

**Witness Name:** Sidney Frank Neilson and Cherene Neilson-Hornblow

**Statement No:** WITN1206001

**Exhibits:** [WITN1206002]

**Dated:** 20 May 2022

**ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE**

**WITNESS STATEMENT OF SIDNEY FRANK NEILSON AND CHERENE NEILSON-  
HORNBLow**

We, Sidney Frank Neilson and Cherene Neilson-Hornblow, will say as follows:

Tēnā koutou katoa

Tuia ki runga, Tuia ki raro, Tuia ki waho, Tuia ki roto, Tuia ki te here tangata,

Ka rongo te pō, ka rongo te Ao, Haumi e, hui e, Tāiki e!

Ko Mātaatua ko Horouta ōku waka

Ko Whakataha ko Hīkurangi ōku maunga

Ko Waitangi ko Waiapu ōku awa

Ko Tauwhara, ko Te Tii, ko Tinatoka, ko Te Au Au ōku marae

Ko Ngāti Rehia, Te Whiu, Ngāti Hineira, Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Rangi ngā hapū

Ko Ngāpuhi nui tonu, Ko Ngāti Porou ōku iwi

Ko Nevel Neilson raua ko Pirihira Nukunuku ōku mātua

Ko Sidney Frank Neilson taku ingoa

Tēnā koutou katoa

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. My name is Sidney Frank Neilson. I was born in Wellington on [GRO-C] 1954 and I live in [GRO-C]. In the 1970s I was admitted to Porirua Hospital, under the Mental Health Act 1969. I have spent the majority of my life almost fifty years in and out of Porirua Hospital.
- 1.2. My younger sister, Cherene Neilson-Hornblow, will also be sharing her evidence in this statement. She is a mental health professional and is very proud to be a registered nurse. Cherene, and the rest of my whānau, witnessed the impacts of the abuse I experienced at Porirua Hospital.

## 2. Early life

- 2.1. I believe I had a normal life. We lived in [GRO-C], Porirua, then [GRO-C]. My father Nevel Neilson (Ngāpuhi) grew up at Tauwhara marae near Waimate North, between Kaikohe and Kerikeri. Our mother Pirihiira (Ngāti Porou) moved from Whakawhitira, a rural area near Ruatoria to Wellington in the 1950s.
- 2.2. My parents' environment and upbringing were hard. They met and married in the late 1950s. My parents worked two or three jobs to make ends meet – they only wanted to give us the best of what life had to offer, and to provide better choices and opportunities for our futures.
- 2.3. I am the mātāmua of our whānau, and I had the added pressure of being the eldest male and having three younger sisters. I had a caring whānau and I enjoyed everything – school, social sports, kapa haka. I was at my best when I was young.
- 2.4. I went to Ngāti Toa School and I was good at school. I was the brainiest one in class. I enjoyed the subjects, had good school reports, and was good at most sports. I played rugby for Porirua City and Marist St Pats Rugby Club. I was the fastest winger.
- 2.5. I was also the leader for kapa haka Ngāti Pōneke and lead our team into trophies with Bill Kerekere, who taught me. I started kapa haka when I was young, it was in my blood. My whānau went to the club every Monday for years. We travelled to Ratana Pa and did many performances at the Wellington Embassy and St James, including travelling to Northland, Gisborne and Ōrākei.
- 2.6. Cherene thinks that even though we were far away from our papakāinga, we were so immersed in our Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Porou whānau because we would return to our whanaunga every year so that we would maintain whakawhanaungatanga and keep our whakapapa connections strong between both haukāinga.
- 2.7. I worked at the Porirua Butcher, Woolworths, and Post Office Wellington back in the day. Life was great back then, everything was going well for me.

### 3. Events leading up to admission in care

- 3.1. As a teenager I was getting into drugs, drinking and girls, I was doing well in everything.
- 3.2. Cherene thinks I was under a lot of pressure and expectation to achieve high in both home, school, socially and in kapa haka. I was the first urban born, she thinks that eventually the strain of everything sent me rapidly into acute psychosis which led to my deterioration. I had been achieving so well up till then. I was a really good student and was one of the top leaders for Ngāti Pōneke. We actually won a couple of awards for the men's haka which I led Poropeihana haka at the competitions, this was a huge achievement. If you know about kapa haka, you know there's a lot of training and competition to excel to the top, and I was at the very top before I became unwell.
- 3.3. I was supposed to go to the United States for kapa haka, but for some reason I didn't end up going. Our parents had fundraised, and I had trained up for it. Cherene thinks not being able to go was also a contributing factor which was a tipping point for me.
- 3.4. I didn't feel unwell. I was still independent and looking after myself every day. Cherene thinks this part of my memory is still untouched, and I haven't been able to reflect or express it. But she remembers I started acting really oddly and bizarrely when I was 17.
- 3.5. By about 19, my whānau recognised something was not right with me. I became isolated and would often be by myself. Our whānau were probably in denial about it for a couple of years.
- 3.6. Our parents were at a loss about what to do. Mum wanted to get a tohunga, because she was into holistic ways of addressing wellbeing. My father wasn't into it. The tohunga came several times but by then I must have been beyond it. We had people from Northland and East coast try to help with me. I know my whānau never gave up on me.
- 3.7. I was sent up North GRO-B to be straightened out the old way. It was very abusive. GRO-B tried to beat it out of me because he didn't understand me.
- 3.8. Cherene says my parents may not have understood the western urban systems, or the processes and where to seek support and help for me as this had not happened to anyone in our whānau. Once I was admitted there was confusion, darkness, and no explanation of what things were going to happen to me or what the whānau were likely to expect from my admission. I was given several diagnoses and eventually labelled with schizophrenia. I was given many trials of medication and different treatment which I never understood until the last treatment of clozapine which I have stayed on ever since.
- 3.9. The final straw was when I lit the neighbour's car on fire. That's what broke me. The police got involved and people from Porirua Hospital started coming in. My parents had exhausted all resources, and bearing in mind that they didn't know much about urban living or mental health, I ended up being admitted under the Mental Health Act.

3.10. I think I was about 19 when I was admitted under the old Mental Health Act into Porirua Hospital.

#### **4. Porirua Hospital**

- 4.1. It was a hell of a life being in the hospital. Porirua Hospital was a violent place. I was treated like an animal, like the hunchback of Notre Dame.
- 4.2. I don't remember much in the early days, and I didn't recognise my family even though they visited regularly. My mother was especially upset and cried because of the way I looked and behaved.
- 4.3. The first five, 10 years were really rough because I'd be injected and knocked out a lot of the time. My whānau have vivid memories of what I was like when I first went into hospital.
- 4.4. Cherene remembers coming to visit me and I would be spaced out and drooling. She thinks I don't remember a lot of this time because I was heavily medicated. She said I looked worse and changed and that I gained a lot of weight and was behaving bizarre. She said I was not myself in the early days of hospitalisation.
- 4.5. I was admitted into Ward 9, where I was given treatment without understanding what was happening. It was hell.
- 4.6. Later toward being released from hospital I worked at the hospital doing jobs like woodchopping, making compost, or cleaning the wing.
- 4.7. The patients were a mix of men and women, but there were mostly men. Cherene remembers they were all Māori or Pacific. There were teenagers and children, younger than me, and they were mixed in together with the adults.
- 4.8. The patients who couldn't be controlled were sent to the hard places, like Manuka A and B. The doors were thick with great big wheels you had to turn, to restrain people in the rooms.
- 4.9. My whānau would show up with no warning or appointment, so they could see what I looked like without forewarning. I'd be a mess. Staff would make excuses, saying I'd just woken up, or that I was asleep, in the earlier days my whānau visited but were not allowed to see me. But my family could tell I'd been like this for days on end sleeping in my PJ's.
- 4.10. I was diagnosed with schizophrenia but Cherene believes that it was an acute phase which was drawn out into years of abuse in care.

#### ***ECT and overmedicalisation***

- 4.11. While I was in Porirua Hospital, they gave me Electro Convulsive Therapy (ECT). I think I was the only one there that was given ECT. It was done by Doctor [GRO.B] and Doctor [GRO.B]. I didn't understand what ECT was, and I was not told about it until the morning after I woke up. Nothing was explained. It frightened me, and I cried.

- 4.12. I'd be put in pyjamas and walked down a corridor. I'd get a cup of tea and toast, then I would be called into a room which had beds. They'd put a rubber thing in my mouth and give me ECT. I soiled myself a few times during the shocks because of how aggressive the 'treatment' was.
- 4.13. When I first started ECT they'd tie me down because I'd be fighting against it. I didn't have any injections and the shocks were unmodified. Because I was conscious, I could feel it, and it was horrible. After that I'd pass out for about 30 minutes or an hour. When I woke up, they'd tell me to go have breakfast in the big dining room in Ward 9 or 10.
- 4.14. I had ECT every day for about six months. I didn't like having ECT every day, I hated it. It still gives me nightmares and scares me when I think or talk about it. I don't know why I had shock treatment, nothing was explained to me or my whānau, and to this day I don't know why they treated me with ECT.
- 4.15. Cherene believes it was a method by staff to control patients who misbehaved and who were considered not to be compliant but 'badly behaved' even though this may not have been the case for me or any others who received ECT.
- 4.16. We also used to get a Modecate injection in the bottom every two hours, every day. Every four hours they would medicate me, they gave me pills. Cherene says I was so overmedicated that they would often see me such a physical state of unwellness, sitting around in my pyjamas for weeks on end, drooling in my seat. It was all hell.
- 4.17. My family weren't informed of anything. Because I was under the old Mental Health Act, my parents couldn't get me discharged. It wasn't until the law changed in 1992 that there was a bit more freedom. Cherene recalls my family pleading, trying to understand my treatment, but it didn't help. Our whānau were affected individually in different ways however we all agree that we were disillusioned and frustrated by the Mental Health system, legislation and staff.
- 4.18. Cherene thinks my parents would have never signed my committal papers if they had known how difficult it would be to get me out. It was never explained that I was more or less committed for life under the old legislation. By the time the law changed in 1992, I'd already been in the hospital for 20 years and was so institutionalised. I'd been absorbed into the colonial system.

### **Seclusion**

- 4.19. After ECT I would be taken to Manuka A or B block, into a small blackened room. It was dark, and they'd shut the windows and lock me in. I would be put in pyjamas for seclusion. Nobody would check on me and sometimes I was left in the room for weeks. I'd only have water and urinal bottle and mattress on the floor. It was horrible.
- 4.20. The staff wore hobnail boots, so I could hear them walking down the corridor. One day, I could hear nurses coming down the corridor, and they were big fellas. I thought they were coming to kill me.

- 4.21. About 10 or 12 Pākehā nurses barged into the room to attack me, with their fists in the air, wearing their hobnail boots. They tried to take me down, but I started to fight back. This went on for about 10 to 20 minutes, but it felt like forever because there were a lot of nurses trying to kick and punch me down.
- 4.22. Eventually, an uncle who worked as a Māori support and cultural worker came into the room. He brought me a cup of tea and we had a talk. He apologised for what happened to me, but I will never forget them and what the nurses tried to do to me. I went back to Ward 10, where I stayed for a few weeks in pyjamas.
- 4.23. It was later that uncle GRO  
B told me I put them (nurses) unconscious. I think one or two nurses may have been injured as a result. If I didn't hit them back, I reckon I'd be dead. I still don't know why those nurses attacked me and can remember clearly who those nurses were.

#### ***Physical abuse***

- 4.24. There was one staff member who didn't like me. He was a psych nurse at Porirua. When I'd go down to the tavern to have a few beers, he'd be waiting outside to take you off. One time, I was at the tavern and he asked, "do you wanna fight bro?" We had a big scrap underneath the bridge and I kicked his head in. There was blood everywhere, and I left him. The next day he tried to approach me again, but I told him to eff off.
- 4.25. Later I was put into Craig A or B, which was a little better than Manuka, but a lot of my mates were beaten up and abused. We were overmedicated often, having daily injections and medication which would knock me out. Myself and my cousin were beaten up by Pākehā male nurses.
- 4.26. There was often fighting between patients. The patients would try to stab each other in the kitchen, and the nurses tried to stop it, but they couldn't. GRO-B-1 a patient, was stabbed in the eye with a knife, and the nurses came, so GRO-B  
1 took them on and he was locked up.
- 4.27. Staff used to bring us cups of tea, then five minutes later the patients would be fighting each other, killing each other.
- 4.28. Cherene recalls visiting me at Porirua where some of the staff appeared violent and abusive. She says I would come out with a lot of bruises, but my family didn't know where or who had inflicted these on me. They'd ask the staff, but the staff couldn't explain to my parents and our whānau how I had received the bruises. Cherene said I would also have shaved eyebrows and hair which disturbed my whānau who wondered why I was able to do this when I was supposed to be in care.
- 4.29. Cherene says staff would beat me up because I was probably trying to do something they didn't like. In my earlier days of being admitted I don't have much recollection of the violence, but my whānau witnessed it and kept requesting hui with the charge nurse and staff in order to get answers for the way in which I was being treated.

### **Deaths**

- 4.30. I saw other patients take their own life. Because we were always locked up in a room, beaten up, drugged with all this medication, people looked like zombies. The patients would just give up.
- 4.31. We used to go to the hospital chapel. I'd go to the funerals and tangi. There was a little urupā, because there were patients dying every day. Most of the patients who were in Porirua with me have passed away now.

### **Whānau working at Porirua Hospital**

- 4.32. My brother-in-law GRO-B and my sister worked as kitchen hands. Mum and Dad also worked in Ward 10. Mum worked as the laundress supervisor and Dad was the supervisor cook. When my dad and brother-in-law worked in the kitchens it was probably the only time we would be feed properly.
- 4.33. Cherene says that our parents working at the hospital was probably hard for them. They could see what was happening to me, how I was treated and beaten up. I was bruised and black-eyed our whānau were never able to understand what was happening to our brother on the inside of those walls. Cherene remembers they would ask to read my notes or have copies of my medical notes but this was declined and whānau were denied any access to try to better understand the situation or get to the bottom of the physical abuse. There was no patient rights or complaints systems set up for patients, or the whānau were not made aware of it.
- 4.34. Cherene doesn't think the abuse was from the patients because they were all drugged to the hilt. To this day our family doesn't know how I was beaten or who beat me. We just know it was happening behind closed doors.
- 4.35. My mother would always visit me, but she would cry because of my worsening situation. She would bring me clothes, after shave, drinks and snacks, and always remind me to maintain cleanliness. I also looked after myself, keeping myself clean. I would visit Mum down in laundry as she was supervisor in that department.
- 4.36. In 1989 my father died. I didn't want to be in hospital, I hated everything about being in a hospital – the Pākehā staff, the environment, the models of health, the doctors and psychologists. I had a psychologist who was a drug addict.

### **Racism**

- 4.37. We didn't like the way the Pākehā nurses talked to us, they treated us like shit. They were rude, arrogant and racist towards us.
- 4.38. Racism was always present in my experiences as a patient, and this was often expressed as anger directed at me by the Pākehā staff. They would stand over me or treat me like I was no good.

- 4.39. The Māori and Pākehā used to be like enemies, fighting in the kitchen. Nurses would come along, and they couldn't break it up, so they'd call the doctors who couldn't break it up. They would be left killing each other.
- 4.40. Cherene says there were a few Māori staff in the 70s and 80s, but they were mostly cleaners and cooks, not working at the hospital in a profession. Dad would gather everyone at the recreation hall and there'd be boil ups and rēwana bread to manaakitanga all the Māori clients at the hospital sometimes Pākehā clients would join in with us. These are the only good memories I have of Porirua.
- 4.41. It was a way to whakawhanaungatanga, and also get all the whānau to talk about what issues and concerns they had with the system, staff, place and environment. Everyone had their own story, and it was a way to support each other. As a result of these gatherings, Te Whare Marie was later established.

#### ***Te Whare Marie***

- 4.42. When Te Whare Marie opened in 1992, I would go to the day programme every day because of the Kaupapa Māori environment and staff. Having the programme, kuia, koroua and the whole atmosphere was more familiar to me, and the staff genuinely cared for us and my whānau. I even led the haka and was encouraged to sit on the paepae at Te Whare Marie.
- 4.43. Te Whare Marie provided freedom and peace. I finally had people that understood me, after 20 years in the system.
- 4.44. Cherene said that Te Whare Marie was the beginning of a Kaupapa Māori mental health approach which was the start of a partnership to provide Māori mental health services facilitated by mana/tangata whenua and patients who upheld the tikanga, kawa, te reo Māori and who provided Māori immersed programmes which I related to and thrived in.
- 4.45. Cherene says that until Te Whare Marie started up, there was nothing like it. It was the result of lots of complaints about no services for Māori people. Once it opened and people were able to go, there was space for Māori to interact and be with their own. They could listen to waiata or do karakia or mihi or pepeha and create their own space. Prior to that, they were just left to their own devices, nothing existed.
- 4.46. Cherene says my family noticed a huge change in my behaviour, attitude and the way in which I become involved especially since a Kaupapa Māori service established we were encouraged to sit on the paepae and get involved with every day running life of an urban marae. We were involved in celebrations, tangihanga, birthdays and weddings.

#### **5. Community living after discharge**

- 5.1. I had years of being locked up and told what to do and when to go to sleep and what to eat. Sometime around 1989, I was told I was going to be discharged due to the big hospitals shutting down. Cherene remembers that when deinstitutionalisation began, there was limited offer of help or support for me or my whānau, I felt like I just thrown into the

community and told to survive. I moved from an open ward at the hospital to a half-way house in 1989. There were whānau hui, and meetings with a psychologist and psychiatrist in preparation for my release, but all my family knew was that the hospital wanted to discharge me.

- 5.2. In 1996 I went to Hart House, GRO-C and I was set free (discharged). It was supported accommodation with a cook and a few of us lived in residence. I loved it. I could shower, eat and go to bed when I wanted, and even watch TV. It was a lot of freedom and choice to do my own thing.
- 5.3. Being able to eat, watch TV and go to bed when I wanted was a big deal after so long in the hospital. I moved around to different flats and went with a couple of community services.
- 5.4. I moved to Porirua, where I flatted with GRO-B then moved to GRO-C. The nursing staff told me they didn't want me to stay. Some places were paru and some of the patients were worse than me.
- 5.5. Since I moved to the community, I haven't had any need to have a beer or smoke marijuana. I am currently living in the community in GRO-C Porirua, for almost 26 years with Pathways, who initially supported me. It is convenient for me to walk to town, shop for groceries, visit my doctor when I was working it was easier for me to get to work.
- 5.6. My previous landlord took advantage of me as I was the only one in the block of flats who lived in a cold, mouldy and damp flat. It hadn't had any renovations while I lived there. My whānau complained to my team and landlord because I was paying a lot of rent but living in substandard accommodation. He told me (landlord) I got it cheaper, which is why no renovations was done inside or outside of my flat even though the other flats around me were renovated and tidied, I also had breathing issues as a result of the mould.
- 5.7. Cherene says the community wasn't set up to for the people discharged into the community as so many people struggled with having lived years being institutionalised. The community struggled to facilitate living arrangements for us and the resources just weren't set up.
- 5.8. I believe I had been taken advantage of by the previous landlord because they were aware I was with Mental Health services. However, my living conditions have been improved with renovations and insulation since my new landlords took over two years ago.
- 5.9. I love my life. It is good living alone, cooking, shopping, keeping my flat clean and tidy, keeping myself clean and tidy and doing my own things. I had a peer zone support person, Noel, for 3 months in 2017 when my sister passed away.
- 5.10. Noel and I did a lot of things together, and I achieved a lot of my dreams and goals with him. One of them was to own or go for a ride in a Red Trans Am, which Noel organised on Valentine's Day. I will never forget that day, it was one of my highlights to achieve a goal

of mine. I've also travelled to Fremantle, Perth, twice, for my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday and my niece's wedding.

- 5.11. I live my life according to what I can achieve. I am supported by my whānau who check in with me and I have been supported by Porirua Community Mental Health Team psychiatrist and Kathy nurse on a regular basis they are good to me I see them once a month for bloods and medication.

## **6. Impact**

### ***Mental / physical impacts***

- 6.1. There were a lot of things that happened at Porirua Hospital. I couldn't wait to get out, and I tried several times, but the Mental Health Act made it impossible. Cherene says I became progressively worse in the first few years. My whānau saw me as a high-achieving person, to someone sitting around drooling, unable to stand, bruised from head to toe. Our parents and whānau never knew what was going on, despite many attempts requesting for clarification from the Charge/Matron or staff members.
- 6.2. My whānau endured stigmatisation, racism and mental health suppression. My whānau were not informed or given information of my treatment or medication, or kept updated about what was happening to me while I was in hospital. A lot of my treatment was mysterious and unexplained with endless staff telling my whānau misinformation about me.
- 6.3. The system should have just left me. I didn't need help, the doctors didn't listen to me, they didn't listen to my family. There were a lot of patients there, but they weren't like me, I was different.
- 6.4. Cherene wrote her Masters dissertation on me and my experience [WITN1206002]. It's a snippet of what life was like, and the issues. There was lots of racism, a focus on English/Pakeha models of health, English/Pakeha services, and the English/Pakeha nurses that ran those institutions. Some of the people employed at Porirua hospital were riddled with institutionalised racism. The few Māori staff employed understood us but they were rarely in positions to make any significant change or difference. Kaupapa Māori services in the early 1990s were emerging which was a new revelation for westernised constructs however this was not new for us as whānau it was real life, real people who understood us, real korero and get real.
- 6.5. Cherene says there were a lot of things that I had to adjust to in those systems. Our parents came from a very humble background, and they didn't know much about city life, so there was a lot of pressure on them and me. I was the first urban-born Māori male born in my family, so I was under a lot of pressure to conform to an urban lifestyle, and to be a role model for the family.
- 6.6. When my parents admitted me, they didn't realise how hard it was going to be to get me out. I was committed for life under the old act. Cherene thinks if I had been hospitalised for a shorter period of time with the support and input from whānau, then it would've helped

me to recover quicker. However, instead I have endured almost fifty years which is a long time being institutionalized and being amongst other people with different diagnoses. I believe I got worse.

6.7. Part of the reason why Cherene wanted to work in mental health was so she could understand Mental Health, be able to support and better advocate for loved ones who become unwell and to support our people who are admitted into these places are looked after as required by law.

6.8. I am proud of the work my sister does now.

## **7. Redress**

7.1. Cherene says I have never sought compensation or redress – talking to the Commission is the first time I've ever wanted to talk about it.

## **8. Looking forward**

8.1. Cherene says that talking to the Commission has finally given me a voice and opportunity to share what I've got to say. My family has watched me go through a bloody exhaustive endurance course that is the mental health system. The whole system needs a magic wand over it – it's a very sick system.

8.2. She's pleased that I'll hopefully be able to find some peace and get my story off my chest. Cherene hopes it will lead to some understanding about what's happened to me, in the past, present and where I'm going in the future.

8.3. I want people to have aroha, be good to each other, be kind and look after everyone equally. In the future I would like to see Māori, whānau, hapū, iwi and communities to be able to improve their own health and wellbeing, information and empowerment for patients and whānau.

8.4. Māori have the answers. Kaupapa Māori, leadership, people, tikanga, theories, models, care and Tino rangatiratanga are needed to protect future generations. That would also lead to better health and wellbeing outcomes in response to the growing needs of Māori.

8.5. I would also like mental health institutions to be held liable to implement Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles in health policies and procedures. Mental Health staff need to be held accountable and educated and trained in competencies based on Te Tiriti. It is not acceptable for government departments, services and employees to not embrace their Te Tiriti responsibilities and obligations.

8.6. Mental Health services should also be held responsible for implementing policies, procedures, laws and systems consistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

8.7. There needs to be Māori equity and equality in leadership and job positions, including equity for Māori health workers including leadership and governance positions. If a stronger focus on equity is placed at the heart of healthcare, then everyone benefits.

Structural racism, like what I experienced at Porirua Hospital, is not acceptable. The only relief I received was when another Māori staff member intervened. Their way of treating Māori patients was not the norm and I was disadvantaged throughout my treatment.

- 8.8. Pākehā staff need to self-reflect and work on their own implicit and explicit biases which includes their own identity, attitudes and behaviours when working with tangata/mana whenua. Pākehā need to acknowledge their contribution to the history in this country so that they can better understand the mana/tangata whenua cultural practices, tikanga, kawa, te reo and mana enhancing ways to better understand us. And to also honour Te Tiriti partnership.
- 8.9. Cherene says my experience in institutions has made our whānau stronger, more resilient towards people that need support with their mental health, because it's made us who we are today. As a whānau we went through my sufferings and experiences of inhumane treatment, lack of dignity and cultural respect for the people who were supposed to be cared for at Porirua Hospital. We are thankful as a result of this our whānau have a deep understanding and we are compassionate towards people who experience mental health issues or any disability.
- 8.10. I do worry about those people who don't have a strong whānau like I do. I could not have got through it all without my whānau fighting for me.
- 8.11. Cherene says our vision of a transformed system and governance addressing intergenerational trauma through institutionalism needs to occur so that healing Māori for Māori alongside Te Tiriti o Waitangi can transpire. I like the sound of that. Improving our own health, developing our own hubs, using Māori models of hauora and ways of doing things. Māori leadership, healing and research. That's the way forward. It's very obvious, because once I went into Kaupapa Māori services, our whānau knew that I was in the right space with the right people as I engaged and thrived which enhanced my own wellbeing and Mana Motuhake.
- 8.12. As my parents and ancestors taught me; *titiro whakamuri, kia matarā ki nāianeī, e ora ai ngā uri whakaheke* – look to our past, be vigilant in our present, so that future generations may thrive.

### **Statement of Truth**

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and was made by me knowing that it may be used as evidence by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

Signed: GRO-C

Dated: 20/5/2022