

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY  
CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL CARE HEARING**

**Under** The Inquiries Act 2013

**In the matter of** The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions

**Royal Commission:** Judge Coral Shaw (Chair)  
Dr Andrew Erueti  
Ali'imua Sandra Alofivae

**Counsel:** Ms Anne Toohey, Mr Simon Mount QC, Ms Kerry Beaton,  
Mr Kingi Snelgar, Mr Simon Waalkens and Ms Julia Spelman  
for the Royal Commission  
Ms Rachael Schmidt-McCleave and Ms Julia White for the  
Crown  
Ms Katie Lane for a survivor  
Mr Stone and Ms Watene for survivors

**Venue:** Level 2  
Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry  
414 Khyber Pass Road  
AUCKLAND

**Date:** 3-11 May 2021

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**TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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1 **6 MAY 2021**

2 **[10.02 am]**

3 **Hearing opens with karakia tīmatanga and waiata by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei**

4 **GWYNETH VICKI BEARD**

5 **CHAIR:** Tēnā ra tatou katoa, nau mai hoki mai ki tēnei huihuinga i tēnei ra. Ata mārīe.

6 A. Kia ora.

7 **Q.** Kia ora. Before we start properly, it's Gwyneth, isn't it?

8 A. Āe.

9 **Q.** May I call you Gwyneth?

10 A. Āe.

11 **Q.** Thank you. I'm just going to ask you to take the affirmation then we'll start properly with  
12 our formalities, is that all right with you?

13 A. Yes.

14 **Q.** All right then. Gwyneth, do you solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that the  
15 evidence you will give before this Commission will be the truth, the whole truth and  
16 nothing but the truth?

17 A. I do.

18 **Q.** Thank you.

19 A. Thank you.

20 **Q.** Thank you, Ms Toohey. I believe there will be a mihi. Mō te Kōmihana.

21 **MR SNELGAR:** Tēnā tatou katoa i tēnei whare. Tēnā koe Gwyneth huri noa ki ngā whaea, me  
22 ngā rangatira, e ngā mana wahine kua tāe mai ki mua I te aroaro o tēnei Kōmihana noku te  
23 hōnore ki a tū poto ki te mihi atu ki a koutou, i raro i te aroha, i raro i tō korowai aroha kua  
24 tae mai. Just a short mihi to you on behalf of the Commission and those that have come  
25 here to tautoko you for your kōrero today, noku nei te mihi, kia ora.

26 A. Kia ora.

27 **CHAIR:** Tēnā koe.

28 **MS TOOHEY:** Kia ora, Gwyneth, do you want to start with a mihi of your own?

29 A. Kia ora koutou. Ko Hikurangi te maunga, ko Waiapu te awa, ko Te Whānau o Ruataupare  
30 te hapū, ko Ngāti Porou te iwi. Ko Gwyneth Beard tōku ingoa. Kia ora.

31 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tēnā koe.

32 **CHAIR:** Thank you Ms Toohey.

33 **MS TOOHEY:** Gwyneth, you're wearing a korowai today, do you want to tell us about that  
34 before you start?

1 A. I'd like to invite Ariana Mataki to have a kōrero on this. It's very important to know why  
2 I'm wearing this today.

3 **CHAIR:** Kia koe Ariana. Kōrero mai.

4 **MS MATAKI:** Kia ora whānau, koutou. Just in regards to the korowai that Whaea Piwi is  
5 wearing, one taonga amongst many taonga that Whaea Piwi is wearing today to manaaki  
6 her and protect her. But this korowai is actually a whānau heirloom, it belongs to our Taua  
7 Kiwa, and this korowai was gifted to her from the Women's Refuge movement at the time  
8 that she also had received the Queen's Service medal. So it is our whānau honour and  
9 privilege that Whaea Piwi wears this today to recognise her as a rangatira and also our  
10 whakapapa to Ruataupare.

11 **CHAIR:** Kia ora Ariana. Before you start, I'm concerned about to ingoa. I've got you down here  
12 as Gwyneth Vicki Beard.

13 A. Āe.

14 **Q.** But I'm hearing you something quite possibly a little closer to you, and I'm wondering if  
15 you'd prefer us to refer to you that way?

16 A. As Piwi or Gwyneth.

17 **Q.** Which do you prefer?

18 A. Either/either, I don't mind.

19 **Q.** I'm going to call you Piwi --

20 A. Thank you.

21 **Q.** -- because that's your Māori name, if that's all right?

22 A. Āe, kia ora.

23 **CHAIR:** Thank you Ms Toohey.

24 **QUESTIONING BY MS TOOHEY:** Piwi, I want to talk to you first about your whānau. Your  
25 father I think is Welsh?

26 A. Āe.

27 **Q.** And your mother Ngāti Porou?

28 A. Āe.

29 **Q.** And you yourself have had seven children?

30 A. Yes.

31 **Q.** And 36 mokopuna?

32 A. Āe.

33 **Q.** I want to talk to you about your early life growing up first. But before I do that, your  
34 current work as well which is relevant to the work of the Commission. Until recently you

1 were on the governance board of Te Whare Hauora?

2 A. Āe.

3 Q. The Māori Women's Refuge?

4 A. I was, yes.

5 Q. Also you work now under the kaupapa of Tūpono Te Mana Tangata?

6 A. Āe.

7 Q. Can you tell us about that work?

8 A. Tūpono Te Mana Tangata extended from the kaupapa of Tūpono Te Mana Kaha o te  
9 Whānau which was an incentive by Whaea Kiwa Hutchinson, Ta Mark Solomon and our  
10 beautiful Dame Tariana Turia. And in 2016 we travelled all over the motu, the South  
11 Island, Te Waipounamu, taking the kaupapa Tūpono Te Mana Kaha o te Whānau to each  
12 marae and giving, allowing whānau to have voices so that they were able to come out with  
13 their own solutions and that.

14 And out of that Tūpono Mana Tangata come through my own whānau being able  
15 to find a pathway to autonomy. So now five years later we have an agency, this agency is  
16 Tūpono Mana Tangata and it consists of about 11 kaimahi and they're all volunteers, and  
17 we work in the arena of advocating for whānau in Oranga Tamariki domestic violence,  
18 suicide, sexual abuse, MSD and homelessness. And it's successful and I'm very proud of it  
19 and I'm kaiwhakahaere of that organisation.

20 Q. Do you want to tell us about your father being Welsh and how he came to New Zealand?

21 A. My dad was in the World War II, he signed on older than what he was and he fought in  
22 World War II and then he joined the Merchant Navy after the war and came to  
23 New Zealand, and he was one of them that jumped ship in Greymouth and came through to  
24 Ōtautahi to Christchurch and then went to Port Levy, Koukourāata and he was whāngai by  
25 my Pouā Poi in Port Levy, and then he went up north as a milkman and worked in Ruatoria  
26 and met my mum up in Ruatoria.

27 Q. And he spoke Te Reo Māori, didn't he?

28 A. He did with a Welsh accent.

29 Q. And you came to know later in life obviously something about the circumstances when you  
30 were born --

31 A. Āe.

32 Q. -- to your mother and father. Do you want to talk about that?

33 A. Yeah, so I am the fourth child out of eight and my dad was working out -- so he was still  
34 doing Merchant Navy, and he -- apparently while he was away for six months he came

1 back and mum was seven months pregnant with me. I don't know the circumstances  
2 around it, but he didn't believe I was his and there was domestic violence and I was born  
3 through my mum being thrown into a chicken coop and, yeah, I was seven months, I was  
4 two month's prem, yeah.

5 **Q.** And I think that your aunty later intervened?

6 **A.** Yes.

7 **Q.** And that changed everything, didn't it?

8 **A.** Apparently I was left up the hospital, I'm not sure, but my dad wouldn't come and see me  
9 and my aunty went and told my dad that I'm the image of him, and I am, and my dad came  
10 up the hospital and seen me and, yeah, and spent every day of his life trying to make up for  
11 it, yeah.

12 **Q.** You were quite close to him?

13 **A.** Very close, yes.

14 **Q.** Can you remember what sort of work he did when you were growing up?

15 **A.** My dad worked on the wharf in Lyttelton until the strikes and then he worked on the  
16 Railways, but most of my life he worked at Dunlop.

17 **Q.** Was he doing -- was he on shift work?

18 **A.** He did, he worked most nights, most nights he worked, night shifts.

19 **Q.** What about your own mother, what was your relationship like with her?

20 **A.** My mum, when I was a child, was quite violent. She was very abusive and would tell me  
21 every day that she wished I wasn't born and would be quite verbally and physically violent  
22 towards me. And I didn't have a relationship with my mother at that stage.

23 **Q.** I think you later found out that her own upbringing had been difficult?

24 **A.** Yeah. So, you know, when I was in my 40s, I had to find out why my mother was the way  
25 she was towards me and found out that her own upbringing was very traumatic. She lost  
26 her mother when she was 18 months old and so she -- I wouldn't say she didn't know how  
27 to love, because out of the eight children there were five of them she chose to love, three of  
28 us she didn't. So -- but I realised why she was the way she was and I forgave her, I went to  
29 her and forgave her for the life that I had had as a child.

30 **Q.** I think your own early life, as you've said in your statement, am I putting it right to say that  
31 this was characterised by violence in the home?

32 **A.** It was, it was. I can't remember any good memories as a child, yeah.

33 **Q.** I think you went to primary school and intermediate school in Ōtautahi?

34 **A.** Yes, I did.

- 1 **Q.** Did you have some problems, dyslexia problems looking back on it at school?
- 2 **A.** I totally, now that I look back at it I thought -- because I see the same problems in my  
3 children and my mokopuna and I'm like it was me, that was me, yes.
- 4 **Q.** I want to talk to you now about Māori culture in your home growing up.
- 5 **A.** Mmm.
- 6 **Q.** Was your mother a native Te Reo Māori speaker, by that I mean did she grow up speaking  
7 Māori?
- 8 **A.** Absolutely, I never learned this until later on in my life that she could kōrero Māori.
- 9 **Q.** Did she speak Māori to you at home?
- 10 **A.** No.
- 11 **Q.** Why do you think that was for her?
- 12 **A.** I remember one incident that my mother said that -- said it was better for us to be Pākehā,  
13 that it's no good for us to be Māori, that we would get further in life if we go on our father's  
14 side than Māori side. She always said to us "Don't end up with a Māori."
- 15 **Q.** Had your mother gone to university?
- 16 **A.** She did.
- 17 **Q.** How did that happen?
- 18 **A.** Years ago, like I'm talking about 40s, 50s, maybe the 50s, 40s, that your hapū would pay  
19 for certain ones in the iwi to go to Queen Vic, or St Stephen's and that and my mother was  
20 one of those chosen to go to Queen Vic.
- 21 **Q.** Did anything happen to her there in terms of speaking Te Reo Māori?
- 22 **A.** Yes.
- 23 **Q.** What was that?
- 24 **A.** She spoke of when they weren't even allowed to say kia ora, they weren't allowed to speak  
25 Māori and she spoke of getting the duster thrown at them, getting the strap and hit across  
26 the knuckles if they even let one word come out, like even the word āe.
- 27 **Q.** At university?
- 28 **A.** At university, at Queen Victoria.
- 29 **Q.** So did you learn Te Reo Māori in the home?
- 30 **A.** Through my dad, through my dad with a Welsh accent. I quite liked that, you know,  
31 because we were criticised because we spoke -- said the words wrong, so, yeah.
- 32 **Q.** Growing up what was it like for you at school being Māori?
- 33 **A.** I don't have good memories of the school. We were -- it was quite a racial upbringing.  
34 I went to Wainoni school in Aranui and the children there, some of the teachers -- one of

1 the well-known words I was called was "black maggot" and "fleas". So my memory of  
2 going to school wasn't good, yeah.

3 **Q.** How did you feel about being Māori as a child?

4 **A.** I couldn't understand it because I didn't know I was Māori. I didn't know I was Māori,  
5 yeah.

6 **Q.** Was there any violence at school towards you?

7 **A.** Yes.

8 **Q.** Tell us about that?

9 **A.** My brother and I used to be coming home from school and get picked on but we were too  
10 scared to fight back because if we did we'd get a hiding when we got home, so we just  
11 endured it, yeah. Sorry.

12 **Q.** It's all right.

13 **A.** Yeah, so we just endured it and just found another way to walk home, yeah.

14 **Q.** I think when you were at school was there a time when one of the teachers cut your hair?

15 **A.** I was out Chisnallwood Intermediate then and that was quite a -- very -- out that time very  
16 racial. I had a teacher there that would, yeah, just constantly pick on me. And now that  
17 I look back on it, it was with racial tones, you know, and I went to school one time because  
18 I didn't have a rubber band for my hair and a teacher there, one of the senior teachers cut  
19 my hair and, yeah, because I didn't have it tied back.

20 **Q.** I want to talk to you now about what happened to you as a child outside of the home.

21 **A.** That's all right.

22 **Q.** So I think that there was a person who used to come to your house who knew your family  
23 when you were between about 5 and 8?

24 **A.** Yeah.

25 **Q.** Do you want to tell us about that?

26 **A.** So we used to -- so actually it was -- we used to go to their place to stay a lot and he used to  
27 sexually abuse me, yeah. And it went on for a few years.

28 **Q.** Did you -- I think he was also young, a child, was he, but older than you?

29 **A.** Yeah. There was an incident that I kept locked away, I call them boxes, and if anyone  
30 understands being a survivor. Can I just take a minute?

31 **CHAIR:** Please do.

32 **A.** So -- sorry.

33 **QUESTIONING BY MS TOOHEY CONTINUED:** Don't apologise.

34 **A.** So I remember when I was 5 and we were out this house and they were having a party and I

1 don't know why I know I was 5, but there was alcohol and I know I don't like alcohol  
2 because of it, not top shelf alcohol, and there was an adult and there was my abuser, it was  
3 a male adult, and -- yeah. And then it was after that that the male, the older child continued  
4 to abuse me.

5 **Q.** Was there anyone at the time that you felt like you could go to for help with that?

6 **A.** No. No. No, and the reason why I didn't was because nobody was helping me when I was  
7 home.

8 **Q.** Did they eventually move away when you were about 8 or 9?

9 **A.** No. I stopped going over, yeah. And -- yeah.

10 **Q.** I think that person later in life asked for your forgiveness for what happened?

11 **A.** Yeah, he came to me when we were in our 30s and I think I was in my 20s, he was in his  
12 30s, and he came to me and asked me for forgiveness, and explained to me why he done  
13 what he done and I loved him, he was, you know, he was -- to me he was whānau even  
14 though he wasn't related, he was whānau, and I understood what he was telling me and I  
15 had to ask him to make sure at that age that there were no other victims. And in some kind  
16 of way I was a bit upset that I was the only one, yeah. But I forgave him and he passed  
17 away not long ago, yeah. He told me that because he was being abused by a male that what  
18 he was doing to me in his kind of way was to justify he wasn't homosexual. So doesn't help  
19 me, sorry.

20 **Q.** Piwi, I think unfortunately there was also another time in your life not long after that from  
21 when you were about 8 until about 10 or 11 where someone else was sexually abusing  
22 you --

23 **A.** Yes.

24 **Q.** -- at another home, is that right?

25 **A.** Yeah. So I would, rather than get the hidings and the beatings I was getting at home, I  
26 would go and stay somewhere else and endure being sexually abused because -- doesn't  
27 sound logical now, within the head of this little girl; it was better to endure, to go through  
28 that than to be home and beaten. And I don't mean just a slap across the face, I mean to be  
29 brutally beaten. I would rather endure going and staying somewhere else and being  
30 sexually abused.

31 **CHAIR:** Whaea, would you like to take a break?

32 **A.** Yes please.

33 **Q.** I thought you might. Let's just take it.

34 **A.** Thank you.

**Adjournment from 10.27 am to 10.49 am**

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**CHAIR:** Okay?

A. Āe, kei te pai.

**Q.** Thank you.

**QUESTIONING BY MS TOOHEY CONTINUED:** Piwi, we were talking before the break about that issue and I think we've covered it. Is there anything more that you want to say about what happened there?

A. On the abuse?

**Q.** Mmm.

A. Kei te pai, it's all right, thank you.

**Q.** When you were around 10 or 11, did you start to run away from home?

A. Āe, yes, I did, yeah, I used to run away more in when I started going to intermediate and I'd run away and stay wherever I could. One of my places I would go to was a friend of mine that lived on our street way up the other end and in their driveway they had a broken down car and that would be -- I called that home, yeah.

**Q.** What did you do for food when you were living there?

A. I would just go to friends' houses or, I'll be honest, or I would go to the shops and steal it, yeah.

**Q.** And this is when you were 10, 11?

A. About 11, yeah.

**Q.** What was happening with school, did you manage to still go to school?

A. I still went to school, even when I was living in my car, yeah.

**Q.** And did the teachers ever make any comment on your appearance or how you looked when you got to school?

A. That's when my hair was cut because I didn't have a rubber band for my hair and it was more, I was just -- thought it was cool I was still going to school and didn't really understand some of the comments of, you know, your uniform's dirty or stuff like that, or your hair's just, you know. A lot of things that I just couldn't explain to people why I was in the state I was, but nobody helped me. They just -- yeah.

**Q.** Is there anyone you felt at school you could ask for help, a teacher or anyone like that?

A. No, no, there was this Mrs Wood, she was lovely and -- but not on these kind of things, she was just really good to be in her presence.

**Q.** Did you ever try and reach out to your father who you were close to when you were running away?

- 1 A. No, no. I was -- yeah, I don't know why, I think I was scared of the repercussions from the  
2 rest of -- from my mother and that, yeah.
- 3 Q. Was there one time when the Police picked you up when you were running away?  
4 A. They picked me up quite a few times, yeah, there was this one time when the constable  
5 picked me up, it was always the same one, and I told him what happened, was happening to  
6 me.
- 7 Q. In terms of what was happening at home or what was happening elsewhere?  
8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. About the beatings?  
10 A. About the hidings I was getting and everything, and he just told me that I need a kick up the  
11 backside and I should stay home, yeah.
- 12 Q. How did that make you feel, Piwi?  
13 A. Like I had no-one, that it was my fault.
- 14 Q. At some stage in this time did your father go back to Wales when his mother was sick?  
15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. Did that have any impact on what was happening to you at home?  
17 A. It did. And my mind's a bit hazy here, but I remember the first day when we dropped him  
18 off at the airport and it was within the hour of him leaving that my sister beat me up and  
19 told me I didn't have my dad to protect me anymore, and I run and then I ended up being  
20 taken home and I -- in my recollection my mum took me to Strathmore and left me there.
- 21 Q. And how old do you think you were when that happened?  
22 A. I was still in Form One, so I was 11, 12.
- 23 Q. You were born in 1961, weren't you?  
24 A. Yes.
- 25 Q. I think your file records that you were placed on supervision for a year during 1974 but you  
26 think you were in care before then, don't you?  
27 A. I know I was, yeah, yeah.
- 28 Q. So moving on to Strathmore --  
29 A. Yes.
- 30 Q. And what happened there. Had your mother told you what was happening before she took  
31 you there?  
32 A. No, I was called an absconder, so when -- that's what, from my understanding, was why I  
33 was put in what I call incarceration is because I was an absconder, yeah.
- 34 Q. You call it incarceration?

- 1 A. Yeah.
- 2 Q. Because of the way the homes worked?
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 Q. We'll come to that in a minute.
- 5 A. Yeah.
- 6 Q. So do you think your father was here in Ōtautahi when that happened or was he away in  
7 Wales?
- 8 A. He was away in Wales, yes.
- 9 Q. And I think when he came back, he tried to get you out, did he?
- 10 A. He did.
- 11 Q. Was that possible or not?
- 12 A. No. I had already been made a ward of the State.
- 13 Q. I think your file records that was on 29 May 1975.
- 14 A. Okay. It doesn't work out, but, yeah, yeah so --
- 15 Q. But whatever the reason he was unsuccessful?
- 16 A. He was, yeah.
- 17 Q. Can you tell us about -- do you remember what happened when you first got to Strathmore  
18 in terms of what happened with your clothes first of all?
- 19 A. I remember when I got there we were taken -- I was taken upstairs to this room and it had  
20 all these clothes in it and I was given a pair of rompers, a bra and a shirt.
- 21 Q. What happened to your clothes?
- 22 A. I don't know.
- 23 Q. How did you feel having to take your clothes off and take these clothes out of the room?
- 24 A. Rompers associated me with sports, because that's what we used to wear, and  
25 I just -- I found out that it was while you were in the cells you had to wear the rompers. So  
26 yeah, it was just -- yeah.
- 27 Q. And then what happened to you after you put the clothes on?
- 28 A. I was taken down to the cells.
- 29 Q. Can you tell us about that, how many cells were there, do you remember?
- 30 A. I remember Strathmore cells very clearly. There were three and a bathroom next door,  
31 bathroom and toilet and they had solid doors with just a window like a port hole on a ship,  
32 and there was just, in the room was just nothing but a bed and, you know, bedding and a  
33 little window right up the top, you had to stand on your bed and kind of jump to look out  
34 the window. Nothing else.

- 1 **Q.** Did anyone explain to you what was happening when you were put in there?
- 2 **A.** No.
- 3 **Q.** Was the door to the cell locked after they --
- 4 **A.** Continuously.
- 5 **Q.** How did you use the toilet that was outside?
- 6 **A.** You had to ring a bell but most of the time knocked on the door, because they didn't come  
7 when the bell was rung.
- 8 **Q.** And did they come when you rang the bell?
- 9 **A.** If we were lucky, if they heard us, if there was someone down in the secure part, yeah.
- 10 **Q.** What about food, do you remember what happened with food while you were in there?
- 11 **A.** We were brought in a tray with our food on it, and then, yeah, it was brought to us and then  
12 picked up after we'd eaten.
- 13 **Q.** Did you get to go out during the day of the cell?
- 14 **A.** No, no.
- 15 **Q.** What was there to do in there, was there any books?
- 16 **A.** They offered you books and the books were like novels. So if you were someone like me  
17 that didn't really know how to read properly, it wasn't that great, and it was really awesome  
18 if you got a book that had pictures in it, yeah.
- 19 **Q.** Was there anyone when you were in the cell when you first got there who was kind to you  
20 from the staff?
- 21 **A.** Not actually in the cells because in Strathmore there were no staff in that area, they were  
22 still up in the house, and it was only the night staff there'd be someone that was there during  
23 the night. But in the house there was -- there was a beautiful staff member there, yeah,  
24 Mrs Akui.
- 25 **Q.** How long do you think you were in the cells for when you first got there?
- 26 **A.** I think it was, you had to stay there until you had your smear test.
- 27 **Q.** And do you think that would have been -- how long do you think, a day, days?
- 28 **A.** I can remember it was always Tuesdays they had the smear tests, so it was whatever day  
29 you came in to wait for the smear test and I can't remember how long I was in there for. At  
30 the first, at the beginning, it could have been just days, the first time, yeah.
- 31 **Q.** And how did you react, what was happening for you in the cells in your own mind?
- 32 **A.** In Strathmore? It was like I'd been locked up, I was only a child and I look out my mokos  
33 now and wonder if anyone locked my mokos up at that age there's no rationality behind it  
34 that you should be locking children up. And I wasn't a monster, I might have been a

- 1 monster in the created but I wasn't a monster to be locked up, to be locked up, yeah.
- 2 **Q.** You mentioned the smear test.
- 3 **A.** Yes.
- 4 **Q.** So what did you understand the purpose of that was, were you told why you needed to have  
5 that before you got out to the house and out of the cells?
- 6 **A.** No, the first time I remember it clearly is as it was yesterday, we were told we were going  
7 to have a medical examination that you had to have when you went into Strathmore, and  
8 I walked into this room, so you walk up from the cells out the stairs and you go into the  
9 gym and there's a little room on the side and you walk in and there's this table with stirrups  
10 on it, with, you know, what you put your legs on, and just a desk and the doctor and the  
11 staff member who's always been there when the medicals were done.
- 12 **Q.** Was it always the same staff member?
- 13 **A.** Same staff member, yeah.
- 14 **Q.** And without mentioning the name of that first doctor, do you want to tell us what  
15 happened? Did they tell you first of all that the medical examination, what it was going to  
16 be?
- 17 **A.** No, not until they told you you had to take your pants off. There was no screen, no nothing  
18 for you to put on, you had to just drop your rompers and your underwear and hop on the  
19 table. I was only 12, yeah.
- 20 **Q.** And what was the role of the staff member, do you remember what she did? Was it a she?
- 21 **A.** It was a she. As far as I'm concerned she was just there to hold you down, yeah.
- 22 **Q.** And then what happened?
- 23 **A.** And then your legs were placed on the stirrups and, you know, I fought, I didn't know what  
24 was going on, and they had these straps that they put over your legs on each side, and then  
25 the female staff member would hold your shoulders down and kind of basically tell you to  
26 stop it, the sooner you just give in the sooner it was finished. And after a while you kind of  
27 learned that.
- 28 But what they done was -- you don't do that to 12 year olds, you don't. And I was  
29 examined and first I was just told that they were going to lubricate me, so that that big steel  
30 thing could be put in for them to do a smear and I was lubricated with fingers and that big  
31 steel thing was put inside of me and then they done a smear. I was 12 years old.
- 32 **Q.** Was anything said, do you remember, during that first examination that year?
- 33 **A.** Very clearly. I was then -- it was then said between the doctor and the staff member "She's  
34 sexually active." I was sexually abused and that sits with me every day. Sorry. Yeah.

- 1 **Q.** Did anyone ask you --
- 2 **A.** No.
- 3 **Q.** -- about whether you'd been abused?
- 4 **A.** I couldn't understand, I was 12 years old, 12. How can anyone at 12 years old be sexually
- 5 active? And the assumption was I was sexually active, and why no-one actually asked had
- 6 anything ever happened to me because I would have just went blah and told them what
- 7 happened. But that statement sat with me and stopped me from talking about it to anyone, I
- 8 was too scared, yeah.
- 9 **Q.** You said a moment ago that you learned to cooperate effectively?
- 10 **A.** Yeah.
- 11 **Q.** How many of these do you think you had to have?
- 12 **A.** In Strathmore, every time we went out and stayed away overnight, so every time you
- 13 absconded you came back and you had to have a smear, or every time you went away for
- 14 weekend leave you came back you had to have a smear.
- 15 **Q.** Did they tell you why?
- 16 **A.** Because you might have a sexual disease, and that's the reason why.
- 17 **Q.** I think that you were in Strathmore for quite a long time up until 1977, is that right?
- 18 **A.** Yeah.
- 19 **Q.** Do you remember being there for quite a few years?
- 20 **A.** I do, I do. I remember being in Form One and going through to -- because I actually told
- 21 them I was older than I was because you're allowed to smoke, sorry, and I pretended to be
- 22 older so I could smoke and, yeah, and they found out I wasn't that old when they let my
- 23 mum know I was going for a job, and they -- my mum said she shouldn't be going for a job,
- 24 she's only 13. So they stopped me smoking. Sorry, it's silly, but yeah.
- 25 **Q.** You mentioned in your evidence another doctor --
- 26 **A.** Yes.
- 27 **Q.** -- towards the end of your time in care --
- 28 **A.** Yeah.
- 29 **Q.** -- who I think had some medical examinations of you.
- 30 **A.** Yes.
- 31 **Q.** Dr Fahey?
- 32 **A.** Dr Fahey, yes.
- 33 **Q.** And do you want to tell us what happened with Dr Fahey in those examinations?
- 34 **A.** You know, when you're being sexually abused you don't know what's right or wrong, when

1 people are touching you down that area. But it wasn't until years later that when I got a  
2 normal doctor and he didn't do those things that I realised that what Dr Fahey was doing  
3 was wrong. He was touching me in places, he was inserting his fingers inside of me, and to  
4 lubricate me and I didn't even know that was wrong to the fact that I actually had him as a  
5 doctor while I was pregnant with my child, so yeah.

6 **Q.** What about during those examinations, was there the same female staff member you  
7 mentioned present?

8 **A.** It was, yes.

9 **Q.** Do you think she would have been aware of what was happening?

10 **A.** I honestly know she was aware, she was very aware of what was happening, yes, because it  
11 wasn't as if he was hiding what he was doing.

12 **Q.** Did she ever do anything to try and help --

13 **A.** No.

14 **Q.** -- or stop this from happening?

15 **A.** No.

16 **Q.** Did you later hear what happened with Dr Fahey, that he was charged?

17 **A.** Yes, later, yeah.

18 **Q.** Not in relation to you but in relation to others?

19 **A.** Yes.

20 **Q.** Did this experience with these examinations have an impact on health checks for you later  
21 in life?

22 **A.** They did. I wouldn't go in for smears, I refused to. I just didn't want to be in that -- have  
23 them done, and that traumatised me, and when I did find a doctor I really trusted and he  
24 started doing the regular smear tests it was found I had abnormal cells and I had to go -- I  
25 had to have a biopsy and have my cervix removed and then I had to have a hysterectomy,  
26 years later.

27 **Q.** How long did it take you to find a doctor you trusted?

28 **A.** When I was pregnant with my second child, so it would have been in the early 80s, yeah.

29 **Q.** You've talked about that first time in secure.

30 **A.** Yeah.

31 **Q.** Apart from these issues, how did your time at Strathmore go, what did you experience there  
32 generally?

33 **A.** It was -- how could you put it, it was survival of the fittest. So you had to learn to survive  
34 in there, or you would be eaten alive. So while I was in Strathmore I learned to survive.

- 1 I ran away a lot, I ran away, any chance I could get I would abscond. I wanted to go home.
- 2 **Q.** Despite the beatings and things you'd had at home?
- 3 **A.** It says a lot about where I was then eh, you know, I'd run away from home to go get  
4 sexually abused, and then where I was I'd run away from there to get home and would  
5 rather be beaten. So that explains a lot, so -- I just couldn't understand why I was being in  
6 this -- I couldn't understand why I was being punished for adult things, yeah.
- 7 **Q.** I think one time you ran away for about a month?
- 8 **A.** I did, yes.
- 9 **Q.** And where were you during that month?
- 10 **A.** I lived on the streets. I sometimes would go around to one of my sister's or find my  
11 brother, but most of the times I lived on the street.
- 12 **Q.** And what would happen, how would the running away time end?
- 13 **A.** Going back into Strathmore into the cells and the normal time was two weeks you'd spend  
14 in the cells if you absconded, but then it depended, all depended on -- yeah.
- 15 **Q.** Did you have any recreation, any exercise or anything when you were in the cells?
- 16 **A.** No, I can't remember any of that at Strathmore, yeah.
- 17 **Q.** What about schooling when you were in the cells?
- 18 **A.** No, no you never went to -- you never got any schooling while you were in the cells in  
19 Strathmore.
- 20 **Q.** What impact do you think that had on your mental health being in the cells for two weeks?
- 21 **A.** Well, in Strathmore I just couldn't -- yeah, it was 24 hours a day locked up and by then I  
22 was about 12, 13, 14, you know, continuously. And, yeah, you just think you're bad and  
23 you get to a point where you believe that you deserve it. And sometimes it was actually  
24 better to be in the cells than up in the house. It's really hard to explain, yeah.
- 25 **Q.** Did something happen there soon after you got there that made you feel unsafe with the  
26 other children?
- 27 **A.** Yes, when I was younger. And I wasn't the only victim of this, there were a couple of girls  
28 and it was like an initiative when you went in.
- 29 **Q.** Like an initiation kind of?
- 30 **A.** I don't know what you'd call it, I called it rape but there were two girls, they were older and  
31 I didn't understand why they were on the other side of the house and we were down in the  
32 dorms, because you went into dorms and you worked your way up. I always wondered  
33 why they were on the other side of the house. We used to think that side was haunted.  
34 Yeah. I don't know, maybe it's in their records why they had to be kept away from us, but

1 those two girls came into my room one night, held me down and done things that shouldn't  
2 be done by women or anyone. And I swore from that time on that nobody will go through  
3 what I went through, and when new ones come in I'd just kind of make sure that those girls  
4 kept away from them, yeah.

5 **Q.** What ethnicity were most of the children there, do you remember?

6 **A.** Māori, yeah, in Strathmore.

7 **Q.** What about Pacific Island children?

8 **A.** No, not -- I can't remember any. I think I had -- there were two, two of my friends that  
9 were Pacific whanaunga, but majority were Māori.

10 **Q.** And were there any other issues with any of the other girls there in your time at  
11 Strathmore?

12 **A.** I have to say that when you're in an environment like that it's a dog eat dog world and if  
13 you -- you don't -- if you're not able to look after yourself it's quite dangerous, so I became  
14 quite, you know, I became quite strong so that nobody could harm me and that, so -- but,  
15 yeah, it was a -- it was a really strange environment to be in. It was an environment of  
16 survival and that's what it was. There was no -- it was an environment of survival. So it  
17 was survival from things that were happening in there to being tough, because if you're not  
18 tough you're just going to have everything taken away from you to having to deal with the  
19 staff who, some of them were very racial. So, yeah.

20 **Q.** Was there any other way to keep you safe? Was there any staff, for example, who you  
21 could go to about what had happened with those girls or anything else that was happening  
22 to you in the home?

23 **A.** I had this one incident that I -- like it's a -- you've moved up really well, if you can work in  
24 the kitchen, and I had earned working in the kitchen, it was a big thing, you know, and I'd  
25 worked -- so I was walking into the dining room with the toast and I stubbed my toe, and  
26 my toe was split open and it was bleeding everywhere and I automatically said the F word.  
27 Next minute the principal of Strathmore dragged me down to the cells and beat the crap out  
28 of me with the end of the vacuum. You know, and the staff member came in and stopped  
29 him and because of her being there to protect me, every time she was around, after -- I got  
30 locked up in the cells because of that, but every time she was around I hung around her  
31 because she was like a protecting mechanism, someone actually stuck up for me, so yeah.

32 **Q.** You mentioned that there was racism in the homes?

33 **A.** Yeah.

34 **Q.** Tell us what you saw or heard that made you think that?

- 1 A. Well, not all of us Māori were naughty, but we were the ones that still wore the rompers or  
2 the ugly uniforms and some of the tauivi that were there, they always had the nice clothes,  
3 the nice cardigan, the nice shirt and skirt and all that, and they looked -- well, I put it this  
4 way, they looked like prefects compared to us. And it's not because we were dressed  
5 wrong, you know.
- 6 Q. Was there ever any violence from the staff to any of you?
- 7 A. Just the one with the principal towards me.
- 8 Q. Did you get to go home at all or speak to your father?
- 9 A. My dad would come for visits, my dad came to visit me every -- I think Monday nights  
10 were the visits, and I got to go home a couple of times for day visits from Strathmore, yeah.  
11 But I just -- even now I wonder why, but I never told my dad. I just didn't have a voice.
- 12 Q. When he came into the home was it a private visitor, was there staff nearby?
- 13 A. We were all in one room, so all the tables, it was one big room and there were all tables set  
14 out and maybe a couple of families sat on the same table, yeah.
- 15 Q. What about social workers? Was there anyone who came and saw you as a social worker?
- 16 A. Never, ever met a social worker, never until I was in Weymouth I met a social worker.  
17 I never met one before I went into the girls' home, into Strathmore, never met one in  
18 Kingslea, but I met one after I got out of Weymouth.
- 19 Q. You talk in your statement about a time that you went to court, not for a charge but for  
20 something else, and you begged your dad to get you out of Strathmore?
- 21 A. Yeah.
- 22 Q. Do you remember that?
- 23 A. Yes.
- 24 Q. Do you know why you were going to court?
- 25 A. It was for my dad to get the State ward removed, and he had gone to court to ask for it to be  
26 removed and he was turned down. Sorry, I just have to say that the reason that upsets me  
27 because that was the first time I ever spoke badly to my father and told him I didn't want  
28 him in my life anymore and he was to stop coming to visit me. And he broke down crying  
29 and he apologised because he didn't know why his little girl was locked up and nobody  
30 could tell him why they wouldn't get me back to him, yeah.
- 31 Q. Why do you think you felt angry with him?
- 32 A. Me?
- 33 Q. Mmm.
- 34 A. Because he was -- because he told me he was going to get me to go home. He'd come and

- 1           seen me and he says "You're coming home princess", and I believed him.
- 2   **Q.**     And he failed?
- 3   **A.**     I don't think he failed.
- 4   **Q.**     But in your mind?
- 5   **A.**     At that time, yes, at that time I thought for the first time someone again is going to do  
6           something for me and it didn't happen, and I couldn't understand why, yeah.
- 7   **CHAIR:** Piwi, you said that your father didn't fail, but you said it in a way as though maybe  
8           something else failed or someone else. Would you like to tell us about that? What failed  
9           for you there?
- 10 **A.**     The system, the system didn't -- I believe that if my father was willing for me to go home  
11           with him I should have been able to go home with him. There was no reason for the State  
12           to be involved with me. But then now I realise by then I had gathered a lot of charges up  
13           against me when I had been absconding. So that was when I was running away from the  
14           homes, from the home. So I understood that was probably -- now I understand that was  
15           probably why I wasn't allowed to be released to my dad, because I had accumulated charges  
16           against me. I don't know, but I really believe they should have let me go home with my  
17           dad, yeah.
- 18 **Q.**     Thank you for that.
- 19 **A.**     Thank you.
- 20 **QUESTIONING BY MS TOOHEY CONTINUED:** What were the charges for, Piwi, do you  
21           remember, generally what would happen?
- 22 **A.**     Stealing, getting into a car that was stolen, shoplifting, and a lot of assault which I really,  
23           really, really regret today. But there was a lot of assaults because this angry little girl didn't  
24           know how to express herself, yeah, and sadly I took it out on people I shouldn't have.
- 25 **Q.**     Was there any schooling at all in Strathmore?
- 26 **A.**     Yes, yeah. When I got up to the house I went to -- there was a school there out the back  
27           and we went to the -- yeah.
- 28 **Q.**     And was that good, was that a good experience for you?
- 29 **A.**     She was -- yeah, we had a really good teacher who ended up -- we both went to the same  
30           church years later, so she was beautiful, she was a really beautiful lady.
- 31 **Q.**     I think towards the end of your time at Strathmore you felt like things were going better for  
32           you, you said you had your job in the kitchen?
- 33 **A.**     Yeah, I was led to believe I was going home and I was doing so well, I was -- everything  
34           was -- I didn't want to -- I wanted to go home. So I was doing everything, I was ticking all

- 1 the boxes to go home.
- 2 **Q.** What did you think you had to do?
- 3 A. Just be -- there's a word for it. I had to be, oh, cooperative in every little -- I had to be a  
4 good little soldier and I was.
- 5 **Q.** How long do you think that went on for?
- 6 A. About four months.
- 7 **Q.** And what were you told about the prospect of you going home?
- 8 A. That I was going home, I was -- that I'm doing so well and they're looking out me going out  
9 by July. And with that idea I stopped running away, I started doing everything that was  
10 asked of me, yeah.
- 11 **Q.** So that was July of 1975?
- 12 A. Yeah.
- 13 **Q.** So you would have been about 14, around there, 13 or 14 when you were hoping to go  
14 home?
- 15 A. 14, yes.
- 16 **Q.** I'm just going to bring up a document, this is witness 0159005 which is a letter on your file,  
17 Piwi, it will come up on the screen in a moment. This is going to be a letter dated 15 July  
18 1975 and it's about the principal who we're not naming?
- 19 A. Yeah.
- 20 **Q.** I think you mentioned to him before that there was an issue between -- that he was the  
21 person who'd been violent to you that time when you stubbed your toe?
- 22 A. Yes, he was very openly racial towards us, towards Māori and would make really racial  
23 remarks, calling us names and all that. So we knew he was racist, yeah, it was a common  
24 fact he was racist.
- 25 **Q.** Did you have any feeling about how he felt towards you individually apart from you as a  
26 Māori?
- 27 A. I thought he hated me, I actually know he hated me, I didn't think, I know he hated me,  
28 yeah.
- 29 **Q.** Why did you think that?
- 30 A. Just the way he talked to me, the way he responded to me and just his whole attitude  
31 towards me wasn't someone that liked me.
- 32 **Q.** So this is a bit hard to read, but you'll see there at paragraph, it's just going to be highlighted  
33 here, paragraph 6?
- 34 A. Āe.

- 1 **Q.** First of all it says that your IQ was 106/113 and at school you were described as surly and  
2 bad tempered, rude to peers and teachers, displayed little loyalty and was known to have  
3 made positive efforts to get others in trouble. Just commenting on that bit first, Piwi, how  
4 does that compare to how you thought you were going in the home where you thought  
5 things were going well, you were being cooperative?
- 6 **A.** Yeah, I -- it's quite -- see it's -- I think that's from when I was at Chisnallwood.
- 7 **Q.** Right.
- 8 **A.** Yeah.
- 9 **Q.** So you think it's an old reference?
- 10 **A.** It is, because it's actually -- yeah. And personal hygiene.
- 11 **Q.** Let's talk about that, that last comment, "She was uninterested in schoolwork and games  
12 and her personal hygiene received adverse comment."
- 13 **A.** So could I just let you know, because of the sexual abuse I became very OCD and very,  
14 very at a young age, so if this is from Strathmore, we get up in the mornings, we would be  
15 all given a shower, a staff member would do our hair, we'd have all our clothes laid out for  
16 us to wear that day. So how would that show any personal hygiene if they were the ones  
17 that provided the washing and well-being of you? And there was also only one teacher and  
18 I thought she was amazing.
- 19 **Q.** So you think this is something that's followed you from well before?
- 20 **A.** Because the same comments, I think it's copy and pasted. Because the same comments  
21 with that is in the reports from the school.
- 22 **Q.** The next paragraph, paragraph 7.
- 23 **A.** Yeah.
- 24 **Q.** I'm just going to bring that up. That says there "Her present attitude towards staff discipline  
25 and authority in the girls' home has caused the principal to recommend long-term training  
26 as he sees no future for Gwyneth in this situation. Her attitude appears to have become  
27 fixed and hardened over the years and I see no possibility of any rehabilitative work being  
28 done with her in a short time. I recommend her approved admission to Kingslea or  
29 Weymouth." So how does that make you feel now looking back on this when at the time  
30 you thought that you were going to be going home?
- 31 **A.** I know I've read that time and time again and I just think wow, you know, how wrong they  
32 had it, how absolutely wrong they had. And what a really bad assumption to put on a child  
33 that there's no possibility of rehabilitation, you know, and, yeah, I just --
- 34 **Q.** Had anyone talked to you about that?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Because you said before that they'd talked to you about -- saying that you'd be going home  
3 in July?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. This letter is in July?

6 A. Yes, yes, so leading right up to that I was doing everything they wanted, I was going on  
7 camps, you're not allowed to go on camps if you're naughty, and I was doing -- I was doing  
8 all the stuff they expected. And so that actually to me was -- that's a 14 year old girl that  
9 once again was let down by -- can I just say this, and I really need to say this, I wouldn't  
10 expect anything less from him. His attitude and his way towards me, I wouldn't expect  
11 anything less. He was a racist man and he treated me with such horrible rapport that this  
12 doesn't surprise me. Doesn't surprise. I could have been jumping through hoops for him, I  
13 don't think his attitude towards me would have ever changed, yeah.

14 And I do acknowledge that I had become hard over the years, I mean when you've  
15 been in there for nearly three years, you become institutionalised. But it doesn't mean  
16 I should be further institutionalised. It meant that whatever they were doing with this girl  
17 for three years hadn't worked and they just thought I should be more punished. I -- sorry, I  
18 don't understand. But those are false statements.

19 Q. But it was a shock to you, I take it, that --

20 A. Later on.

21 Q. -- after this you were sent to Kingslea, after this letter?

22 A. I didn't understand why I was going to Kingslea. I thought I was going home. This kind of  
23 thing really affected me, because when these people that are meant to be having you in  
24 Care and Protection are definitely not caring for you or protecting you. And then when you  
25 start toeing the line, they punish you more. So imagine what was going on in this head of  
26 this poor little girl who once again was let down by a system that should have been there to  
27 help her and it hadn't.

28 Q. This might be a good time to have a short break if that's all right?

29 A. Yeah, please, sorry.

30 CHAIR: Don't be sorry, it's up to you and if you want a break we're happy to have it.

31 A. Yes please, thank you.

32 **Adjournment from 11.39 am to 12.03 pm**

33 CHAIR: Nau mai haere mai.

34 A. Kia ora.

- 1 **Q.** Thank you Ms Toohey.
- 2 **QUESTIONING BY MS TOOHEY CONTINUED:** I want to talk to you now about Kingslea.
- 3 Your file reflects that you went there during late September or early October 1975. Do you
- 4 remember going there by car with a social worker?
- 5 **A.** I do, yes. It's actually in a van.
- 6 **Q.** And did you know before being in the car that that's where you were going in the van?
- 7 **A.** No, I thought I was going home, yeah.
- 8 **Q.** How did you feel when you got to Kingslea?
- 9 **A.** It was while we were going to Kingslea they told me that because I was talking about going
- 10 home and that's when they told me, "No, you're going to Kingslea", and I didn't understand
- 11 why.
- 12 **Q.** Do you remember what happened when you got to Kingslea?
- 13 **A.** I was put into Howard House and I just wanted to leave, I wanted to go home.
- 14 **Q.** So what happened after that?
- 15 **A.** I think I was only there a couple of days and I absconded and went home and got picked up
- 16 and taken back.
- 17 **Q.** Who by?
- 18 **A.** The Police.
- 19 **Q.** Did you tell them about your life and what was happening to you in the homes?
- 20 **A.** Yes.
- 21 **Q.** And what happened?
- 22 **A.** Nothing, I told the Police Officer what happened as a child, told him my whole story and
- 23 just dropped me off at Kingslea.
- 24 **Q.** What about at Kingslea, was there a nice person I think Mrs Nuttal?
- 25 **A.** Yes, Mrs Nuttal.
- 26 **Q.** Did you end up telling her your whole story as well?
- 27 **A.** I did, she was the -- she usually done the night -- she worked at nights while I was in what
- 28 they call clinic, which is the secure unit in Kingslea, and she'd get me up and sit with her
- 29 talking to her and that, and I told her what happened. I told her everything.
- 30 **Q.** And --
- 31 **CHAIR:** Can I just be clear that the clinic was again solitary confinement?
- 32 **A.** It was. So at Kingslea clinic, the solitary confinement was called "clinic".
- 33 **Q.** Yes, we've heard about that from somebody else.
- 34 **A.** Yeah.

- 1 **Q.** Did anything happen after you told her, was it acted on at all to your knowledge?
- 2 **A.** No, nothing was ever acted on or followed up or anything.
- 3 **Q.** And I think later you got your file and to your knowledge, are there no notes at all on your  
4 file about what you told Mrs Nuttal about your background and what had happened to you  
5 in the homes?
- 6 **A.** Absolutely nothing.
- 7 **Q.** I think as well, just speaking about your file, I think you had some times at Kingslea where  
8 you worked in the laundry and won awards for gymnastics?
- 9 **A.** Yes.
- 10 **Q.** Was there anything about that in your file when you obtained a copy later?
- 11 **A.** No, no, there wasn't any at all that I can remember. Most of it was blacked out, it was only  
12 about the charges I had against me, so, no, there was nothing.
- 13 **Q.** All right. You talked about the clinic a moment ago at Kingslea.
- 14 **A.** Yes.
- 15 **Q.** Is that somewhere that you spent time in while you were at Kingslea?
- 16 **A.** I spent five months locked up in clinic, yes.
- 17 **Q.** In total or all at once?
- 18 **A.** All at once, yes. They kept me there until they could transfer me to Weymouth.
- 19 **Q.** Why did you understand that you were kept there?
- 20 **A.** Because I was an absconder, I was -- I think the word was prevalent or something,  
21 absconder, so I was at risk of absconding, so they kept me locked up.
- 22 **Q.** Okay. Was there any gate or fence around Kingslea, how did it work?
- 23 **A.** So Kingslea itself were all different hostels and it was an open, it was open. There were no  
24 fences and gates, except for the other properties, but there was -- it was a lot of space, but  
25 clinic was like a square building with in the middle was a recreation area and that was  
26 actually -- that was secured.
- 27 **Q.** Do you mean like an internal courtyard?
- 28 **A.** Yes, yeah.
- 29 **Q.** Just want to bring up a document witness number 0159007. This is a letter on your file  
30 from November 1975, so we're just going to have a look at this. Perhaps while we're  
31 bringing that up, do you remember how many times you ran away from Kingslea?
- 32 **A.** Twice.
- 33 **Q.** And what would happen after you ran away?
- 34 **A.** I'd be put in clinic.

- 1 **Q.** What was it like compared to Strathmore clinic?
- 2 **A.** You know, even though I spent a long time, even though I spent a long time in clinic, for  
3 some reason I can't remember what the cells look like. Yeah, it's really --
- 4 **Q.** I'm just going to look at this, Piwi, because it's later on but it records some things about  
5 what happened for you at Kingslea. So this is from November and it records that you  
6 absconded three times and --
- 7 **A.** Okay.
- 8 **Q.** -- and spent most of your time in the institution in the secure unit, spending only 13 days in  
9 the house. So the secure unit was the clinic, is that right?
- 10 **A.** Yes.
- 11 **Q.** What was the house?
- 12 **A.** The house that I was in was Howard House.
- 13 **Q.** That was the area where you were -- you weren't locked in that area?
- 14 **A.** No.
- 15 **Q.** Then in the next part of it, I just want to -- and I'm bringing this up just so we can see what  
16 was being written about you at the time.
- 17 **A.** Yes. So, yeah.
- 18 **Q.** It's saying that your "work and personal hygiene need constant supervision, she is a very  
19 grubby little girl"?
- 20 **A.** And that same statement is in the school report, those very words, "she is a very grubby  
21 little girl" is the same words said in the school report Strathmore and now this one. And I  
22 think, and I know that I'm not the only Māori wāhine that's had that same statement made  
23 about her, and I think it's a racial comment, because once again within Kingslea you were  
24 soldiered into the shower in the morning and a shower at night and the clothes you were  
25 given were given by the institution, so you couldn't be grubby, unless I went out there and  
26 rolled in the mud. It's a racist comment on me because I was Māori and I'm holding on  
27 that.
- 28 **Q.** Did you experience that kind of comment to you orally when you were at the homes from  
29 the staff?
- 30 **A.** No, not out Kingslea, but I did experience it when I was in Strathmore and when I was out  
31 Chisnallwood Intermediate, yeah.
- 32 **Q.** It then says, "School was the one area that she enjoys" -- sorry, just still that  
33 paragraph -- "School is the one area that she enjoys and she has talked of sitting her school  
34 certificate." Is that part right, that you did like school?

- 1 A. I loved school, I absolutely -- whenever I could go to school, wherever I was, I loved it. So  
2 yeah, it was probably one of the things that I looked forward to while I was in these  
3 institutions, was school.
- 4 Q. Did you get to go to school when you were in the clinic?
- 5 A. I can't remember. I can't remember, I -- I can't remember much of the clinic, because I got  
6 very, very depressed, yeah.
- 7 Q. "It is not easy to assess her on 13 days association." Does that mean that -- I take that to  
8 mean -- tell me if I've got that wrong -- that you only had 13 days where you could  
9 associate with other children there in the house?
- 10 A. In the house, because it was only 13 days altogether, not all in one span, but 13 days  
11 altogether in the six months I was at Kingslea that I spent in the house.
- 12 Q. It then says that the absconding habit appears to be quickly becoming a way of life. Then  
13 I want to refer you to the bottom of this letter at paragraph 4. This is a note written by  
14 someone else after that letter in the homes. And it says "Absconding is a way of life. I can  
15 well remember writing this about Vicky's sister when her absconding got to over 30. I find  
16 Mr and Mrs Beard -- and this is later corrected in a later note on file -- even more  
17 ineffectual now than when I worked with them four years ago." And it then says, "Vicky at  
18 this stage is just playing a game and has no realisation of her true position. Her future  
19 concerns her even less." Then it's got an adverse comment about you at the end, saying that  
20 they haven't seen the "vicious and brutal tendencies she displayed prior to her admission."
- 21 A. So which really -- my dad would be out looking for me when I'd run away. My mum didn't  
22 care less. What happened with my sister is totally different to mine.
- 23 Q. But do you think looking at that that there was some history with your family that was  
24 affecting the way that staff were dealing with you in the homes?
- 25 A. Absolutely, I was actually looking out that, that I thought that I'm just being compared to  
26 my sister, you know? You know, I don't think absconding is a crime when you want to get  
27 out of an institution. And to be actually held accountable for wanting to escape prison  
28 when you shouldn't be in there, shouldn't be noted as throughout my records I noticed I've  
29 really been held accountable from being -- escaping these horrible places and that's wrong,  
30 sorry. And I don't think I should be compared to my sister, we're two different people.  
31 And my mum and dad, yeah.
- 32 Q. Your father, you had a comment in your witness statement about him being concerned at  
33 you being locked up in a cell --
- 34 A. Yeah.

- 1 **Q.** -- during the time in care. Did that affect him coming to visit you, how did that impact on  
2 you?
- 3 **A.** So when I was in Kingslea I got very depressed and I know that my -- my dad didn't  
4 understand, so my dad didn't understand who I was anymore because I was -- I was really  
5 solemn, I was unresponsive to them and, yeah, he -- it broke his heart to see me where I  
6 was and to see what I was becoming, yeah.
- 7 **Q.** What was happening with you with feeling depressed, tell us about that?
- 8 **A.** I was -- I won't be a minute, I'm all right. I was starting to believe that everything that was  
9 happening to me I deserved it, that I was a bad seed, that everything that happened to me as  
10 a child I deserved it, that I didn't want to be here anymore, that I had no life, that nobody  
11 heard me, nobody cared about me, and I was better off dead, and I just didn't want to be  
12 here anymore, because I felt all I was on this earth for was to be punished for breathing.  
13 I felt I was exactly what my mother said, that I shouldn't have been born and I didn't  
14 deserve to be here.
- 15 **Q.** Do you think that you might have been the longest person held in the secure unit at  
16 Kingslea when you were there?
- 17 **A.** At that time, yes.
- 18 **Q.** How did you know that?
- 19 **A.** Because it was a comment that -- it was just something that was said around, it was like a,  
20 like a show off kind of statement, which is, you know, I was only a teenager, I was only a  
21 kid, so --
- 22 **Q.** I just want to show you another document, Piwi, it's witness 0159008.
- 23 **A.** Yeah.
- 24 **Q.** This is one that's just recording here, this is a school report dated December 1975, so  
25 coming towards the end of your time at Kingslea. "Although depressed at times, Vicky  
26 appears to be fairly stable." Did anyone offer you any help?
- 27 **A.** No, nobody ever talked to me about it. I didn't even know that they knew. I actually  
28 thought that -- I didn't even know at that time what I was feeling, I didn't know that that  
29 was called depression, I just thought it was just -- I thought I was worn out and done at that  
30 time.
- 31 **Q.** They seemed to know that you were depressed?
- 32 **A.** Absolutely, but nobody done nothing about it, nobody even talked to me about it.
- 33 **Q.** Just want to look at the -- because this is a report at the top just while we're on this  
34 document, you can see there under the wider word "academic" at the top it says, "Vicky has

- 1 shown that she has good ability in English and should be encouraged to persevere”, and  
2 then, “She has expressed a wish to study for her school certificate, will need to work hard  
3 without any breaks for a year if she is to succeed.” So still, school was something still --
- 4 A. Absolutely.
- 5 Q. -- something you wanted to go on with?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. Did you have medical examinations again at Kingslea, the same nature of the ones that you  
8 told us about before, or perhaps not with the sexual abuse, but did you have those same --
- 9 A. We had smears. I think I only had two at Kings -- I can't -- yeah, I can't remember.
- 10 Q. I want to now bring up another document about your transfer from Kingslea to Weymouth,  
11 this is witness 0159009. First of all at paragraph 4. Again, so this is a -- see the date  
12 8 December 1975, and it's saying that you are a "bright young lass who has been  
13 educationally very deprived." Do you agree with that statement from your time in the  
14 homes that you were deprived?
- 15 A. I was deprived of education, I wasn't given any except for when I was in what they call the  
16 houses. And because they had me in the secure blocks, the cells and in clinic, there was no  
17 education offered, so I, yeah, I was deprived because of that.
- 18 Q. It says at the end, "She has shown while in the secure unit that she has considerable  
19 undeveloped potential" and then talks about your absconding within less than a week when  
20 you went out into the house. But again, did anyone talk to you about the fact they saw  
21 potential in you?
- 22 A. No, no.
- 23 Q. And then at paragraph 6, this letter records that “the proposed transfer to Weymouth has  
24 been discussed with Vicky” -- we'll come to that in a minute -- and "she has expressed a  
25 desire to be allowed an opportunity to lead a more settled life away from the pressures of  
26 her present environment." Did anyone come to you and talk to you about going to  
27 Weymouth, a girls' home in Auckland?
- 28 A. I -- you know, I can't remember, I can't remember. Look, I don't believe it happened, but it  
29 could have, you know, I -- it's really hard to remember all that time of Kingslea. But  
30 I really don't think I would have been happy to leave my family. I really don't  
31 believe -- I might have been happy to leave clinic, they could have sent me to Australia to  
32 get out of there, but I don't think, I don't think I was -- no.
- 33 Q. In the next paragraph, paragraph 7, it talks about a meeting or the fact that both your  
34 parents visited you on 6 December and discussed the transfer, "they are rather nonplussed

1 that at this stage Gwyneth accepts the move as being in her best interests." Do you  
2 remember your parents -- that's suggesting I think that your parents accepted you going to  
3 Weymouth in the North Island. Do you --

4 A. I don't ever remember my mother coming to see me at all when I was institutionalised, so  
5 they might have went there without me to a meeting, but I don't understand what  
6 nonplussed means.

7 Q. Do you think your father would have accepted you moving away?

8 A. No, no. My dad wouldn't have.

9 Q. Then in the next paragraph, paragraph 8, it says, "I usually feel that it is more successful  
10 overall to work in our type of institution with the parents of our clients near by. However,  
11 in this case after my long and unsuccessful association with this family in the past, I agree  
12 to remove this lass as far as possible from their influence is the most practical plan."

13 A. And that to me, my father has been -- he's been a big part of everything I had done within  
14 Strathmore, and Kingslea, my dad had come to the meetings, he was always visiting and  
15 things like that and I think that's taken from my sister, an assumption, once again, that I am  
16 the same make-up of my sister. And to turn around and say that my parents are working  
17 with the institution that have their children in, so you need to move them away from them?  
18 That's just -- sorry, that's quite a -- that's quite a statement in itself, just that statement alone,  
19 that they could remove me possibly from this influence.

20 Q. How did you feel?

21 A. Sorry?

22 Q. How did you feel about going to Weymouth, did anyone give you any warning that you  
23 were going up to Auckland?

24 A. I knew I was going, yes, I remember I knew I was going. I remember working out that my  
25 uncle lived up there and that could be a contact for me.

26 Q. I think you found Weymouth generally quite good apart from the secure unit, is that right?

27 A. Yeah, Weymouth was a different kettle of -- I think there was -- it was so different that  
28 I -- being in Weymouth, I was only there for about four or five months and they sent me  
29 home. I just -- and, yeah, it was --

30 Q. Was your father able to visit you up there?

31 A. No, I had no visitors.

32 Q. Was that difficult for you?

33 A. It was, it was very hard.

34 Q. Did you experience any time in a secure unit at Weymouth?

- 1 A. I ran away once, there was a whole lot of girls that were doing absconding and I stupidly  
2 thought I'd join in.
- 3 Q. And I think your file records that when you first got there you had a few days in the secure  
4 unit?
- 5 A. Yes, yeah.
- 6 Q. What was it like compared to the other secure units you'd been in?
- 7 A. Weymouth has got -- the secure there, there's different blocks within secure too. The  
8 secure I was in had a bed, a toilet and a basin. Steel toilet, steel basin and windows up the  
9 top.
- 10 Q. Again, was the door locked?
- 11 A. Yes, constant -- yes.
- 12 Q. For how much of the day?
- 13 A. All the time.
- 14 Q. Again, was there anything to do in the secure cell?
- 15 A. Books.
- 16 Q. What about the medical examinations, was that happening still at Weymouth?
- 17 A. It was, it was a -- this time it was a nurse, she was a female nurse and it was probably -- it  
18 wasn't. Because it was expected, you knew it was going to happen, so it wasn't too bad.
- 19 Q. And I think there was some gangs at Weymouth, is that right?
- 20 A. Yeah.
- 21 Q. What were the gangs, do you remember?
- 22 A. So the majority of the girls that were in Weymouth were actually of the Polynesian  
23 whanaunga and there were King Cobra, and it's not a gang this other one, but there was a  
24 lot of the girls that were connected to the Polynesian Panthers and there were a couple that  
25 were like the Mongrel Mob but they weren't as prevalent as the girls that were in the  
26 Samoan gangs.
- 27 Q. Were there lots of Pacific Islanders at Weymouth?
- 28 A. Yes, yeah, very much so, outnumbered us Māori, yeah.
- 29 Q. How was it between the girls who were there?
- 30 A. It was good, it was a different -- it was different than in Kingslea and Strathmore, you  
31 know, like you built family units and -- but yeah, but there was -- there you had to, again,  
32 within every institution the strongest survive, yeah.
- 33 Q. Did you have the opportunity to have some Te Ao Māori activities?
- 34 A. Yeah, it was the first time ever we done things like kapahaka, waiata, done karakia, and

- 1           yeah.
- 2   **Q.**    Were there Māori staff there?
- 3   A.    There were mostly Māori and Samoan staff out Weymouth, even the principal was Māori.
- 4   **Q.**    And what impact did that have on you being able to participate in Māori cultural activities?
- 5   A.    It was good, it was really, really good. It was the first time I actually learned to understand
- 6           myself being Māori and how important that was and actually knowing that I -- it's the first
- 7           time I actually learned there was a difference between Māori and Pākehā within my
- 8           understanding of culturally, yeah.
- 9   **Q.**    Your file records that some months later on 13 July 1976 that you, due to your positive
- 10          progress, you got sent home to your parents?
- 11   A.    Yes.
- 12   **Q.**    And just before we leave Weymouth, had you had any schooling at Weymouth?
- 13   A.    Yeah, yeah, there was schooling. And I must admit by then I had become really disruptive,
- 14          disrupting things that were good for me. So I disrupted the fact of going to school and then
- 15          tried my hardest to try and get back there while I was there, because -- yeah.
- 16   **Q.**    I think once you got home --
- 17   A.    Yeah.
- 18   **Q.**    -- I think you had a week at Aranui High School?
- 19   A.    Yes.
- 20   **Q.**    And then your mother took you back to Strathmore, is that right?
- 21   A.    Yeah.
- 22   **Q.**    Why was that do you think?
- 23   A.    I got expelled from Aranui, I just didn't want to be -- I was -- the truth was I had become
- 24          institutionalised and I had become hard, so what was stated by Strathmore or Kingslea had
- 25          actually then now five years later happened, I had become dependent on being in the
- 26          institution and I actually wanted to stay institutionalised.
- 27   **Q.**    And how did you -- I think your file records that you went back to Strathmore?
- 28   A.    Yes, voluntarily, I actually went back on my own.
- 29   **Q.**    Did you have to again undergo those medical examinations from that same Dr Fahey?
- 30   A.    Yes.
- 31   **Q.**    And then you were discharged according to your file as a State ward in January 1978?
- 32   A.    Yes.
- 33   **Q.**    After getting discharged from care, if we just turn briefly to what happened to you after
- 34          that.

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 **Q.** Did you end up in a relationship with someone, who we won't name, who was in the  
3 Mongrel Mob?
- 4 A. Yes, I did.
- 5 **Q.** And I think you had two children with him?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 **Q.** Was that a violent relationship, Piwi?
- 8 A. It was very violent, very violent, yes.
- 9 **Q.** And how did that relationship end?
- 10 A. I -- he got -- way back in the 70s if you had, like when you went to court you'd be -- and  
11 you didn't come from Christchurch or any part of -- you'd be like deported back to where  
12 you live within New Zealand, so he was deported back to where he lived and it was my  
13 escape, yeah.
- 14 **Q.** Did you run away from him at some stage when you were pregnant with your second child?
- 15 A. Yes. That was then.
- 16 **Q.** Then you married your second partner who you also had children with?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 **Q.** Was that also a violent relationship?
- 19 A. It was.
- 20 **Q.** Did you end up getting a protection order against that partner?
- 21 A. I did.
- 22 **Q.** By that time had you become a social worker, a community worker?
- 23 A. That was my third husband, I'd become a social worker in the community.
- 24 **Q.** What made you decide to do that?
- 25 A. I just -- because I'd been working in the community for a couple of years and I'd been  
26 coaching league with all my tamariki and I worked basically in the soup kitchens and all  
27 that, and I just thought I need to get a paper so I could be recognised for the work I do,  
28 yeah.
- 29 **Q.** At some stage did you live in Australia for a while?
- 30 A. Yes, when I left my husband I actually went to Australia and I was living in -- yes, in 2006,  
31 yes.
- 32 **Q.** Did something happen that made you come home?
- 33 A. Yes, 2011 I lost -- my daughter entered into a coma through -- my daughter was a victim of  
34 family violence, so were my mokos, and through neglect and through not being allowed to

1 get the needed help she needed while she was having a severe asthma attack, she ended up  
2 in a coma and three days later she died and she was pregnant with my moko, she was five  
3 months pregnant, yeah. So I came back from Australia while she was in a coma and  
4 I promised her I wouldn't let her boys leave me, yeah. So I stayed in New Zealand and  
5 fought the courts for four years to keep them in my care and I won, yeah.

6 **Q.** Do you feel able to talk about why you had to fight for their care?

7 **A.** So their father, because he was only a 1% of the reason she passed away, in the coroner's  
8 report he wasn't charged because she had pneumonia, she had swine flu and she never got  
9 the medical help she needed, so all those were part of the reason in the coroner's report. So  
10 he still was out and he fought me in court to keep the boys in New Zealand, he didn't mind  
11 if I had them, but he wanted them to stay in New Zealand, and I wanted to take them back  
12 to Australia because I had my own house in Australia and I was a manager of a mining  
13 camp over there, so I was very established. So it took me four years to win, to be able to  
14 leave New Zealand with them. I got custody of them, but after four years I had nothing to  
15 go back to, so I stayed here, which was a good choice for me, so yeah.

16 **Q.** And you still have them now I think?

17 **A.** Absolutely, yeah, beautiful taonga.

18 **Q.** Remember that document we looked at before referred to you as "Vicky"?

19 **A.** Yes.

20 **Q.** Do you want to tell us why that was?

21 **A.** So Vicky -- so Gwyneth was a very damaged child that I kept in a box and a lot of people  
22 called me Piwi because I was the little short one, so I'd be running along and everyone  
23 would go "Hurry up Piwi", so that was a nickname. But Vicky's my middle name and she  
24 was the strong one that I would revert to in times of struggle and survival, so Vicky became  
25 who I was when I was about 12, 13, and it stayed with me until I found Gwyneth again and  
26 healed her.

27 **Q.** When do you think that was?

28 **A.** After I lost my daughter, yeah. I needed to heal myself to look after my moko.

29 **Q.** What about your tīpuna, what impact has had had on your life?

30 **A.** My tupuna, my tīpuna, so I'm very spiritual, I believe that I stand -- I have many tupuna  
31 that stand beside me, and I believe I've been survived, and survived all this, because of  
32 them, because I have some amazing strong tupuna that have supported me and held me  
33 every time I've falled, I've fell, and helped me back up again. And that's why I've managed  
34 to go through what I've gone through and, yeah, I just often think what if I'd been allowed

1 the right to live a proper life, how -- what amazing stuff could be happening right now. So  
2 I'm very blessed with who sits beside me.

3 **Q.** You told us before that you forgave your mother later in life.

4 **A.** Yes.

5 **Q.** I think you actually became very close to her?

6 **A.** Yes.

7 **Q.** The last eight years of her life?

8 **A.** Absolutely. So I got to understand my mother's walk and how she'd lost her mum when she  
9 was 18 months old, and what she went through, being without a mum and the things that  
10 she experienced and got to understand why she was the way she was. And I loved my  
11 mum, I forgive her, I understand now. I think if someone had just told her, I think if  
12 someone had just told her that it was wrong, someone had actually made her accountable  
13 when I was a child, she would have stopped, you know, but you don't know how to break a  
14 cycle, don't know, but nobody ever stopped her. I think that -- yeah, sorry, yeah, yeah.

15 **Q.** We've talked a little bit about what happened to you afterwards, but can we talk about the  
16 impact on you of everything that happened to you as a child and in care?

17 **A.** So, because of what's happened, what happened to me, and what's happened to -- the  
18 impact has -- do you want the good or the bad? Look I just think to myself if I was given  
19 the right to be able to be what I should have been in the first place, wow, you know? If I  
20 was allowed to be given an education, if I can get that kind of outcome for my IQ and  
21 I couldn't read, imagine what I could have if I'd allowed to be educated, imagine.

22 And I look and I think I have, to my recollection, seven years missing from my life  
23 and it's really hard when we get -- when you get your mokos that say to you, "When you  
24 were 13 Nana what were you doing?" Or when you get your daughter who's 17 saying,  
25 "I bet you used to go out." I never had the right to party or to go to dances or to do  
26 any -- I had no -- I was never a rangatahi, I was institutionalised and I don't understand  
27 why, because when you are locked up for just running away and wanting to go home, and  
28 that's a punishment that even child offenders and some murderers don't even get seven  
29 years. And I was given seven years for just wanting to be protected, and wanting to find  
30 someone to actually talk to me and say "It's okay, we're here, we've got your back" and  
31 because of that that's why I do the mahi I do today.

32 **Q.** Do you want to talk about that, looking forward about the mahi that you are doing in this  
33 area?

34 **A.** Yes.

1 **Q.** In Aranui and in the South Island?

2 **A.** Āe, so one of the things is because my daughter was too scared to ask for help through her  
3 domestic violence because she was scared she would lose her boys, to then Child Youth  
4 and Family, she never seeked help and she died. I had no-one to talk to, I had no-one to  
5 turn to and I nearly died. I nearly took away my own right to live because I was so -- what  
6 I do now is I am the voice for whānau who go before Oranga Tamariki and I'm a very  
7 strong voice all over New Zealand. I advocate for our whānau to have a voice when at the  
8 table for Oranga Tamariki and I make sure that the whānau voice and our tamarikis' voice is  
9 heard and I make them accountable for them being involved with our whānau. The  
10 outcome is that whānau stays with whānau, hapū, iwi. But first it's whānau.

11 And we will wrap around the services to ensure that happens so you don't need to  
12 be alienating anymore tamariki from their whānau. Whānau have the answer, whānau have  
13 the solution and that's how I work. In domestic violence, we go in and we wrap around  
14 services around mum and the tamariki so she doesn't lose her children. Because she's  
15 already a victim of something, doesn't mean she should be a victim of losing her children.

16 And we have to stop that, we have to stop taking our children away from our  
17 mums because they don't know how to protect themselves against family violence, they  
18 shouldn't be held accountable, they should be given the right services and the wrap-around  
19 things for them to keep their children.

20 So that's why I'm passionate about this, sexual abuse, I am a victim -- I am a  
21 survivor of sexual abuse and I just want to be there for that little girl that needs someone to  
22 talk to, not someone to make her have to talk her story, but let her know that she's got a best  
23 friend between me and my kaimahi that are there, whānau to stick up for them.

24 Suicide, we work in that arena for a big reason. I've lost whānau to suicide,  
25 GRO-D I've nearly lost myself to suicide and there's got to be an answer. And the  
26 answer is that we're here, you've got a voice, we're going to listen and we're going to sit  
27 with you as whānau, not as practitioners, not as NGOs, as your sister, your brother, your  
28 mother, your uncle, your aunty, the ones that were never there for you before, we're here  
29 and we're going to wrap those services around you and that's why I do what I do.

30 **Q.** Piwi, do you think it's working, the --

31 **A.** We're winning big time. We have politicians that want to sit at the table with us. We have  
32 people that want to sit at the table and find the solution. I've made relationships within  
33 Oranga Tamariki down in Ōtautahi, some still fight the old school way, but we're winning,  
34 we're winning big time. What I'm saying about what we're winning, our whānau are

1 finding their identity, they're standing strong for their tamariki and for their future.

2 **Q.** You made a comment before about your time in care, that you were being punished for  
3 adults' behaviour?

4 **A.** Yes.

5 **Q.** Do you think that's still happening now?

6 **A.** I want to -- the reason why I'm doing this because it's still happening now. I am fighting a  
7 system to -- that's going on, I have, without mentioning names or anything, I have one case  
8 where I've sat at the table with Oranga Tamariki, children's lawyers and had a young boy  
9 who has spoken loudly that he's being sexually abused in the group home he's in, nine years  
10 old, uplifted for domestic violence, now he's a victim of sexual abuse. And I have  
11 contacted way up the top to try and help and that boy is still sitting there. Nobody's  
12 wanting to even listen. And I'm screaming and I'm shouting it, and it's still not happening.  
13 We're coming against barriers, it's got to stop.

14 One, you shouldn't be putting a child in a group home just because there's  
15 domestic violence, and this is a family of three that have now been separated into group  
16 homes and they're Māori, and three different group homes, they're getting separated  
17 because of domestic violence. There's got to be a better way. And we have the solution,  
18 you've just got to sit at the table and hear us.

19 **Q.** How does a group home work, Piwi, is it like a family home, it's a State-owned house?

20 **A.** It's -- I think there's up to -- I don't know what numbers, some of them five, up to ten  
21 children in one home with a couple that care for them.

22 **Q.** Like a fostering situation but in a house owned by the State?

23 **A.** Āe, āe, yes.

24 **Q.** What about you mentioned about -- I think you've already spoken to it, but is there anything  
25 else you want to say about the use of Tikanga Māori in your work in the current care of  
26 children?

27 **A.** So we work mainly with a lot of our whānau that have been colonised and they've lost their  
28 identity and they themselves, actually 92% of our clients were actually in State care  
29 themselves. So they don't know what their iwi is, they don't know anything about being  
30 Māori, about standing strong and being Māori. So within our organisation we run  
31 wānanga, we give them schoolwork, they've got to go and try and find out who they are,  
32 what their whakapapa is, or anything close to it. And we have some amazing people that  
33 come and help them with all that. And then they just learn their pepeha, they learn  
34 to -- they learn the importance of the whare tangata, wāhine, tāne, what a tāne

1 actually -- what their status is within whānau and how our tamariki, our taonga, they're  
2 treasures, the reason our whakapapa keeps going for the future. And we put in and teach  
3 them that, you know, we teach them, at our wānangas and that how to stand strong as a  
4 whānau, how to stand strong as Māori.

5 And being Māori is not, is not something you should be ashamed of. Being Māori  
6 is something you've got to be proud of. You know, we're proud people, we should have a  
7 right to stand tall. This is our tangata whenua and we have a right to stand tall as Māori,  
8 not be shamed. I'm very sorry but I need to make the statement, Aotearoa is where Māori  
9 come from but we're second class citizens within our own society and we've got to stop  
10 playing second class citizens, we need to step up ourselves and claim back the right to stand  
11 taller within our own land.

12 **Q.** This is slightly off that topic, but social workers, is there anything you want to say about  
13 qualifications in terms of your current work and your own experiences about how you think  
14 social workers should be trained and respond to complaints about abuse in care?

15 **A.** I really believe -- this is my kōrero, this is my own take, but, you know, everyone has their  
16 own views. I think Oranga Tamariki needs to be shut down, they don't deserve to have the  
17 name Oranga Tamariki. **[Applause]**. They are an organisation that is just about power and  
18 control. I have sat at many tables over the last five years and probably only 5% have sat  
19 there for good outcomes, the rest are just all about trying to disempower whānau. And the  
20 work of social workers there, the practises and the procedures are just not up to par, or  
21 anything, they are -- look, without sounding smart and that, they're kindergarten teachers  
22 sitting in the role of a judge and they don't know how to sit there. They just take what they  
23 believe is their right and disempower our whānau.

24 This is just my whakaaro, okay, everyone else has their own kōrero, but I sit at  
25 those tables and there are reasons that our tamariki are getting uplifted for the most -- when  
26 they shouldn't be. The answer is wrap around the right services to empower this whānau to  
27 keep their tamariki, not rip them from their arms and take them somewhere else and just  
28 alienate. The practises of our social workers out there now is all about segregating the  
29 whānau from the tamariki and it is done -- I have story after story that would shock you.  
30 Seven years a dad's waited to have visitations with his tamariki because of false allegations  
31 of sexual abuse, only to find out three weeks ago when we're sitting at the table that those  
32 allegations were uplifted and found to be false seven years ago. And he still had a  
33 protection order out against him and he still wasn't allowed to visit his children. And to  
34 watch that dad break down and cry and hear that he wasn't even -- it was found out that it

1 wasn't true anyway. But he was alienated from his children. That's one case. I can sit here  
2 all day and tell you about case after case after case of those kind of practices that go on.

3 And it's got -- we've got to fix it.

4 **Q.** Kia ora Piwi. Before I ask the Commissioners if they've got any questions, is there  
5 anything else that you want to say to the Commissioners?

6 **A.** I just really want to thank you for the right to give Gwyneth a voice. She's been waiting 60  
7 years and I thank you. I was really worried about the vulnerability of myself being in this  
8 situation, but kei te pai, I was all right, I was surrounded by my tīpuna.

9 I just want to say this. If I have been given the ability to sit here and show my  
10 vulnerability in this arena publicly, I hope it hasn't been in vain. And that whatever  
11 recommendations come through, whatever years, but something needs to happen now, not  
12 in 2026 or 23 or 24, it has to happen now. Because in four years, three years while these  
13 tamariki that are now suffering going through worse than what I did are going through, they  
14 need help now, they need someone to stand up now and say something needs to be done,  
15 and I'm tired of doing it alone.

16 But I'm not alone because there's other soldiers like me out there screaming the  
17 same scream. But we're not being heard, so if this is an arena I can say please, we need to  
18 step in now, we have tamariki that are still being sexually abused in care, we have tamariki  
19 that shouldn't even be in care, and we have whānau that have been alienated from their  
20 tamariki just because they were victims of family violence and it's got to stop. We need to  
21 change the system today, not in two years' time.

22 So whoever has the power to be needs to stand up now, because I'm still standing  
23 out there with banners and protests saying close that system down, we need to stop it.

24 We're going to be sitting here in another 30 years' time with another lot of survivors doing  
25 the same kōrero, if we are then we haven't done our work properly right now. Ka pai?

26 Kia ora.

27 **CHAIR:** Kia ora.

28 **MS TOOHEY:** That's all the questions that I have. Do the Commissioners have any questions?

29 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tēnā koe e te whaea. Nei ra te ngākau whakaute, i tukunā atū te  
30 reo rahiri, i te kupu mihi ki a koe, kā puta mai ka eke mai i te pūtake i te maunga ki te tihi  
31 ki te tuku to kōrero ki a mātou, tēnei te mihi mahana ki a koe. On behalf of the Inquiry I'd  
32 like to thank you for coming and sharing your kupu with us, your powerful words, it's very  
33 moving. And, you know, no reason for so much in your evidence today, but no reason for a  
34 young tamariki with so much promise to be subjected to so much racism and abuse, when

- 1 at kura at Chisnallwood as little tama all the way through to these residences.
- 2 A. Āe.
- 3 Q. No excuse, no excuse for that and important for us to hear this for, as you say, for our  
4 recommendations to the Government, but also for the public at large to know about what  
5 happened, because a lot of New Zealanders would not know about this, or have turned a  
6 blind eye. So these powerful words from you and from other wāhine Māori who have been  
7 through these homes with you, so essential for us and I know it was hard for you today.
- 8 A. Yeah.
- 9 Q. And on behalf of us all, we felt it and we're with you and we just want to thank you so  
10 much for coming and speaking with us. Kia ora.
- 11 A. Kia ora.
- 12 Q. Ariana too for your tautoko, and Kath, kia ora kōrua, kia koutou.
- 13 A. Kia ora.
- 14 **CHAIR:** Kia maia, kia kaha, kia manawanui. He waiata koutou ma?
- 15 **[Waiata]**
- 16 **Adjournment from 1.07 pm to 2.16 pm**
- 17 **NETA BERNADETTE KEREPEPI**
- 18 **CHAIR:** Tēnā koutou katoa. Kia ora, tēnā koe. Neta, can I call you Neta?
- 19 A. Yes.
- 20 Q. Just before we start our proceedings I'm going to ask you if you'll take the affirmation, is  
21 that all right for you?
- 22 A. Sure.
- 23 Q. Neta, do you solemnly, sincerely, truly declare and affirm that the evidence that you'll give  
24 today will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?
- 25 A. I do.
- 26 Q. Tēnei te mihi ki a koe. Kia ora Mr Snelgar.
- 27 **MR SNELGAR:** Tēnā koe. Tēnā tātou, tēnā koe Neta. Kua tae mai nei mua te aroaro o ngā  
28 Kōmihana. He mea tuatahi me mihi ana ki a koe me ngā karanga maha kua tae mai, i tō  
29 taha ki te tiaki, hei akiaki me te āwhina i a koe i runga i ngā taumahatanga o tēnei kōrero.  
30 No reira, ka mihi ki a koe, huri noa ki to kōtiro e noho pou ana ki to taha hei tiaki hei  
31 manaaki. E te whanaunga tēnei te mihi nui ki a koe.
- 32 A. Tēnā koe.
- 33 Q. Tēnā koe Neta. Can I just start by asking were you born in 1961?
- 34 A. Āe, I was.