- 8 **MS COOPER:** Talk about the work you had to do there first of all, you're all still pretty little, talk
9 about the work you had to do. Tessa, you had to do a lot.
- 10 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 11 **MS COOPER:** What were your daily chores there?
- 12 **MS AK:** Just about everything, everything and anything really, doing the lawns, cleaning up the
13 rooms, dishes. This was just the line of work we had to do until we went out to the other
14 placement.
- 15 **MS COOPER:** You talk about them being hard on you, but I mean this was a place actually when
16 you suffered, all of you suffered a lot of physical abuse.
- 17 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 18 **MS COOPER:** So, can you talk to that? I know this is tough so just to the extent that you feel
19 able to. Does anyone want to kick off about the physical abuse?
- 20 **MS AK:** Yeah, we were just getting, you'd- get a hiding every day, on a daily basis because we
21 were forced to do, -into- doing things that we didn't know how to do. Like, for me I was
22 forced to cook- and make Māori bread or fry bread and I didn't know how to do none of
23 that. No one taught me how to do that, so you were just forced to do it and if you get it
24 wrong, didn't know how to do anything right, you'd get a hiding-.
- 25 **MS COOPER:** What was a hiding, what did that involve?
- 26 **MS AK:** Punching in the face, if there's a tokotoko lying around you'd get a whack from it, just
27 anything, whatever they could get their hands on.
- 28 **MS COOPER:** And you talk about vacuum cleaners and brooms.
- 29 **MS AK:** Yeah, even jug cords.
- 30 **MS COOPER:** Peter, what was your experiences? We'll talk about the farm but let's just talk
31 about the townhouse first. What were your experiences in the townhouse?
- 32 **MR AI:** One experience that I remember is, I'm- not sure if it was, -it- was during the morning
33 when we were having breakfast, and I pushed the chair, the couch along the wall and

1 (inaudible) the wall, (inaudible) one of the sons jumped over the couch and smashed into
2 my face-.

3 **MS COOPER:** How old would you have been then? Over 10 or under 10? (Inaudible).

4 **MS HILL:** (Inaudible) Tessa, you were 9, Peter was 8, Jade was 6, Rachel, you were just 4.

5 (Inaudible). So, still very young.

6 **MR AI:** (Inaudible).

7 **MS COOPER:** Jade, anything that you want to add at this stage? So, we're at the townhouse at
8 this stage.

9 **MS AG:** I remember another morning, woke up, and before school we had to clean the house.
10 And I was on vacuum, and I didn't know how to vacuum, so she kept hitting me with the
11 vacuum cord, screaming at me, telling me vacuum properly like an adult (inaudible), you
12 have to pull it behind you (inaudible). It left scars on me.

13 **MS COOPER:** Whereabouts are your scars?

14 **MS AG:** On my thigh, the back of my thighs. I still have them to this day. I had one under my
15 eye and I went to school, and I was crying, but she still sent me to school, and I was crying.
16 And I told my teacher, I didn't want to, but he asked me why, what happened, and I told
17 him that I got a hiding with the vacuum cord because I didn't know how to vacuum like an
18 adult. And I begged him not to tell because I knew I would have got a hiding when he told,
19 and I suffered again when I got home with the vacuum and the jug cord, this time.

20 **MS COOPER:** Rachel, do you have any memories of this time in the townhouse?

21 **MS AJ:** I remember not eating my school lunch, the sandwiches, and they were like four days old
22 maybe, and then they emptied my bag and made me eat it, and it was mouldy. And I think
23 that's affected me, like with food, yeah.

24 **MS HILL:** Tessa, you mentioned in your statement not getting food as a punishment (inaudible).

25 **MS AK:** Yeah, that's right. Every time we had to steal food. Shouldn't, -we shouldn't go through
26 that, sorry-.

27 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Sorry, Ms Cooper, can you just check if the witnesses would
28 like to take a break at all, because it's quite tough questioning.

29 **MS COOPER:** It's completely up to you.

30 **MS AG:** Break, please.

31 **MS COOPER:** You'd like a break?

32 **MS HILL:** A five minute break?

33 **MS COOPER:** All right, we'll take a five minute break, thank you.

34 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Okay, thank you, we'll be back in five minutes. Take care.

Adjournment from 11.27 am to 11.34 am

1 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Nau mai hoki mai, welcome back. Are our witnesses ready,
2 Ms Cooper?

3 **MS COOPER:** Yes, they are.

4 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Over to you.

5 **MS COOPER:** I just want to take you back to, Jade, that that you actually told a teacher what was
6 happening. Because before you all get shifted out to the farm, it's clearly brought to CYFS'
7 notice that you're being physically abused. I just want to call out a document, and I'll just
8 read it, but I'll call it out, WITN0702002. And we're at the bottom of that page 1, where
9 your lawyer for child clearly has sent a fax asking what's happening, and there is a response
10 which says:

11 "Phone call to the lawyer and spoke to him regarding the concerns received. Informed him
12 we were in the middle of our investigation concerning physical abuse concerns for the
13 children in relation to the care provided by the Wharves."

14 Were you aware at any point while you were in the townhouse that there was an
15 investigation going on?

16 **MS AG:** No.

17 **MS AK:** No.

18 **MS COOPER:** Were you ever spoken to by a social worker?

19 **MS AK:** No.

20 **MS COOPER:** We'll just then go on to the second page and your lawyer is wanting to know if
21 there are concerns regarding hitting of the children, what would the Department's stance be,
22 and the response is "discussed other options of working with the Wharves as opposed to
23 seeking new placement for six children."

24 Now, the question that I put to you before, is, as the people, as the children who were being
25 hit, was it better to be all six of you together, or should there have been a response to the
26 fact you were being hit?

27 **MS AJ:** A response.

28 **MS COOPER:** Should you have been left in a place where you were being hit by your
29 caregivers?

30 **MR AI:** No.

31 **MS AJ:** No.

- 1 **MS COOPER:** So, we'll move on then, you then move out to the farm. Tell us about life at the
2 farm, because that got a whole lot worse in some ways, didn't it. So, let's start again with
3 how many people were there and what your sleeping arrangements were.
- 4 **MS AK:** It was the same, we were all sleeping in one room, all together, top and tailing on the
5 beds, and then the grandchildren are in the room with us as well.
- 6 **MS COOPER:** And what's daily life like there? What did you have to do there? Talk about the
7 chores, Peter, do you want to add, what were your chores there at the farm?
- 8 **MR AI:** (Inaudible), not even having breaks (inaudible), farm work, helping with the farm work.
9 That was at the house, up at the marae it was the same thing, (inaudible) we're the ones,
10 washing dishes that were stacked right up (inaudible).
- 11 **MS COOPER:** Jade, do you have any specific memories? I remember something about thistles
12 and --
- 13 **MS AG:** In the morning they'll get me and my siblings to go and go out into the paddocks and cut
14 all the thistles. But this is like, we're almost fainting, but we're not allowed a break. They
15 were forcing to us to carry on.
- 16 **MS AK:** You're not allowed a drink of water. On hot as days, I used to put my siblings under the
17 tree while I carried on working, so, where we couldn't be seen, there's like hills and that.
- 18 **MS COOPER:** And would this be like after school? Or before school? Was it in the weekends?
- 19 **MS AK:** Before, after.
- 20 **MS AG:** After, just whenever they wanted us out there.
- 21 **MS AK:** Yeah, pretty much.
- 22 **MS COOPER:** Sometimes you got up really early in the morning, didn't you, like 3 o'clock in the
23 morning?
- 24 **MS AK:** Yeah, we were woken up about 2, 3 o'clock in the mornings to hand scrub the clothes in
25 the bathtub. And I used to, I- used to let my siblings sit on the floor and go to sleep while
26 I carried on scrubbing the clothes. And this went on for quite some time-.
- 27 **MS COOPER:** Rachel, as the baby, or nearly the baby, did you also have to do chores?
- 28 **MS AJ:** Probably but not as big.
- 29 **MS COOPER:** Yeah. And in terms of the physical violence here, was it the same?
- 30 **MS AJ:** Not as bad. It still was physical.
- 31 **MS COOPER:** What about for the rest of you, was the physical violence --
- 32 **MS AG:** Still the same, yeah. I think it was probably worse for us older ones.
- 33 **MR AI:** Yeah, because I think the expectation was (inaudible) with the older ones. So, I think
34 (inaudible), the work just increased. On the farm there's so much to do.

- 1 **MS COOPER:** One thing that we were discussing is like you went to the marae. One of the
2 things we were asking you was, like were you treated as whānau on the marae, were you
3 ever welcomed, were you allowed to participate in what was happening at the marae?
- 4 **MS AK:** No, not at all.
- 5 **MS AG:** We were invisible to them.
- 6 **MS HILL:** You were invisible (inaudible).
- 7 **MS COOPER:** So, all you did, you were in the background doing the work.
- 8 **MS AG:** Yeah, free labour, free labour for them.
- 9 **MS HILL:** One of the things that came up in your statements were the Wharves were involved in
10 the trust that ran the marae and they were quite intimidating people. So, did other people
11 who were around the marae see how you were treated?
- 12 **MS AK:** Yes.
- 13 **MS AG:** They all knew.
- 14 **MS AK:** Definitely.
- 15 **MS COOPER:** Did they ever intervene? Ever stop anything?
- 16 **MS AK:** Not at all. They knew what was going on. Some of them would turn the other way and
17 just, yeah, everything just carried on as normal, we thought that was normal. We got used
18 to it, doing all that.
- 19 **MS COOPER:** One of the things you talked about, Jade, was actually being locked up on the
20 marae, weren't you?
- 21 **MS AG:** I did something wrong, I don't know, (inaudible) and the Wharves locked me in the back
22 room, in the pillow room, where the mattresses go.
- 23 **MS COOPER:** It was overnight, wasn't it?
- 24 **MS AG:** Yeah, (inaudible). I was crying out for my brothers and sisters, but they couldn't do
25 anything.
- 26 **MS COOPER:** Peter, was this the place where you had to do all the push-ups, or did this happen
27 at the townhouse?
- 28 **MR AI:** No, that was at the townhouse. Do you want me to explain it?
- 29 **MS COOPER:** Yeah.
- 30 **MR AI:** I'm not sure, our caregivers, they went away on I'm- not sure, tangi or something. One of
31 the sons were looking after us for that week. And, yeah, I didn't know my mathematics,
32 I got so many questions wrong, so he (inaudible), and whatever I got wrong, that's how
33 much -press-ups I have to do. Anyway, I was -yeah-, I had to do it in front of him every
34 night, from 8 o'clock till midnight, I had to do press--sups, do -press-ups all night.

1 I couldn't do anymore, and any time I had a break, I'd get a whack with the stick. And the
2 kids, they were sitting there watching, and my sister (inaudible) they were helpless, they
3 couldn't do anything. I would see them tearing up as they're watching-.

4 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Aroha mai koutou, I just need to talk to the Chair for a minute.
5 Julia?

6 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Yes.

7 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** I'm not sure if you got the message about the streaming.

8 **SPEAKER:** I just sent that to you Commissioner Erueti.

9 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** If I could have Benesia call me immediately please, kia ora.

10 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Okay, can we pause the livestream?

11 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** I think we need to pause the livestream, thank you.

12 **Adjournment from 11.47 am to 12.44 pm**

13 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Nau mai hoki mai tātou. Aroha atu, we, as you could tell,
14 have had quite a few issues this morning that we've had to work through with our tech
15 people, and once again I just want to apologise for that and thank you for your patience.
16 I just want to check in with our witnesses, the whānau, that we can hear you, and that you
17 can hear us please, can we just check that first? (Affirmative). Kia ora whānau.
18 Ms Cooper and Ms Hill.

19 **MS COOPER:** Kia ora.

20 **MS HILL:** Kia ora.

21 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Okay, great, before I hand you over, I'll just let you know
22 we're happy to keep going until you are ready to finish, really leave that for you to let us
23 know how you're going with the whānau.

24 **MS COOPER:** Thank you.

25 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Over to you.

26 **MS COOPER:** Thank you.

27 **MS HILL:** So, I just wanted to pick up where we left off with the Wharf family, and we'd been
28 talking about the work that you had to do both home and the marae, the physical abuse,
29 quite serious psychological abuse from them and their sons over that four-year period. And
30 one of the things that I wanted to explore more, and you've touched on it in your statement,
31 Tessa, was the way that they spoke to you, and some of the names and the verbal abuse that
32 they would use. Can you remember, how did they treat you day to day? How did they
33 speak to you?

34 **MS AK:** Like we were nothing. They'll call us names, any names you can think of.

- 1 **MS COOPER:** Did they call you by your given names? Like, did they actually call you by your
2 proper names?
- 3 **MS AK:** Yeah, at times, only if there was something serious, like I did something wrong, that was
4 the only times. Other than that, it was other names.
- 5 **MS COOPER:** So, you came to associate your name with doing something wrong?
- 6 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 7 **MS HILL:** One of the things that your records show, is that the Wharves said that they were
8 whanaunga to you, that they were family to you; were you aware of that? Did they treat you
9 like family?
- 10 **MS AK:** No, definitely not.
- 11 **MS HILL:** All the time that you lived with them, that four-year period, you were all in the
12 custody of CYFS for that time. And that meant that CYFS were paying money to the
13 Wharves for your care and clothing allowances and pocket money, birthday allowances.
14 What do you remember about clothing and pocket money, things like that?
- 15 **MS AG:** We never had anything, (inaudible), I can't remember anything.
- 16 **MS COOPER:** Did you ever get any presents, like for your birthdays or Christmas?
- 17 **MS AK:** No, that was out of the question.
- 18 **MS AG:** No birthdays, no pocket money, no outings.
- 19 **MS HILL:** Would your social worker come and see you at the farm?
- 20 **MS AK:** No.
- 21 **MS HILL:** Don't remember seeing a social worker?
- 22 **MS AK:** No.
- 23 **MS COOPER:** One of the other things you talked about was food again, how food was used, in a
24 way I suppose, as a punishment. So, just talk a bit about how food was used with you all.
- 25 **MS AG:** They used to lock the food up, they'd lock it in the room. The (inaudible) food was left
26 in the cupboard and we'd steal it.
- 27 **MS COOPER:** What happened if you were found out?
- 28 **MS AG:** We got a hiding. These aren't just little hidings, I mean they're whipping the heck out of
29 us over a bag of chips.
- 30 **MS HILL:** One of the things that, Tessa, you talk about in your statement, and some you will
31 remember, was your dad visiting you at the farm.
- 32 **MS AK:** Yeah, our dad used to come visit us, and he used to sit out on the porch. We were inside,
33 were not allowed to go see him. We had to carry on doing our chores. And my dad will sit

1 there from the time he gets there to the time he was ready to go home, wherever he come
2 from.

3 **MS HILL:** He'd sit there and wait?

4 **MS AK:** Yeah, he'd sit there and wait, and he still didn't get to see us.

5 **MS COOPER:** What about mum? Did she come and visit you?

6 **MS AK:** No.

7 **MS HILL:** Were you ever taken to see them, did social workers or did anyone arrange for you to
8 see your parents in those four years?

9 **MS AK:** I don't know.

10 **MR AI:** The sad thing about that is, dad was only like a half an hour drive away, he was just up
11 the road.

12 **MS COOPER:** Not far at all.

13 **MR AI:** No, not far at all (inaudible).

14 **MS AK:** We had a family farm around the corner from where he was based at and they did
15 everything (inaudible), they wouldn't let us know that our family was only literally around
16 the corner.

17 **MS COOPER:** So, when did you find that out?

18 **MS AK:** When I left there, when I ran away.

19 **MS COOPER:** So, I just want to go back now to the documents again because there were more
20 reports going to CYFS that you were being abused there.

21 **MS AG:** There was.

22 **MS COOPER:** So, the first document that I want to refer to is one that's dated 14 June 2001 and
23 its WITN0768007. And this happens during home visit by a social worker, I understand it.
24 On the second page, there's some discussion about Mrs Wharves' discipline of you. I'll just
25 read out the passage and ask you to comment on that.

26 "She was very open about her disciplining the children with us, where she declared
27 that she gives the children a good whack. It's necessary to growl them, whack them, boot
28 them and shove them. She also spoke of the children needing a good talking to now and
29 then. It appeared as though she saw nothing wrong with the way she disciplined the
30 children. She has explained to us she has no alternative ways of disciplining the children.
31 We discussed the allegations of physical abuse made against her in September of last year.
32 She said she was not concerned with the allegations that were made..."

33 Comments about that, that the social worker was recording what Mrs Wharf was saying
34 about how she disciplined you.

- 1 **MS AG:** It's not discipline, it's abuse.
- 2 **MS COOPER:** And I know it's hard, but did any of your social workers at that time talk to you
3 about what was happening?
- 4 **MS AK:** No.
- 5 **MS AG:** No.
- 6 **MS COOPER:** The next thing the social worker says is that Mrs Wharf refers to the care of the
7 children as being a source of income and she advised us of her availability to care for any
8 other children. Do you have any comment on her seeing you as a source of money? Is that
9 how you felt?
- 10 **MS AK:** Yeah, yeah, we weren't even, yeah-, definitely because we wasn't getting looked after
11 properly-.
- 12 **MS COOPER:** And you weren't only a source of money, were you, you were also a labour force.
- 13 **MS AK:** Yes.
- 14 **MS COOPER:** And the other thing that I just wanted to refer to from this document is, because
15 this says that there hadn't been any contact with mum and dad or for at least five months for
16 mum. That fits with your memories of not really any contact with mum, doesn't it?
- 17 **MS AK:** Mmmhmm.
- 18 **MS COOPER:** Then I just wanted to go on to the next page, because again there's some
19 interesting statements that I want you to comment on. So, this is the top of the next page.
20 So, Mrs Wharf said she saw the children staying in her care as long-term and she was
21 thinking of adopting you. She said the whānau have also accepted the children as being
22 part of their whānau. Do you agree that you were treated as part of the whānau?
- 23 **MS AK:** No.
- 24 **MS AG:** No, definitely.
- 25 **MS COOPER:** Why do you think she said that?
- 26 **MS AG:** Make her look good.
- 27 **MS COOPER:** And the other thing that she said was that she instilled Māori culture in your lives
28 by way of kapa haka, te reo and waiata. Did that happen?
- 29 **MS AK:** Incorrect, no.
- 30 **MR AI:** No, we never learned nothing like that. Yeah, (inaudible). We actually I- felt like we
31 actually lost our identity, you know, being- Māori.
- 32 **MS COOPER:** Yeah.
- 33 **MR AI:** Being tangata whenua.
- 34 **MS COOPER:** In what way?

1 **MR AI:** We never got to, we -didn't grow up with our grandparents, we didn't see our
2 grandparents, even though they were only a stone's throw away-.

3 **MS COOPER:** Yeah.

4 **MR AI:** Yeah, lost a lot of (inaudible) while we were in their care.

5 **MS COOPER:** And one of the things that struck me, I think it was you said it, Jade, it might have
6 been you, Rachel, that while you were there you started to feel like you were invisible.
7 That's one of the things that struck me.

8 **MS AG:** Yes. Having everyone knowing what's going on with us and no one's acting on it. So,
9 pretty lonely.

10 **MS COOPER:** We're not talking about the dark ages here, we're talking about 2001, so we're not
11 talking about a long time ago either. So, you stay there and in October there is another
12 meeting that happens because the social workers go to a visit at college where, Tessa, you
13 were at college.

14 **MS AK:** Yeah. So, I was going, I- was going to school, and I wasn't focusing on doing my work
15 and stuff, so I didn't know there was a school counsellor at school that we can go to if we're
16 having problems. One of my friends suggested that, so I went to go see the school
17 counsellor, and I told her everything that was, -what- was going on back at home and with
18 all my siblings, what we were going through, and she said that she'll try and help me and
19 get in contact with the social workers-.

20 **MS COOPER:** So, the social workers go to visit the school and speak to the counsellor, and again
21 we're just going to deal with some of the material that's in that report. So, this is
22 WITN0703005. I'm just again going to read bits of it and ask you to comment on that. So,
23 her name was Betsy, do you remember that, Tessa?

24 **MS AK:** Mmmhmm.

25 **MS COOPER:** "Betsy has stated that physical abuse is currently happening, and it is ongoing at
26 the Wharf house. But Betsy has also said that you told her that Nan uses her hands and
27 objects as a weapon to hit them. Betsy says that she feels sorry for the younger ones and
28 that she feels responsible for this." That's you, Tessa, feeling responsible for the younger
29 ones.

30 **MS AK:** Yeah.

31 **MS COOPER:** "Betsy relayed to us that Tessa often says she might not be back at school at times
32 because Mrs Wharf threatens Tessa by telling her she will pull her out of school."

1 Can you just talk a bit about that because that's something you talk about in your statement,
2 how school was used as a threat, or pulling you out of school was a threat. Was school a
3 safe place for you?

4 **MS AK:** Yeah, definitely. Any chance we got to go to school we just couldn't wait to get out of
5 the house. That was our only like happy time.

6 **MS COOPER:** Did you all feel like that?

7 **MR AI:** Yeah, that was the only place you could be you- could play-.

8 **MS AG:** Be with your friends.

9 **MS COOPER:** So, one of the things that Mrs Wharf did say to you, is she might not let you go to
10 school.

11 **MS AK:** Yeah.

12 **MS COOPER:** Was that to all of you or just to you, Tessa?

13 **MS AK:** Just to me.

14 **MS COOPER:** This is an important one, so this is where, now on the next page of that document,
15 the middle paragraph.

16 "Betsy talked about the children not having any faith in anyone or trusting anyone.

17 This is directly related to a situation that Tessa had told her about concerning
18 social workers who had visited them in the past. Mrs Wharf explained to

19 Betsy" sorry-, no- "-Tessa explained to Betsy that social workers had been around
20 home and talked to Mrs Wharf about the children. After the social workers

21 left, Mrs Wharf told the children that she had told the social workers

22 that she hits them and that she's going to carry on hitting them. This led Tessa

23 to lose faith in anyone helping them especially Child Youth and Family social
24 workers-."

25 Did you know that was in your records until you saw your statement?

26 **MS AK:** No. No, I didn't.

27 **MS COOPER:** How do you feel about the fact that that was in your records but still nothing
28 really happened?

29 **MS AK:** Yeah, just makes me frustrated that they didn't act on it once they, when- they see those
30 accusations made-.

31 **MS COOPER:** So, you were interviewed, and do you remember was this interview at school or
32 was it somewhere else? I think it must have been at school.

33 **MS AK:** Yeah.

- 1 **MS COOPER:** And again, I'll just read to you, bits of that and each of you can chip in. You
2 didn't want Mrs Wharf to know that the social workers were there because Mrs Wharf
3 would be angry and stop you from coming to school?
- 4 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 5 **MS COOPER:** Because you'd been talking to the social workers?
- 6 **MS AK:** Yeah, yeah.
- 7 **MS COOPER:** And would you all have felt like that?
- 8 **MS AJ:** Yes.
- 9 **MS AK:** Yes.
- 10 **MS COOPER:** You also said, Tessa, "We all want to live somewhere else. Mrs Wharf says that
11 no one else will want us, there's no other home for us."
- 12 **MS AK:** Yeah, that's what they used to drum in our heads on a daily basis, that we're not wanted,
13 nobody wants us and that's why we're in there because our parents don't want us.
- 14 **MS COOPER:** You also said that you didn't want to stay there because "she beats us up, she's
15 cruel, mean, done something wrong, don't listen to her, she gets a jug cord, whacks us
16 anywhere, punches us and pushes us." Who were you describing there? Was that
17 Mrs Wharf?
- 18 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 19 **MS COOPER:** But did you say you- were asked who physically abused you, you said it was
20 mostly Mrs Wharf, sometimes her son-?
- 21 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 22 **MS COOPER:** You've all talked about that, haven't you? And you also said that "the little ones
23 get hidings too".
- 24 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 25 **MS COOPER:** And you've all talked about that as well. Then you were asked what you did, and
26 you went on to say, "We do all the cleaning, that's what we do every day, we cook the tea
27 and stuff like that. She buys all the kai and tells us not to touch this and that, we have to
28 ask what we can eat."
- 29 So that was your life too, you have to ask what you could eat?
- 30 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 31 **MS COOPER:** You said everything was locked up, wasn't it?
- 32 **MS AK:** Yeah.

1 **MS COOPER:** You talked about the little ones. You said that Tessa-, you said that she left after
2 them well but when their clothes were messy or their room was messy, she beat them up
3 using sticks, brooms, whatever she can get her hands on-.

4 **MS AK:** Yeah, even the jug cords she used to whip them with the jug cords, I used to stand there
5 helpless, can't do nothing.

6 **MS COOPER:** Yeah, that was something actually I guess you all saw it happen to one another.
7 How did that make you feel? Peter, how did that make you feel seeing your sisters being
8 beaten?

9 **MR AI:** Just angry, sad, those emotions, can't do anything, you're helpless.

10 **MS COOPER:** Jade, how did it make you feel?

11 **MS AG:** Sad, (inaudible).

12 **MS COOPER:** Rachel?

13 **MS AJ:** Same.

14 **MS HILL:** You were still very young at this point, weren't you, one of the younger ones.

15 **MS AJ:** Mmmhmm.

16 **MS COOPER:** Then the next document I want to move to is either the same day or the next day, I
17 can't tell when it is, this is WITN0704015. So, this is when Mrs Wharf is interviewed after
18 you'd been spoken to, Tessa. One of the first things she says from the first page of that
19 document is:

20 "We do shopping and the girls just about eat everything that day. When my house is
21 renovated going to put locks on the cupboards."

22 Comment about that? The food was locked anyway, wasn't it?

23 **MS AK:** Yeah.

24 **MS AG:** It was locked already.

25 **MS COOPER:** And then she's asked about how she disciplines you, and this is another two pages
26 on, and she says:

27 "I sometimes kick them or hit them and asked what that was for, but someone complained
28 to Ōtāhuhu about abuse of kids. We still yell at them, they all have their chores and do
29 their work." One of the other things she said is, "I whacked the kids with the stick, I didn't
30 give them a hiding."

31 Do you agree with her that she didn't give you a hiding?

32 **MS AK:** No. That's a lie.

33 **MS AG:** Absolutely not.

- 1 **MS COOPER:** One of the things that also interested me is you were referred to as all having
2 sores because of the way that you lived. Do you remember having sores there?
- 3 **MS AG:** Yeah.
- 4 **MS COOPER:** So, where were the sores?
- 5 **MS AG:** On our body, like covering our bodies.
- 6 **MS COOPER:** Did you ever get any treatment for them?
- 7 **MS AG:** I don't know, I can't remember.
- 8 **MR AK:** I don't remember getting treatment eh.
- 9 **MS AG:** Didn't get taken to doctors.
- 10 **MS AK:** No, we didn't.
- 11 **MS COOPER:** The conversation ended with Mrs Wharf saying, "We want a loan, need financial
12 assistance, we are saving the department a lot of money."
13 What do you say about that, that they were saving the department a lot of money?
- 14 **MS HILL:** It was a way to keep you there?
- 15 **MS AK:** Yeah, could have been.
- 16 **MS COOPER:** Do you think that the Department saw you as keeping you there because it saved
17 them money?
- 18 **MS AG:** It saved their efforts in looking into other places for us, placements maybe.
- 19 **MS COOPER:** What do you think about the fact that we've got all of this documentation going
20 on for a couple of years and you just stay there, how do you feel about that now as adults
21 thinking about that?
- 22 **MS AJ:** Angry, and something could have been done about it and we didn't have to suffer so long.
- 23 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 24 **MR AI:** Yeah. Our health and wellness, they were in the hands of Social Welfare, they never
25 (inaudible).
- 26 **MS HILL:** One thing that struck me, Peter, was you went and spoke to the guidance counsellor,
27 and she clearly believed you and one of the things this- seemed to be the first time there
28 was someone who was outside of the Wharf family that you could go- to.
- 29 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 30 **MS HILL:** If there'd been a safe person, a person that you could talk to, do you think it would
31 have made a difference earlier, if there's been someone you could have gone to?
- 32 **MS AK:** Yes, I reckon.
- 33 **MS HILL:** The house was quite isolated, wasn't it, you couldn't just walk down to the shops, is
34 that right?

- 1 **MS AK:** No, it's about an hour into town to the shop.
- 2 **MR AI:** I guess that was one way to keep us at bay (inaudible) from people. Even just trying to
3 talk to people, we weren't confident enough because (inaudible) and if they did, they'd
4 probably (inaudible).
- 5 **MS HILL:** That line in the report about losing faith, you didn't think that anyone would help you?
- 6 **MR AI:** Yeah.
- 7 **MS COOPER:** You certainly didn't think your social workers would help you because they knew,
8 and Mrs Wharf told you they knew she was abusing you and had left you there.
- 9 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 10 **MS AG:** They could have really changed things, but we had no one.
- 11 **MS COOPER:** Mum and dad weren't allowed to come?
- 12 **MS AG:** (Inaudible) family.
- 13 **MS COOPER:** And at the marae, as you said, you weren't part of the iwi or the --
- 14 **MS AG:** (Inaudible) nothing, just slammed.
- 15 **MS COOPER:** So, you then get shifted about a month later, oh no, it's a long time after that,
16 yeah, you get shifted to Maggie in November 2001- and this is not her real name but that's
17 what we're going to call her for the purpose of this hearing. Initially, you're all there
18 together in this placement. Was this somebody who was- whānau? You know, did Maggie
19 have any relationship to you?
- 20 **MS AJ:** I don't know, but I heard that she was whānau through marriage.
- 21 **MS COOPER:** Right. And how was it there at that placement?
- 22 **MS AJ:** Quite cold.
- 23 **MS COOPER:** In what way?
- 24 **MS AJ:** Like no love, no support.
- 25 **MS COOPER:** Were there any good things about that placement?
- 26 **MS AJ:** Playing with the other kids, her mokos.
- 27 **MS HILL:** I guess from what you've talked about with the Wharves playing with the other kids
28 wasn't something that had happened (inaudible), is that right?
- 29 **MS AG:** No, we weren't allowed to play at all.
- 30 **MS AJ:** We would never play together at the Wharves.
- 31 **MS HILL:** Tessa, you didn't stay there very long, is that right?
- 32 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 33 **MS HILL:** You left?

- 1 **MS AK:** Yes, I ran away. And I still regret it to this day, even as an adult I still regret running
2 away because I can't get over the fact that I left my siblings there behind.
- 3 **MS HILL:** But to put that in context, you're not an adult when you ran away, right?
- 4 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 5 **MS COOPER:** You're still a young teenager, weren't you.
- 6 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 7 **MS HILL:** As the oldest you have some guilt about that?
- 8 **MS AK:** Yeah, I still carry it with me now.
- 9 **MS HILL:** Do you think that's fair on you, given your family was taken and put in a place where
10 you shouldn't have, would that --
- 11 **MS AK:** No, definitely not.
- 12 **MS COOPER:** Peter, you weren't there long either because you went to whānau and then you
13 moved placements as well at around that time, didn't you? So, you were also being
14 separated away?
- 15 **MR AI:** Mmm.
- 16 **MS COOPER:** We'll get to Kōkiri because I think that's an important place to talk about because
17 the three younger ones of you all had time at Kōkiri. But were you starting to, at this point,
18 again, lose contact with one another as siblings, as brothers and sisters?
- 19 **MS AG:** Yeah, we did. (Inaudible).
- 20 **MR AI:** Yeah, it's just part of our upbringing eh, (inaudible) it was like that, yeah, there was no
21 contact between us, we didn't know what they would do. (Inaudible).
- 22 **MS COOPER:** I mean, that's one of the things that again has struck us, is what steps were taken
23 by the social workers to make sure that you kept contact with one another, that you saw one
24 another regularly?
- 25 **MS AG:** There was nothing (inaudible).
- 26 **MS COOPER:** So, how often, like, so if you think of that time, how often would you have seen
27 one another? Not at all?
- 28 **MS AG:** We used to ask a lot, like I was told you're going to go and see them, but it was lie after
29 lie from my social worker. It was hard. More than I wanted was to be with my own
30 siblings, you know. I cried for them, (inaudible) come together, they'll say this day or this
31 week, in another couple of months. It never happened.
- 32 **MS COOPER:** What about you, Peter, was it the same?
- 33 **MR AI:** Yeah, yeah, pretty much the same. Just no contact (inaudible).
- 34 **MS COOPER:** Did you ask for contact?

- 1 **MR AI:** Yeah, there's a few times I asked (inaudible) just never (inaudible).
- 2 **MS COOPER:** Rachel? Did you ask about having contact?
- 3 **MS AJ:** Yeah.
- 4 **MS COOPER:** What were you told about seeing your brother and sisters?
- 5 **MS AJ:** I think after like three years that (inaudible) they finally got a hold of these two and then
6 I'm to go like do holidays there.
- 7 **MS HILL:** (Inaudible) there was a photo taken around the time at Maggie's house, wasn't there?
8 There was a photo taken at some point, it was the first photo in a long time. Are there any
9 photos taken of you when you were at the Wharves, or any of the times that you were
10 together?
- 11 **MS AG:** No.
- 12 **MS HILL:** You don't have any photos?
- 13 **MS AK:** No, we don't have any photos at all (inaudible).
- 14 **MS COOPER:** That's something we were talking about again, wasn't it, again, that contributes to
15 how you feel invisible, as though you were invisible, because there are no photos of you as
16 children.
- 17 **MS AK:** Yeah, I find that really sad, yeah.
- 18 **MS AJ:** And that told us we weren't important. Even as an adult I wish we had those photos, like
19 had any photos of us growing up.
- 20 **MS COOPER:** Yeah. Just while we're at Maggie's and before we move out, because the two
21 younger ones, you stayed there for quite a long time. This is another place where there
22 were concerns that you were being mistreated. So, the first document I'm going to refer to
23 is WITN0704017. This is where we- move right through to May 2006 and the- Ōtāhuhu
24 Police phone CYFS, and there's an update on multiple notifications and previous and
25 ongoing interventions regarding both girls, so that's you and the younger sister in the care
26 of Maggie. Were you aware that there were any notifications being made about concerns
27 about their care and that the Police were involved?
- 28 **MS AK:** No.
- 29 **MS COOPER:** And then there is another there's- another record of the same day, "noted by and
30 ensure that caregiver liaison become involved with caregiver Maggie re no hitting policy
31 and strategies to manage girls' behaviours." So again, it's clear that CYFS know you're
32 being hit by Maggie. So that's not something you've actually talked much about, but were
33 you hit by Maggie-?

1 **MS AJ:** Probably, but it's not like right there in the forefront of my head a like memory, but I
2 think she did.

3 **MS COOPER:** What about you, Jade, you've clearly got memories of Maggie hitting you.

4 **MS AG:** Yes. We did fought, like we fought each other quite a bit. There was, -like, for me there
5 was-, -like, we'd just come from the Wharves and then dumped into Maggie's and then
6 (inaudible) kids well- behaved, but we were -like- me, I was all over the place, I was
7 scattered, I didn't really know how to be like a well- behaved child because we just come
8 from something real horrible where that traumatised me and my siblings, and then they just
9 dump us into another place where they want us to be spick and span, but we couldn't be like
10 that. How are we supposed to be like normal children? We had no, like- -even then we had
11 no- one coming to talk about, like coming to us and talk about what has happened, like just
12 getting thrown around to different places-.

13 **MS COOPER:** Places where you continued to be abused as well and they know you're being
14 abused as well.

15 **MS HILL:** And while the younger ones are with Maggie, Tessa, you're with your dad, aren't you?

16 **MS AK:** Yeah.

17 **MS HILL:** You've gone back to dad.

18 **MS AK:** Yes, when I ran away from Maggie's I caught a ride into town, and I went to my
19 grandfather's because I remembered where he lived. And I didn't know that my father was
20 living there. When my father came home and he saw me there, he was very disappointed in
21 me.

22 **MS HILL:** Because you'd run away?

23 **MS AK:** Yeah, because he didn't want to get into trouble. That's what he kept saying to me, was
24 how come I'm there and what am I doing there, and I just told him I've had enough of being
25 moved around from home to home and suffering, I don't want to keep going through it
26 anymore.

27 **MS HILL:** Eventually CYFS let you stay there?

28 **MS AK:** I didn't even see them, I didn't see them.

29 **MS COOPER:** So, you just disappeared?

30 **MS AK:** Yeah, pretty much. I didn't get to see them.

31 **MS COOPER:** Peter, you've gone to Kōkiri, so this is after a number of placements. So, you end
32 up in Kōkiri towards the end of 2002. Talk to us a bit about Kōkiri. That's a place again,
33 where you had quite a long time and then you eventually have the younger ones coming
34 there too. So, what were your early memories of Kōkiri?

1 **MR AI:** Yeah, I got there, and stuff and they told me later how I used to be. They said I was just
2 a real standoffish person, I never talked to no one, I never spoke to anyone. I used to walk
3 down the hallway, they'd see me and I'd always like turn to the wall and walk along the
4 wall. Like, that's the effect of, -that's- how I used to, -that's- how I was when I first
5 (inaudible), I didn't know why I used to do that. Now I know why (inaudible-).

6 **MS COOPER:** And it talks about you actually being depressed.

7 **MR AI:** Yeah, that was the first (inaudible). I didn't know what depression was, I thought that
8 was normal to be like that, to be standoffish and not talk to anyone. But over time it just
9 got worse and worse.

10 **MS COOPER:** And this is a place that you say they were trying to help you?

11 **MR AI:** Yeah.

12 **MS COOPER:** Do you think you could be helped at this stage, or was it too late really?

13 **MR AI:** I think if they had have known what (inaudible) prior to me going there, (inaudible)
14 helped me out a bit better, but they just sent me to a psychiatrist and let them deal with it,
15 but, you know, the psychiatrist wasn't that interested, so --

16 **MS COOPER:** You got taken for food, didn't you?

17 **MR AI:** Yeah, they'd just give us food and we'd sit there for an hour answering questions and then
18 nothing. So, I think they're there for about ten weeks, yeah, (inaudible) the deeper issue
19 was still there, it was never addressed.

20 **MS COOPER:** From there you went to a Māori language school for a while, how did you find
21 that?

22 **MR AI:** That was hard, because we couldn't speak te reo, we didn't know nothing about our
23 whakapapa or anything, it's a Māori school and we were just, yeah, pretty much (inaudible)
24 on the spot translate it to English, yeah.

25 **MS COOPER:** And Jade, you then also start shifting around at this stage, so you get taken into
26 the care of the primary care group. So, you're in a number of placements there, so you start
27 in a place in Te Atatū. You talk about the home there having bars on the windows and
28 locks on the front door.

29 **MS AG:** Yes, in the girls' home.

30 **MS COOPER:** Had you done any crime?

31 **MS AG:** No.

32 **MS COOPER:** What did you do all day there?

33 **MS AG:** Just stayed inside.

34 **MS COOPER:** What about school?

- 1 **MS AG:** Home school.
- 2 **MS COOPER:** Did you actually do learning?
- 3 **MS AG:** No.
- 4 **MS COOPER:** And then you got shifted again. Can you talk about a place where you would
5 have there- were six girls living in a studio room with no separate bathroom, sorry
6 bedroom, and you all had to share the same living space to sleep, live and eat-?
- 7 **MS AG:** Yes.
- 8 **MS COOPER:** And you had nothing to do all day there?
- 9 **MS AG:** No, we did nothing, we just lazed around or, yeah, there was no school.
- 10 **MS COOPER:** This was a motel, wasn't it?
- 11 **MS AG:** Yes, it was a motel.
- 12 **MS COOPER:** One of the things that we were talking about is, you know, like this was thought
13 to be good enough for you. Do you think if you had been a Pakeha kid this would have
14 been good enough for a Pākehā kid?
- 15 **MS AG:** Not at all, I don't think they would even talk with Pākehās or cram them in a place like
16 that, not at all.
- 17 **MS COOPER:** Or even with the Wharves you were all crammed in.
- 18 **MS AG:** Yeah.
- 19 **MS HILL:** Because you were all girls that you were with, (inaudible)?
- 20 **MS AG:** Yeah, there was. That was just a little bit of us, there were way more, (inaudible) they
21 were in other places like the (inaudible) home in Papatoetoe, some were at Te Atatū
22 (inaudible). We were all Māori; the children were Māori.
- 23 **MS COOPER:** One of the things that struck me that we were talking about is that they did not let
24 you, actively stopped you from having contact with whānau. So, you talk about a situation
25 where you bumped into Peter, you saw Peter at the supermarket. Can you tell that story
26 because that's it's- tough. Peter might be able to help-.
- 27 **MS AG:** Yeah, so we were moved to Pukekohe, from the motel, the same PCG, the same girls'
28 home, and we passed Pak'n'Save and I saw my brother. I was telling them please stop, can
29 I go and say hi to him, but they wouldn't let me. He was only like 100 yards from where
30 we were on the road and I was begging them, I just wanted to go and say hi, hug him. They
31 wouldn't let me.
- 32 **MS COOPER:** Just so we're clear, this primary care group was a group that contracted to CYFS,
33 so they were CYFS caregivers really, weren't they?
- 34 **MS AG:** Yes.

- 1 **MS COOPER:** Do you remember that, Peter?
- 2 **MR AI:** Yeah, I remember someone calling my name and that was it. I looked back and then
3 I just seen a van driving past.
- 4 **MS COOPER:** You said you wouldn't have recognised it was your sister by then.
- 5 **MR AI:** No, I just heard someone call my name.
- 6 **MS AG:** I was yelling out, yelling out and telling them to stop.
- 7 **MS COOPER:** Yeah. You then go to foster care in Titirangi. Now, you can talk as much or as
8 little about what happened to you there. This was another bad and unsafe place for you, so
9 it's up to you what you talk about here. But this is another place where you get violence
10 from a female caregiver, the daughters used to beat you up. Anything else you want to say,
11 it's completely up to you, it's in your written statement.
- 12 **MS AG:** Yeah, (inaudible) it's quite hard there also. (Inaudible) it was the father; it was the
13 father. We were home alone, and the mum and the children were gone shopping, and
14 (inaudible) and he brought me to the lounge and for lunch, and so I went in, and he made
15 me, he- made me do- --
- 16 **MS COOPER:** Masturbate him?
- 17 **MS AG:** Yeah, sexual acts, (inaudible).
- 18 **MS COOPER:** That's okay, yeah.
- 19 **MS HILL:** It's hard to talk about these things. (Inaudible).
- 20 **MS COOPER:** Just to clarify, this is not the only time it went on which made you really scared
21 every time you were left alone?
- 22 **MS AG:** Yeah, I used to like, I want to go, like- to go with the mum, they just thought I was
23 an -attention-seeker. But the reality, like they had no idea what was going on when they
24 left me home. I hated it-.
- 25 **MS COOPER:** Yeah.
- 26 **MS HILL:** Because it was just you in this, you didn't have your brothers and sisters with you.
- 27 **MS AG:** (Inaudible).
- 28 **MS HILL:** If we can just come back to catch your breath a little bit, you'd left here by this time
29 haven't you, you're aging out, you're old enough to leave CYFS care. And that last time
30 period , what happened, what happened, what was the contact with the social worker, what
31 was going on for you? In that last little while, because you're about 15, I think.
- 32 **MS AK:** Yeah, I ended up being pregnant and I remember seeing a social worker once, she come
33 to see me one time after I left, when I left the homes. And I was on my own, I only seen
34 her once, that was it.

- 1 **MS HILL:** Did they give you any help the fact that you were pregnant, did they give you support?
- 2 **MS AK:** Yeah, she took me out and bought baby a couple of items and then that was the last I saw
- 3 her.
- 4 **MS HILL:** (Inaudible)?
- 5 **MS AK:** No, I didn't hear from any of them.
- 6 **MS HILL:** Did you feel like you were in a good place to have a baby at that stage?
- 7 **MS AK:** Thinking back now, I don't, probably- not. Just I didn't know how -to I- didn't know
- 8 how to be, I didn't know how to treat, I didn't know how to act once I left the homes,
- 9 I, -it- was like I was just getting thrown into whatever was coming my way, I was just
- 10 going forward with it all-.
- 11 **MS HILL:** You age out of the care system and go and have your baby while Jade's in Titirangi
- 12 and, Peter, you're in Kōkiri (inaudible).
- 13 **MS COOPER:** Yeah, so eventually you all, the last of the three of you, so Peter, Jade and Rachel
- 14 end up together in Kōkiri. You've said that that was a mostly good place, but you were
- 15 quite depressed and isolated and, Peter, just quite disengaged, weren't you?
- 16 **MR AI:** Yeah, it's not their fault that I was like that, but I was going through that when I first went
- 17 there. For many years that I was there (inaudible).
- 18 **MS COOPER:** You started going to college there?
- 19 **MR AI:** I first did correspondence, I was doing correspondence first, but that was only for half a
- 20 day.
- 21 **MS COOPER:** Then you went to Tangaroa College.
- 22 **MR AI:** Yeah, I went to Tangaroa College.
- 23 **MS COOPER:** How was that?
- 24 **MR AI:** (Inaudible).
- 25 **MS COOPER:** And you did okay at school?
- 26 **MR AI:** Yeah, I did okay at school.
- 27 **MS COOPER:** That's one thing actually that strikes us about all the records, you all did well in
- 28 school, didn't you?
- 29 **MS AK:** Yes.
- 30 **MS COOPER:** You all were good at sports?
- 31 **MS AK:** Yes.
- 32 **MS COOPER:** So, you all had talents, and Rachel, you were voted to be excellent in music. So,
- 33 could you play instruments, or were you a singer?
- 34 **MS AJ:** A singer.

- 1 **MS COOPER:** So, you have all these talents that were only seen really in school, is that right?
- 2 **MS AJ:** Mmmhmm.
- 3 **MS COOPER:** Were you part of sports team at school or were you not allowed to be part of the
- 4 sports team?
- 5 **MR AI:** Just school.
- 6 **MS COOPER:** So, Jade, your experience at Kōkiri, again, you went to a Māori immersion school
- 7 first, how did you find that?
- 8 **MS AG:** Difficult, real difficult. (Inaudible) but, yeah (inaudible).
- 9 **MS COOPER:** Rachel, that was the same for you, wasn't it, you also went to the immersion
- 10 school. How did you find it?
- 11 **MS AJ:** I didn't like it. I struggled. I felt like I didn't fit in.
- 12 **MS COOPER:** Is that because you didn't feel Māori?
- 13 **MS AJ:** That and also not being able to understand it or speak it, and just be up to the same level
- 14 as other kids.
- 15 **MS COOPER:** One of the things that interests me about your experiences at Kōkiri, particularly
- 16 the girls, is removal from school and loss of privileges, but not allowed to do things
- 17 because you're under 24-hour supervision. Do you want to just talk a bit about how you
- 18 experienced that? Jade?
- 19 **MS AJ:** I feel like --
- 20 **MS COOPER:** Rachel, yeah.
- 21 **MS AJ:** I feel like we were always constantly, like getting beat down on (inaudible), like I've got
- 22 to try not to do something wrong. That's what I felt from Kōkiri.
- 23 **MS COOPER:** And one of the things that your social workers note, for example, is that there is a
- 24 music school literally across the road, but you can't go because your supervisors can't take
- 25 you across the road or won't let you walk across the road to the music school because you
- 26 need 24-hour supervision.
- 27 **MS AJ:** Which I didn't know about, I didn't know about that 24-hour supervision. What did I do
- 28 wrong? I didn't even know.
- 29 **MS COOPER:** Yeah, had you done any crime?
- 30 **MS AJ:** No.
- 31 **MS HILL:** That's one thing that really strikes me, is that so often people in care go from Care and
- 32 Protection into the youth justice system. But you didn't, did you? You stayed in Care and
- 33 Protection the whole time. And none of you got into the Youth Court, Lisa, did some stunts

1 at youth justice and things, but Jade, you talk about having bars on your windows. You
2 were under 24-hour supervision, but you're not your justice eh.

3 **MS AG:** Mmm.

4 **MS COOPER:** One thing that we talked about this morning, and I think it is important to just talk
5 about, and perhaps we can have a break then, unless you want to keep going. But is there
6 some discussion at this point, and certainly when you're at Kōkiri, we're not clear where the
7 others are, where you are asked about going back to the Wharves. So can you just recount
8 that, because I didn't know about that until this morning, I just want you to talk a bit about
9 that.

10 **MR AI:** Yeah, (inaudible) at the time, so a social worker picks me up, and I'm away, she tells me
11 you're going to a meeting in Papakura (inaudible). And I said yeah, what's happening?
12 She's like oh the Wharves in there, the mother and daughter, you're going to have a meeting
13 with them to see whether if you're going to go back to them. This is a couple of years after
14 we initially went there. And I was like man that's a (inaudible) for them to ask us
15 (inaudible) after everything we've been through. Anyway, we done that, we go upstairs,
16 and we have this big meeting.

17 **MS COOPER:** Who was there?

18 **MR AI:** Me and my four younger siblings. And just Mrs Wharf and the daughter, and we all had
19 to individually say whether we wanted to go back there (inaudible).

20 **MS COOPER:** Jade, do you remember that matter?

21 **MS AG:** Yes, I do.

22 **MS COOPER:** Rachel, do you remember that meeting.

23 **MS AG:** Yes, I remember going there.

24 **MS AJ:** Yes.

25 **MS COOPER:** How did you feel having to respond to whether you wanted to go back.

26 **MS AJ:** I felt kind of intimidated and scared, but I don't know how, I still ended up saying no,
27 yeah.

28 **MS COOPER:** And then I think we can so- Peter, you leave- Kōkiri for a while, you go and live
29 with whānau in Australia.

30 **MR AI:** Yeah. Yeah, I lived with family in Australia, and I think that's where
31 the depression kicked in when I was over there, I didn't know anyone, there were family I met
32 when I was in Kokiri, when I did come back (inaudible), I didn't go to school or nothing, just
33 stayed back, I was just there (inaudible).

34 **MS COOPER:** You end up back at Kōkiri?

- 1 **MR AI:** Yeah.
- 2 **MS COOPER:** Where you eventually age out?
- 3 **MR AI:** Yeah.
- 4 **MS COOPER:** Yeah. And you finish your time in care, Jade, at Kōkiri. But Rachel, you had
5 more placements, and you ask to be put with a family, don't you?
- 6 **MS AJ:** Yeah.
- 7 **MS COOPER:** But actually, you were put somewhere where you're with a stranger again to help
8 get you ready to become independent.
- 9 **MS AJ:** Which I don't feel like I got any help towards independence, not from CYFS or not from
10 a caregiver at the time.
- 11 **MS COOPER:** That was a kind of strange placement for you, wasn't it, because the caregiver got
12 very attached to you.
- 13 **MS AJ:** Yeah.
- 14 **MS COOPER:** So that made it quite difficult for you given what you'd been through.
- 15 **MS AJ:** Yeah. She put through the love word on me, and it used to make me feel angry. Because
16 growing up in all those placements I never felt love, so it was a strange, very strange thing
17 for me. And yeah, I felt like she forced that over me, on me, and I wasn't ready, yeah, and
18 it made me feel disgusting. And the fact that she was Pākehā, like a Pākehā lady saying it
19 to me, it made me feel even more disgusting to be honest, yeah.
- 20 **MS HILL:** We've come to the end of that discussion around care. So, Rachel, you age out of care
21 in 2011, so it's only 10 years ago.
- 22 **MS AJ:** Mmm.
- 23 **MS HILL:** So today we've talked about the beginning of your time in 1995, 1996 through to 2011
24 and also, we've talked a little bit about your dad who was also in the State system, so this is
25 another generation of that. And what we're going to move on to now is to the impacts of
26 your time in care and what could be done differently. And I just wanted to check in and see
27 whether you wanted to have a quick break or a bit of a rest and some kai or whether you
28 want to carry on?
- 29 **MS COOPER:** They're happy for us to have a break and come back after, you know, have a bit of
30 a break and for you to come back and talk later. So, we're in your hands now, whether you
31 want to keep going and get it finished or whether you want to have a break, have some kai
32 and then we finish off on how this has impacted on you.
- 33 **MS AK:** Probably a break, I'm getting a bit of a headache, I'm sorry.

1 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Thank you, Ms Cooper, I was about to ask that, because we
 2 have been going for quite a while and I just want to make sure that they have had some kai
 3 and a good break. So, I think it is a good time for us then, given that you've signalled you
 4 would like to do that. So, we will come back and resume in 30 minutes.

5 **MS AK:** Ka pai.

6 **Lunch adjournment from 1.51 pm to 2.34 pm**

7 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Nau mai hoki mai tātou. Hopefully you've all had a good
 8 break. I will now just go back over to Ms Cooper and our whānau just to check you can
 9 hear us? Can you hear us? Yes. Can everybody say kia ora or hello? (Affirmative). I'm
 10 hoping that you all had a good break and had some kai. Good, I can see nods, that's
 11 wonderful. Ms Cooper over to you.

12 **MS COOPER:** Alright, so, we're basically going to do this last session which is looking at first of
 13 all the impacts of your time in care and then I think we want to talk about what could have
 14 and should have been done better, so what your vision is, I think, for the future. So, we're
 15 going to ask you individually to talk about the impacts of your time in care and Rachel,
 16 we're going to start with you this time. Just speak a bit about how you came out of here
 17 feeling and behaving, I suppose.

18 **MS AJ:** Feeling about, like lost and unsure of like the real world, I guess, world out of CYFS and
 19 out of homes. And I wish that there was like a support that would help me to learn
 20 everyday things, like banking or, you know, I had to just figure that all out really. And
 21 what was the other thing?

22 **MS COOPER:** So, one of the things you also talk about is education, about the loss of your
 23 education, that's a big loss for you. So can you just talk about that, why that's been such a
 24 big loss for you. You say about missing out on opportunities that you think, you know, that
 25 you would have had if you had gone through proper schooling.

26 **MS AJ:** I don't think I'm equal to other people my age because of lack of schooling and it actually
 27 took my confidence down. I think I can't do, I- can't study; I don't understand much
 28 because those milestones with schooling wasn't getting reached-.

29 **MS COOPER:** I mean for you; you talk about missing out on university. So that's something
 30 obviously that was a dream.

31 **MS AJ:** Yeah, I wanted to go there.

32 **MS COOPER:** Would it be possible still, do you think, or do you feel like that's just out of reach
 33 now?

34 **MS AJ:** It would take a lot of work to get me to that feeling- that it's possible-.

- 1 **MS COOPER:** One of the things that strikes me about just the way you've spoken all through this
2 and in your written statement is that you left care feeling invisible and unimportant.
- 3 **MS AJ:** Yeah, yes.
- 4 **MS COOPER:** Can you just talk a bit more about just that impact on you of just feeling
5 unimportant and invisible?
- 6 **MS AJ:** It's actually like I've struggled to, like make relationships because of that. And I have
7 lack of confidence because of that, and I have, I- used to have a lack of -self-worth
8 and -self-importance and that's affected me right across to the point where, if people treated
9 me like that, like unimportant or anything, I actually didn't blame them because I really
10 believed that I wasn't important. -And --
- 11 **MS COOPER:** Sorry to interrupt you, one of the things you all talked about is your anxiety.
12 That's something you particularly talk about, Rachel, in your statement. So just tell us
13 about anxiety and how that affects you every day.
- 14 **MS AJ:** It's kind of hard to explain, like all of us, what we've gone through has been kind of hard
15 to fully explain, to grasp the trauma and the effects and all of that, but yeah--.
- 16 **MS COOPER:** Yeah, and you talked about the impact of that with the mental health, that's still a
17 struggle, and also drug and alcohol issues as well.
- 18 **MS AJ:** Yeah. I would use the drugs to cope and to escape from the pain and from the rejection
19 of this world.
- 20 **MS COOPER:** In terms of culture, and that's something we were all talking about, that's another
21 big strong theme and for you all, and I'll talk to you all about it, is that disconnection from
22 your culture and from your iwi. So again, can you just talk about that, that loss of that
23 connection, and your identity, I guess.
- 24 **MS AJ:** Because of that loss of connection, it's been hard to like believe that I am even a Māori,
25 I kind of feel plastic. And I'll try to like go to like a Māori school, and I've tried to learn
26 Māori, but in my subconscious it's like telling me that I can't do it, what's the point, yeah,
27 and that I don't I- don't believe in myself-.
- 28 **MS COOPER:** Yeah. Is it that you feel you don't belong?
- 29 **MS AJ:** Yeah, I was going to say that.
- 30 **MS COOPER:** Yeah. And just about also too we were talking about, like your sense of
31 belonging within your iwi, because that's, you know, do you have any sense of connection
32 or belonging?
- 33 **MS AJ:** No.

- 1 **MS COOPER:** Is there anything more that you want to talk to there? Because I mean that's
2 powerful stuff. Is there anything more that you want to, I- was going to actually say what's
3 been the impact on you as- a whānau really, like in terms of your relationship with each
4 other, how would you talk about that?
- 5 **MS AK:** Still working on it.
- 6 **MS COOPER:** And your parents?
- 7 **MS AK:** Working on it.
- 8 **MS COOPER:** So, that's a work in progress too?
- 9 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 10 **MS COOPER:** Jade, can I next ask you as the next youngest, so, you're again somebody who's
11 struggled with anxiety, haven't you?
- 12 **MS AG:** Yes.
- 13 **MS COOPER:** How's that kind of affected you in day-to-day life?
- 14 **MS AG:** It's affected me big, so far as I struggle to leave my home. I have panic attacks to walk
15 out the door, you know, shopping, like, yeah, I get bad, bad, extreme, bad anxiety just
16 doing the shopping, and I'd rather avoid it if I can avoid it, yeah, I'll try any necessary way
17 just to avoid me going into a public space.
- 18 **MS COOPER:** One of the things that struck me about what you said when we were talking, and
19 it's also in your written statement, is that you thought that when you got out of care you
20 would be free and that everything would be fine, but actually that's not how it's been.
- 21 **MS AG:** Yeah. I thought that I could have control, always have control of my life, but my mental
22 state I still suffer and I'm still suffering for it. I wish I was able to leave the past behind me,
23 but it still follows me wherever I go. Like (inaudible) having a family (inaudible) will
24 make it better but it doesn't, I still have to live through everything, as much as I don't want
25 to, like it will just never go away.
- 26 **MS COOPER:** And you talk about having nightmares, flashbacks to what happened to you.
- 27 **MS AG:** Yeah, I have problems that's where it really like cuts me up, like really wounds me. The
28 nightmares. That's why I don't, I- stay up (inaudible-).
- 29 **MS COOPER:** How do you feel in terms of your connection to your iwi?
- 30 **MS AG:** I don't really feel anything, I don't feel connected to my iwi. I think, I personally, I wish
31 it was different so I could be connected, but I personally don't feel like that, I don't know
32 what (inaudible).
- 33 **MS COOPER:** Yeah. One of the things again that's really struck us is that you've come out of
34 here still very fearful of the State, particularly Oranga Tamariki.

1 **MS AG:** Yes.

2 **MS COOPER:** And you've had an experience.

3 **MS AG:** I've had a few (inaudible) to get to some like (inaudible), so the offer of like for
4 community (inaudible), they really don't actually ask, they refer you to the Oranga
5 Tamariki. And so, the social worker did that to me and I said I need family (inaudible),
6 really upset. So, just going straight into Oranga Tamariki, like that is unnecessary, and
7 (inaudible). So, I've never gone back to the school for anything. I avoid the school,
8 meetings, everything, yeah.

9 **MS COOPER:** And one of the things that you talk about is your own fear about actually getting
10 counselling because you're afraid of actually dealing with the trauma.

11 **MS AG:** Yeah. And so, I mean I wouldn't want (inaudible) thinking that I'm an unfit mother to
12 my own children, yet I know I'm not, they're my children, I still have them. But just that
13 (inaudible) from the social worker, that it will be okay, but it's not because they just refer
14 you to Oranga Tamariki, the children are eventually going to end up in the system and how
15 dare you like the social worker say that to me, I had no words, really that was I- left, I got
16 up and left. That's the last thing I want for my children. I'm trying my hardest and I'm
17 trying to break the cycle that's been happening generation to generation of the family of my
18 side, like I don't want that for my children, my siblings' children-.

19 **MS COOPER:** Yeah, yeah.

20 **MS HILL:** We've talked earlier today that between you, you've got eight kids and none of them
21 are in the system, are they?

22 **MS AG:** No.

23 **MS HILL:** So, you've broken that cycle, haven't you?

24 **MS COOPER:** Well, you said that but actually that's really interesting. So, your children haven't
25 gone into the cycle, but you were talking about the impact of your own trauma and that
26 intergenerational trauma, how that impacts.

27 **MS AG:** Yeah.

28 **MS COOPER:** Do you just want to talk a bit more about that, because that was really, I- think
29 that's something that the Commissioners, everyone would be interested in, is how you carry
30 it with you, you know, it's your burden every day and how that then becomes a burden, in
31 the sense that your children do-.

32 **MS AJ:** It's not good, it's not good. But maybe if we had the help to heal those traumas and get
33 educated properly.

34 **MS COOPER:** Is that something also, Jade, you talk about is your education as well.

- 1 **MS AG:** Yeah.
- 2 **MS COOPER:** Something obviously you feel as well.
- 3 **MS AG:** Yeah, I do feel that way (inaudible). I thought I could accomplish that by getting out of
4 the system. I struggle to keep a job now, I'm in and out of jobs. I can't hold one down for
5 more than a month or so, it's too much, yeah. I can't handle it, like I guess that's the things
6 that's happened.
- 7 **MS COOPER:** Peter, that probably is a good stage to turn to you, because that's also something
8 that impacts you a lot, isn't it. You've actually got tertiary qualified, but you talk about how
9 it's really hard to hold down a job too, don't you.
- 10 **MR AI:** Yeah, (inaudible) I find it hard trying to hold a job because I can't stand people looking
11 over my shoulder, telling me what to do. Yeah, so I'll just walk out, I won't even hand my
12 resignation in.
- 13 **MS COOPER:** And you've also got anxiety issues as well, don't you?
- 14 **MR AI:** Yes, (inaudible) a lot of people, when there's a lot of people around (inaudible).
- 15 **MS COOPER:** We're talking about all of you, don't like going into supermarkets as a place
16 because that's a place you all feel anxious because it's a busy place and there's things you
17 can't control there.
- 18 **MS AK:** Even just going out to the mall and stuff.
- 19 **MS AJ:** I think because we were so isolated out at the farm, maybe that's had an impact on us,
20 overcrowding and too busy, too much noise.
- 21 **MS COOPER:** One of the things I liked the word that you used in your witness statement, is
22 being dislocated from your culture and wider whānau. So, do you want to just talk a bit
23 about that lack of connection to culture and whānau?
- 24 **MR AI:** Yeah. There is none, like I still feel like and I'm trying to find myself, where I belong
25 and who I belong to (inaudible).
- 26 **MS COOPER:** So, do you feel Māori?
- 27 **MR AI:** I know I'm Māori but do I feel it, it's 50/50.
- 28 **MS COOPER:** Yeah. One of the things that you talk about is this kind of connecting again with
29 whānau, because you say you were never actually placed with whānau. Throughout your
30 time in care you were never placed there except maybe for a short period.
- 31 **MR AI:** Yeah, because of that I've actually I- moved back to Pukekohe because I wanted to be
32 with my son so that he could be brought up with family around. That was my way of,
33 I guess, so that he has an identity, (inaudible) I guess as well, yeah-.

- 1 **MS COOPER:** Can I just say a positive, because you mention it, is that you have managed to stay
2 out of the criminal justice system which, as you say, you know, a statistical anomaly, yeah,
3 for a Māori man who's been through care.
- 4 **MR AI:** Yeah, I think that it ran deep I guess, (inaudible) regardless of what I've been through,
5 I've still managed to set something up for that's- the whole idea, was just to set up a better
6 path for my son-.
- 7 **MS COOPER:** Yeah.
- 8 **MS HILL:** One of the things, just before I come on to Tessa, is a question that relates to that
9 connection or disconnection and looking forward to the future as well, is where for each of
10 is your tūrangawaewae, where is your place to stand? You've had a childhood of
11 instability, so is there a place you can call home, where do you plant your feet? Is there
12 somewhere.
- 13 **MS COOPER:** You're all shaking your heads.
- 14 **MS AG:** No.
- 15 **MS COOPER:** No. Tessa, you think no? So, none of you have a place that you think is what you
16 would call home?
- 17 **MS AJ:** Just try and make, like do our best with our own families and with each other.
- 18 **MR AI:** Yeah, (inaudible) that's where I (inaudible) to go home to learn te reo, but mainly to
19 connect back to my people, our whānau.
- 20 **MS HILL:** If we can just talk through some of those similar things with you, Tessa. We touched
21 earlier on some of the guilt that you carry as the oldest, and that's the way you were forced
22 as a parent almost to look after the young ones because they're a young age, and that's
23 something that you still carry now; is that right?
- 24 **MS AK:** Yeah, yeah, that's right. -- I still carry it now as I'm an adult. And I still feel like it was
25 my job to protect them in foster care-.
- 26 **MS HILL:** Even though you were so young yourself.
- 27 **MS AK:** Yeah. Nobody else was going to do it for them, so I had to do it. I had to try my best to
28 do whatever I could do.
- 29 **MS HILL:** You talked about in your statement as an adult your struggles with drugs and alcohol
30 as a coping mechanism.
- 31 **MS AK:** Yeah, I was heavy into drugs and alcohol when I ran away from homes, and I was doing
32 that for years.
- 33 **MS HILL:** Did that start while you were in CYFS care?

- 1 **MS AK:** Yeah, it did. I was doing it on the side to where they couldn't with- the Wharves, I was
2 doing it on the side where they didn't know I was doing it-.
- 3 **MS HILL:** You talk about trust being an issue, having trouble trusting people.
- 4 **MS AK:** Yeah, I didn't trust anyone. I didn't trust the system, I didn't trust the Police, I didn't trust
5 anybody, because that's how it made me feel at the time. And I'm still having a hard time
6 as an adult now trying to trust people. It's hard for me to even be trusting you'se and sitting
7 here with you'se and doing all of this.
- 8 **MS HILL:** (Inaudible) but those records from when you were kids, you say that you'd lost faith
9 and we were talking about that safe person to talk to, you didn't have that for a long time,
10 did you?
- 11 **MS AK:** No, we didn't.
- 12 **MS HILL:** Does that make it hard now to talk about things like counselling and healing and all of
13 those things that you need trust to be able to do that, don't you?
- 14 **MS AK:** Yeah.
- 15 **MS HILL:** As the oldest sibling, do you have a different relationship with your mum and dad
16 perhaps, because you have different memories of them?
- 17 **MS AK:** I don't know, I'm still working on it with them. I think we all are. But I'm still trying to
18 learn myself all the things now.
- 19 **MS HILL:** What about things like culture and language, where are you at in terms of your
20 relationships with whakapapa and your identity?
- 21 **MS AK:** Nowhere with that.
- 22 **MS HILL:** Nowhere with that?
- 23 **MS AK:** No.
- 24 **MS HILL:** Do you feel Māori?
- 25 **MS AK:** Yeah, I do. It's a bit I- do feel- Māori but not fully. I can't explain it, but I would feel
26 more better knowing, speaking te reo, knowing our whakapapa properly, it would make me
27 feel more at ease and better. But it's shame that we don't know none of that and that we're
28 still learning.
- 29 **MS HILL:** So, you don't know your mum and dad's whakapapa, you (inaudible)?
- 30 **MS AK:** No, no, not until this day.
- 31 **MS HILL:** Is that something that would help you feel more closely identified with your Māori
32 side?
- 33 **MS AK:** Yeah.

- 1 **MS COOPER:** But Rachel, as you've said only partly, that's not the full story, is it, because
2 there's sort of greater needs that you have and just being and living day-to-day that are
3 actually of day-to-day and critical importance to you.
- 4 **MS AJ:** Yes.
- 5 **MS COOPER:** It's probably a good point to turn then to what recommendations that you've got.
6 So, like just what you would say about what would have made your lives different, what
7 would have made it positive for you, what would have made a difference in terms of
8 making it better for you as you went through the system? Who wants to start? Rachel.
- 9 **MS AJ:** If the caregivers actually loved us and cared for us and had our best interests in mind.
10 (Inaudible) something on my phone, can I read it?
- 11 **MS COOPER:** Yeah, definitely.
- 12 **MS AJ:** Is it what could have made it better?
- 13 **MS COOPER:** Yeah.
- 14 **MS AJ:** If social workers were making sure we're getting the right entitlements and opportunities
15 as other kids, checking on us, and if the money that CYFS actually gave was spent on us,
16 and if we were treated like we were important and not just a number, and treated like kids
17 that had no place to call home and like a child that needed love, stability and safety. And
18 social workers making sure we were reaching good and positive developmental milestones
19 with the caregivers' inputs, building in other fun activities.
- 20 **MS HILL:** One of the things (inaudible) is making sure you feel important, you are important.
21 By the time you're in care, the whole idea of the legislation around this is that the child is at
22 the centre, that their needs are paramount, you know.
- 23 **MS COOPER:** Well, that had actually been in legislation since 1974, but yeah, certainly by the
24 time you all came to care.
- 25 **MS HILL:** So yeah, that thing about putting you at the centre, do you think --
- 26 **MS COOPER:** Were you at the centre of decision-making?
- 27 **MS AJ:** No.
- 28 **MS HILL:** Would it have changed things do you think?
- 29 **MS AJ:** Yeah, I reckon. If we were like put first and important and valued.
- 30 **MS COOPER:** Jade, any views about what you think would have made things better that you
31 would like to see for children now but just looking at your own experience, what do you
32 think would have made a difference?
- 33 **MS AG:** I agree with everything Rachel said.

1 **MS COOPER:** One thing you emphasise, and I think it's an important one, is that before you are
2 placed with caregivers, there need to be good checks on them first to make sure they're an
3 appropriate person and place for you to go to, and that doesn't seem to have happened with
4 you really anywhere you went, or a lot of places you went.

5 **MS AG:** Yeah. It would be good if they'd be checked properly, thoroughly.

6 **MS COOPER:** Another thing you say, which again I think is a good one, is that in care you
7 should get long-term counselling both while you're in care and after you come out of care.

8 **MS AG:** Definitely.

9 **MS COOPER:** Because you got bits of counselling, didn't you, but not for very long.

10 **MS AG:** Didn't last, yeah, I still needed help, I still needed that counselling.

11 **MS COOPER:** Yeah. The other thing that you talk about is as much as possible keeping your
12 whānau together, your siblings together, because you talk about being broken up and then
13 put back together and then broken up again. So, what was the impact of that for you?

14 **MS AG:** I hated it, I hated being put together and broken up. I think (inaudible) I wanted it to be
15 stable, I wanted to be just settled with my siblings. I thought that's (inaudible) we deserved,
16 I thought that (inaudible), I just wanted us to be family.

17 **MS COOPER:** Peter, you say some of the same thing. So, you also talk about there needing to be
18 in-depth assessments of caregivers and so that there is -also- you talk about the importance
19 of accountability when things go wrong. Can you just talk about that a bit more-?

20 **MR AI:** Yeah, (inaudible) need to be made responsible for, you know, because we're the end
21 result, this is an impact on other people's decisions based on -(inaudible) we're the end
22 result of it and, you know, there should be some accountability, whether it be the social
23 workers or (inaudible-).

24 **MS COOPER:** Another thing that you say, and it's something that we started off with really, is
25 that your thought is that you actually would have been better off with your parents, whether
26 that's with one parent or both parents together, because at least they loved you rather than
27 being taken away and put with essentially strangers. Is that a view you all hold, or do you
28 have some different views around that?

29 One of the things we talked about is just where's whānau and, you know, like where
30 are your koro, where are your uncle and aunties, where are they in all of this, and yes, dad
31 didn't want you to go to this side, but presumably there was mum's side somewhere, so
32 where was whānau in all of this? Do you think that supporting you to stay with mum and
33 dad would have been the best option?

1 **MR AI:** Yeah, resources and support because they're my parents. You know, at the time, it wasn't
2 going to work straight away, but I guess at the time, the amount of years we spent in care, it
3 might have taken that long for my parents to come right, but at least they were getting that
4 support and awhi.

5 **MS COOPER:** Yeah.

6 **MS HILL:** And Tessa, in your statement you talk about the need for social workers to make
7 consistent and frequent visits to kids.

8 **MS AK:** Yeah, I believe that should happen, more frequent visits and without the caregivers being
9 present, at the time when they come to see us or anybody and talk to us away from them as
10 well so that we are not, so- that we can feel comfortable in telling them everything what's
11 going on, if there's things that need to be told-.

12 **MS HILL:** You also talked about needing a better explanation about why you were uplifted, and
13 they came and took you, and you've talked about being forced into that car not knowing
14 why.

15 **MS AK:** Yeah, nobody would tell us anything, like we're just going in blinded. We don't know
16 what's going on. Why couldn't they just come and talk to us together and let us know
17 what's going on, it would have saved us going through all that commotion, running away
18 (inaudible), we just don't know what's going on.

19 **MS HILL:** That was the case a lot of the time, you often talk about not knowing why things were
20 happening. Do you think it would have helped to have someone talk through with you
21 what was happening, why decisions were being made?

22 **MS AK:** Yeah, I think that it would have made us feel more at ease knowing what's going on than
23 not knowing nothing. That's all we went through basically is not knowing anything what's
24 going on.

25 **MS COOPER:** It doesn't sound, listening to you, like you actually got to ever make any decisions
26 yourselves.

27 **MS AK:** Not at all.

28 **MS HILL:** So, you made decisions by running away, didn't you, that was your decisionmaker
29 sometimes.

30 **MS AK:** I just feel like it's as- a child it's your instincts, if somebody comes along, another
31 stranger, and they're going to try and grab you and chuck you in the car, wouldn't you try
32 and do anything to get away from them? I think that's normal to want and do that-.

33 **MS HILL:** And it's obviously a way of being able to control what's happened to you as well.

34 **MS AK:** Yeah.

1 **MS HILL:** The last thing I wanted to talk about, the last recommendation in your statement was
2 incorporating the Treaty of Waitangi into care and making sure that experiences are equal
3 between Pākehā and Māori. If you were all Pākehā, do you think you would have had the
4 same experiences?

5 **MS AK:** Probably not. No, I don't think so. No, definitely not. I reckon we would have been
6 treated way differently if we were Pākehā.

7 **MS HILL:** When you say differently?

8 **MS AK:** To Māoris.

9 **MS COOPER:** If you were Pākehā would you be treated better?

10 **MS AK:** I reckon they would, yeah. Sorry to say that but...

11 **MS HILL:** No, you don't have to apologise.

12 **MS AK:** That's how I feel.

13 **MS HILL:** You don't have to apologise at all.

14 **MS COOPER:** I just have, I- mean it's taken a lot of bravery and courage to come here today and
15 speak, and we know that it's actually been really traumatic for you all. What's your hope,
16 what's your hope by being here? What do you want to say to the Commission and to the
17 people from Oranga Tamariki and the New Zealand public who are listening? What's your
18 hope coming out of this? Tessa, do you want to start? Or shall I come to your last. Rachel,
19 do you have a thought about your hope coming out of this-?

20 **MS AJ:** I hope for better for the younger generations, and I hope for change.

21 **MS COOPER:** What hope do you have for yourself?

22 **MS AJ:** I hope to live a full life and not, what's that word for it? Like live it to the fullest, not
23 have any barriers.

24 **MS COOPER:** Yeah. So, one of the things that's important to you actually as somebody who's
25 come through this care, is that you get the appropriate supports now that you need to live
26 your life to the fullest.

27 **MS AJ:** Yes.

28 **MS COOPER:** Jade, anything you want to add to that? What would you like to say to those who
29 have listened to you today?

30 **MS AG:** If they really listen and take note of all of our stories, hopefully it changes things
31 (inaudible) about the system, generation now or the next generations, they never suffer
32 (inaudible) any of those troubles.

33 **MS COOPER:** Peter?

34 **MR AI:** Yeah, probably the same (inaudible), so learn from your mistakes, (inaudible).

1 **MS COOPER:** Anything else you want to add? It's all right, you don't have to. That's all I think
2 we want to ask you now. You know that maybe some of the Commissioners have some
3 questions for you, so, yeah, if we can leave you in the hands of the Commissioners.

4 **MS HILL:** If I can say first before we hand you over to the Commissioners is that we've talked a
5 lot about the harm to you today and the things that you need to heal, but you've also been
6 inspirational and you've been courageous and you've held yourselves with dignity today, so
7 I really hope you're proud of yourselves today.

8 **MS AK:** Thank you.

9 **MS AG:** Thank you.

10 **MS HILL:** The Commissioners will have a chat with you now.

11 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Thank you Ms Hill and Ms Cooper, and to -- ngā mihi nui e te
12 whānau (I want to thank you to whānau), absolutely inspirational, totally tautoko. And as
13 tangata whenua I can say that you absolutely belong. Don't ever believe otherwise, your
14 ancestors have been with you, I think that's where this strength and resilience has come
15 from.

16 But I have asked my other Commissioners and there are no questions other than
17 Commissioner Erueti who is also going to thank you on our behalf. So, I'm just going to
18 pass you to Commissioner Erueti, kei a koe te wā (you have this time).

19 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Kia ora te Heamana. Kei te mihi atu ki a koutou me o koutou
20 kōrero māia e takoha mai. (Thank you Madam Chair. I want to acknowledge you and your
21 submission). My name's Anaru, I just wanted to ask you about,- there's so many questions,
22 but I think in the evidence that you've given to us that we've covered a whole lot of things
23 and you've explained so clearly to me many of the fundamental problems that we have with
24 the foster care system-.

25 I did want to ask about your views about reporting, mandatory reporting where people in
26 positions of responsibility for tamariki are compelled to report when they are aware of harm
27 or abuse. Because I've noticed from your evidence there was, I think there was, it- might
28 have been you, Peter, or one of your sisters who had the stitches and went to see the doctor
29 and the doctor didn't report that. And I know that several of you have, -it's- been clear to
30 your teachers that you've been harmed, and they didn't report it to the authorities about
31 what was happening-.

32 So, I wanted to ask you collectively about what you thought about the need to ensure that,
33 or even those whānau attached to the marae who saw you there working constantly and
34 didn't and- as you said, turned a blind eye to all the mahi that you were doing, about

1 whether there's a need to ensure that when abuse is seen that it's reported immediately to
2 the authorities?-

3 **MS COOPER:** So, what the question is, is do you think that somebody who sees abuse should
4 have to report that abuse?

5 **MS AG:** Absolutely, yeah.

6 **MS AK:** Definitely.

7 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Yeah, okay. So, on behalf of the Inquiry, I want to thank you all e
8 te whānau for coming and giving your evidence to us and for your courage and persistence
9 and dedication. In your evidence there was the- information you provided to us today has a
10 whole lot of important themes and messages for the Inquiry that we will take with us when
11 we prepare our reports with recommendations to the State. They include the Kaupapa we
12 just spoke about reporting, but also about the need to vet caregivers, to evaluate caregivers
13 to make sure that they're capable of caring for tamariki, that there's proper complaint
14 processes available for tamariki so that you feel safe about talking about your experiences
15 in care, that there's proper oversight of the caregivers and the mahi that you're doing. And
16 we saw with the home where, even though CYFS was aware for over a year that you were
17 being beaten, there was nothing done about it, and you remained in the care of those two
18 caregivers. The need to ensure that you have good access to proper counselling support,
19 both while you're in care but after care as well. Your views that you just felt that you were
20 being- were- a means of making income for some of the people who were caring for you.
21 The way you were treated, as you put it, as slaves while you worked for, in particular
22 that- whānau, getting up in the middle of the night to do all these chores to keep that farm
23 going, doing work on the marae.

24 These are all important Kaupapa that we hear, particularly in our private sessions
25 for those who have been in the foster care system, and also the disconnect that you feel with
26 your iwi and your hapū and your whānau. And perhaps most fundamentally, the fact that
27 during the time that you were in care you were never valued and loved and shown the care
28 and love that you deserved, each and every one of you.

29 So on behalf of the Inquiry, thank you for your time and for sharing with us, and
30 I just want to say it's been very valuable to the Inquiry and it's something that we will take
31 to heart and will inspire us as we reflect upon the changes that need to be made to ensure
32 that tamariki now in care are safe and those who have suffered abuse receive proper, robust,
33 holistic redress.

1 Nō reira, ngā manaakitanga ki runga ki a koutou me o koutou whānau, ngā mihi
2 mahana ki a koutou. (Take care of yourselves and your whānau and warm
3 acknowledgements to you all).

4 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Yes, definitely tautoko that. We're going to now have a
5 waiata, so we'll just cut over to our beautiful choir. (Waiata Tai Aroha).

6 Ngā mihi (thank you). Mr Snelgar. Aroha mai, Mr Snelgar. Every day I will be
7 getting one name wrong, today I have to apologise, it has been yours.

8 **MR SNELGAR:** No that's fine, I think that's the least of our worries today, Madam Chair.

9 I wonder if we could just take a five minute adjournment to prepare for our next witness,
10 Glenda Maihi.

11 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Yes, I think that's a good idea, we'll be back in 5 minutes,
12 thank you.