

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY  
FOSTER CARE INQUIRY 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)  
Ali'imua Sandra Alofivae  
Dr Anaru Erueti

**Counsel:** Mr Simon Mount QC, Ms Kerryn Beaton QC, Dr Allan Cooke  
and Ms Aroha Fletcher for the Royal Commission  
Ms Rachael Schmidt-McCleave, Ms Julia White and  
Mr Max Clarke-Parker for the Crown

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

**Date:** 13 June 2022

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**TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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1 **CHAIR:** Yes, thank you Dr Cooke.

2 **DR COOKE:** Tēnā koe e te Heamana. Ko Mr EH tāku kaiwhāki. This is Mr EH, he is  
3 accompanied by his wife and his nephew. Prior, just immediately prior to this stage of the  
4 hearing, Mr EH has indicated he is now happy to be live streamed, but he is still going to be  
5 known as Mr EH and for the purpose of the live streaming, the focus is going to be on the  
6 two gentlemen who are seated in the witness stand.

7 **CHAIR:** Good, thank you. May we know the name of the other gentleman, do you want your  
8 name known or would you prefer to be anonymous?

9 **JOHN:** Yeah.

10 **DR COOKE:** This is Mr EH's nephew, John.

11 **CHAIR:** John, kia ora John.

12 **JOHN:** Kia ora.

13 **DR COOKE:** The only other matter is that of affirming, swearing him in.

14 **CHAIR:** Yes. We'll do that.

15 **MR EH (Affirmed)**

16 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE:** We're going to refer to you as Mr EH during the course of  
17 the morning, you know that?

18 A. Yes.

19 **Q.** You have a copy of your statement in front of you?

20 A. I do.

21 **Q.** You know that the Commissioners have that copy as well and are familiar with it?

22 A. Yes.

23 **Q.** Can you first of all tell us when you were born?

24 A. I was born in 1943.

25 **Q.** How old are you now?

26 A. 79.

27 **Q.** And where were you born?

28 A. I was born in Māngere.

29 **Q.** And can you tell us the purpose of why you're here today at this hui?

30 A. I'm here to state my case as being brought up and how I was ill-treated in foster care, and  
31 I'd like part of that – I don't know what I'm saying now I've got it all back to front. Hang on.  
32 It's just that I want to state my case how I was brought up in foster care and the abuse that  
33 I had against me when I was a young child.

34 **Q.** And in addition to being in foster care you were also placed in a residence, weren't you?

1 A. I was, yes.

2 Q. Can you tell us which one that was?

3 A. First of all, it was a girls' home in [GRO-B] called for girls; it was in [GRO-B], it was  
4 a – I don't know whether it's Catholic, but it is [GRO-B].

5 Q. And the second one?

6 A. Second one was Ōwairaka Boys' Home.

7 Q. We'll come on to that later.

8 **CHAIR:** Just before you do, I don't want to interrupt your evidence at all, but remember we've got  
9 signers over here, so just if you can both just keep a little bit of gap between your questions  
10 and answers, just so that they can keep up. Do you mind doing that?

11 A. Okay.

12 Q. Thank you very much.

13 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** So, we've set the scene about why you're  
14 here today, I just briefly need to cover something about your family life when you were  
15 small. I understand your dad was a drinker who hardly ever worked.

16 A. That's correct.

17 Q. Mum was never there for you when you were growing up?

18 A. No, never there. That I can remember.

19 Q. Right. How many were in the family, how many children?

20 A. There was 14 of us.

21 Q. And where did you come?

22 A. I'm the fourth youngest.

23 Q. Is it correct that you were born into a family that was under the watch of Social Welfare?

24 A. That is correct, since 1942 before I was born.

25 Q. Of your siblings, how many went into State care that you're aware of?

26 A. State care would be, I would say out of the 13 I'd say about 10 of us were in State care, but,  
27 yeah, I'll leave it at that, State care, about 10 of us, the rest were a bit older.

28 Q. Is it correct that of your – you had three younger brothers, and they were adopted out?

29 A. Three younger ones were adopted out, yes.

30 Q. You weren't adopted out, can you tell us why you think you weren't adopted out?

31 A. I think that my father right from the word go decided that he wanted me with him and that  
32 he suspected that the others were not his children.

1 **Q.** What I want you to do now, because you've told me you want to read some of your  
2 evidence yourself?

3 **A.** Yes, I do.

4 **Q.** What I would like you to do now, if you can turn to paragraph 8 and – you've got that in  
5 front of you?

6 **A.** Yes, I've got that.

7 **Q.** That tells us first of all that Social Welfare was involved with the family in 1942 which we  
8 know. Then just start from that second sentence if you can?

9 **A.** "There was a Social Welfare involvement with my family in 1942 before I was born."  
10 Excuse me I'll going down to the next paragraph, is that what you want?

11 **Q.** Just read out the next one, "I know there".

12 **CHAIR:** Not too fast.

13 **A.** Sorry. I know there were concerns that my parents wouldn't be able to look after us. The  
14 situation at home was reviewed every year. Sometimes it was okay and other times the  
15 comments would suggest the place was a mess and the kids were not well fed. In June 1946  
16 there was an investigation by Child Welfare following a complaint made about my family.  
17 The Superintendent of Child Welfare division approved the committal of the children in my  
18 family to the care of the State in conditions in our home did not – if conditions in our home  
19 did not improve. I think it was a poor housing situation and possibly there was some  
20 neglect on the part of my parents.

21 In October 1947 there were complaints regarding our living circumstances at that  
22 time. Committal of the children was recommended and approved. Then in November 1947,  
23 according to my records, the children were placed in legal supervision for one year. I was  
24 still living with my parents at this point.

25 On 23 March 1949, when we were placed in – a complaint action was taken by  
26 Child Welfare, and I was committed to the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare.  
27 That was when I entered State care and became a ward of the State, other people would call  
28 us inmates.

29 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** Just pause there. You were five years old at  
30 the time of going into State care?

31 **A.** That is correct.

32 **Q.** You've used the word "inmates". Can you just tell us the context where that occurred, why  
33 and how was it that you were called inmates?

- 1 A. I read in an article of when people are to look after us that they were in the bottom of that  
2 line, right at the bottom it said that we were inmates in care of our foster people. And it also  
3 occurred when I was at school that we were called inmates and welfare rats. That we were  
4 just welfare rats, that was very hurting.
- 5 Q. So, what you're telling us, isn't it, that the kids who you were at school with knew that you  
6 were in the welfare?
- 7 A. Yes, the headmaster of the school told the children that we do have a welfare person in the  
8 school, in our room, and he's to be treated the same as everybody else. And therefore, those  
9 children knew about us as welfare.
- 10 Q. Okay. I now want to go on to your life in the girls' home. So if you could go over to  
11 paragraph 14. I would like you to read from paragraph 14 onwards which describes the  
12 experience you had in that home. You'll see as well that – you'll see it's been redacted,  
13 hasn't it?
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 Q. If you could just use the word that's in the redactions might be the easiest thing if you can  
16 remember to do so. Paragraph 14.
- 17 A. When I was – that was a redaction – the first place I went to that I remember was a girls'  
18 home in GRO-B in GRO-B. I only found out later in life where I was and where I  
19 was put. I was only there because I couldn't go to a boys' home as I was too young, so they  
20 put me in a girls' home. The girls would do things like put sheets over their heads and light  
21 candles underneath them to pretend they were ghosts. It was really scary as to a young boy.  
22 Life there was terrible. There were bad girls a lot of them. They weren't good. They used to  
23 punch and fight and used to get scared, and I used to get scared. They'd fight at the dinner  
24 table; they would throw food in front of each other. The girls would fight in front of me,  
25 and it was so scary.
- 26 Sexual abuse. I was sexually abused there by a couple of older girls. The next night  
27 in the home I was in bed, and I was asleep. When I woke up, they were in my bed, and they  
28 were playing around with me. There were about 12 girls in that dormitory. I just woke up in  
29 the morning and I was lying on the floor. I didn't want to move or do anything. The girls  
30 fondled me and done bad things to me.
- 31 Q. Mr EH I should have said to you earlier, but if at any time you want a break, just give me a  
32 wave.
- 33 A. I'm still carrying on.

1 **Q.** Jolly good and just give us a wave and we'll make sure that you have a break.

2 **A.** I'll just have a drink.

3 **CHAIR:** Of course.

4 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** Okay.

5 **A.** This would happen every couple of nights. And I would cry, and I used to run down the  
6 back of the section where the home was and climb up a tree and sit there and try and hide  
7 from what was happening. Then they would call me and say, "where is Mr EH?" They'd  
8 tease me and say, "he's up the tree, he's like a monkey." I tried to raise it, but I was ignored.

9 Physical abuse. Treatment from the staff wasn't good either. Staff would yell at me,  
10 pull my hair. I recall being manhandled by the staff and slapped and knocked around. They  
11 fed us horrible food, like tripe and onions, smoked fish and milk. My social worker at the  
12 time was Miss Wishart – do you mind me saying that?

13 **Q.** No.

14 **CHAIR:** No, that's fine.

15 **A.** Miss Wishart. I preferred the Social Welfare women; the men were too rough. I used to  
16 think Ms Wishart was my mother, she was so kind.

17 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** We've just dealt with your time in the home,  
18 girls' home, you were about five and a half I think when you went there.

19 **A.** Yes.

20 **Q.** We're now going to talk about the Christina foster home, which is the first of the foster  
21 homes that you were in. Just tell us who was living in that home?

22 **A.** There was Mr and Mrs **GRO-B** and a boarder in the house.

23 **Q.** Let's go down to paragraph 23.

24 **A.** Mrs **GRO-B** passed away later on while I was there. But she used to physically and  
25 mentally abuse me. She would lock me in a room with a little fox terrier and a cat. The cat  
26 and the dog would fight, and I couldn't get out because she would lock the door. I tried to  
27 look after the cat and stop that by throwing the cat out the window. But I got scratched and  
28 it was frightening. These things I remember, and they stay with you.

29 The boarder in the home tried to sexually abuse me. I told him to leave me alone  
30 and I would tell him to get away. He would say things like "jump over here and I will feel  
31 you boy." I used to poke my tongue out at him and run away. He would grab me and try to  
32 pull me in. I tried kicking him. It was bad. He would have lollies and things like that. One

1 time he grabbed me, grabbed hold of me and I knew what that was about because I'd  
2 already had that experience.

3 **Q.** We're going to move on to the next couple of paragraphs and this is about your leaving the  
4 home. You tell us paragraph 25 that the female caregiver died.

5 **A.** Yes.

6 **Q.** Who found her?

7 **A.** I did.

8 **Q.** Just carry on reading the rest of that paragraph.

9 **A.** I remember going into the room yelling something like "the welfare is here" and I went  
10 over to touch her, and she didn't move. I had heard Mr Skuse say that Mrs [GRO-B] had  
11 cancer and that she was dying. She had wanted to adopt me. And I think Mr Skuse tried to  
12 stop it. My father came into the house at that same time as the welfare and I imagine he  
13 would have stopped that. I was glad about it.

14 **Q.** You then went into Ōwairaka for a very – a relatively brief period of time and we're going  
15 to miss that bit out, but we're going to now talk about your time in the second foster home  
16 which is at paragraph 28.

17 **A.** Oh yeah.

18 **Q.** As I understand it there were a couple living there and they had a son who was the same  
19 age as you, that's correct?

20 **A.** Yes.

21 **Q.** If you could just start at paragraph 29 where we talk about the female caregiver being an  
22 ex-school teacher, and if you could start where you describe what she was like. Second  
23 sentence, para 29.

24 **A.** She was nice. I found [GRO-B-1] a bit of a hard man. Later in life though [GRO-B-1] wrote to  
25 Social Welfare Department in relation to me. He said if I was ever to make a claim about  
26 sexual abuse, he would verify that at the age of six or seven years old I had told him I'd  
27 been abused. I don't recall the welfare ever visiting me in the time I lived there. While I was  
28 living with the [GRO-B-1 GRO-B-2] I got sick and ended up in hospital for about three  
29 weeks with appendicitis.

30 Physical abuse. In that time, I lived there if I did something wrong then [GRO-B-1]  
31 would get us in the shed with boxing gloves on and hold on to me for his son to punch me.  
32 I used to try and punch back but I couldn't. I was only a small boy, and he was very big and



1 was quite a solid boy. I would end up with a bloody nose and the son was about a year  
2 younger than me.

3 **Q.** The next paragraph is about you leaving that home because they went to Helensville. You  
4 say they didn't want to take you, there was no room for you.

5 **A.** They reckon there was no room, so they got rid of me. I'm glad they didn't want me.  
6 Mrs **GRO-B-2** stated she would gladly have me back if welfare had followed that up. I  
7 think I would have stayed with them permanently.

8 **Q.** We're now moving on to the next foster home and here you – again, it was with a couple,  
9 and they had a boy who was slightly older than you, didn't they?

10 **A.** They did.

11 **Q.** And if you look at paragraph 35?

12 **A.** They had a boy who was older than me. I told the boy things that had happened to me, and  
13 he would laugh at me. He told his father what had happened to me.

14 **Q.** Now go down to paragraph 37?

15 **A.** Mr **GRO-B-4** sexually abused me a couple of times. He attempted to sodomise me, but  
16 I got away. One night I was in bed, and he came into and said to me to hop up, take my  
17 clothes off, my pyjamas off. I said I was cold, so he didn't want to, so he didn't – I didn't  
18 want to sorry. He sat me on his knee and started fondling me and told me that he liked me  
19 and that I was a good boy and this sort of – and all this sort of thing. That time there was no  
20 penetration or anything. He tried though. I tried to hit him as hard as I could, and I just ran  
21 outside and stayed outside all night. I stayed out there; I didn't go back inside.

22 The next day after that happened, I told Mr Skuse, my welfare officer, because he  
23 came over. He said "we had better get you out of here" but nothing ever happened to those  
24 people that did that to me. Mr Skuse should have acted on it and done something about it.

25 I think it might have been two or three weeks until I got out of the **GRO-B** home.  
26 I pretended that I got sick, and I wanted to go to hospital. I thought by me doing this  
27 I would be able to get out and then I could run away from hospital, but it didn't happen like  
28 that.

29 I still had two Social Welfare officers at the time, Mr Skuse and Miss Wishart. Miss  
30 Wishart didn't come to see me though. Mr Skuse was the main welfare officer. Mr Skuse  
31 was also a welfare officer for my brother. I found that out later. My brother had got along  
32 well with him. Mr Skuse treated him good, but he didn't treat me good. He used to pull my  
33 hair and I was told I was pretty cheeky.

1 **Q.** We're now coming to those paragraphs where you're going to tell us about your time in the  
2 Ōwairaka Boys' Home.

3 **A.** Yes.

4 **Q.** You were there, I think you'll see paragraph 41?

5 **A.** Yes.

6 **Q.** I'm just going to summarise that first paragraph, you tell us that it was as bad as being in  
7 the foster home and that you were ill-treated. Can you just – see that?

8 **A.** Yes, yes.

9 **Q.** And the boys there were generally 14 or 15 years of age, and you were only nine?

10 **A.** Yes.

11 **Q.** You went to the local school at Ōwairaka?

12 **A.** Yes.

13 **Q.** And how did you get to and from school?

14 **A.** Every day get up in the morning and we have to walk to school to, I don't know, it wasn't  
15 that far, I suppose, but we used to have to walk in bare feet to the school and at lunchtime  
16 walk home, and at lunchtime after lunch walk back to the school, and at home time walk  
17 back home again. And that was with the supervision of a welfare officer walking beside us.

18 **Q.** Just look at the last sentence of that paragraph. You're telling us there what would happen if  
19 you ever tried to tell the teachers at school what was happening.

20 **A.** Yeah.

21 **Q.** What would they say to you?

22 **A.** Sorry, just –

23 **CHAIR:** That's all right, you're on paragraph 42 right at the end.

24 **A.** Yeah, if ever we tried to tell the teachers about what was happening, we would be told just  
25 to shut up. I think they were told that, tell us to shut up.

26 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** In the next two paragraphs you're telling us  
27 about life at Ōwairaka, can you just read those out to us please.

28 **A.** If we did something wrong, we used to have to cut firewood with a saw. This was the  
29 hardest task, and we would have to do it every day for about an hour. We had to cut  
30 firewood in bare feet, and I recall having blisters on my feet. We had to have cold showers  
31 as punishment. There was also other tasks we had to do like weeding the garden, washing  
32 windows, polishing floors and cleaning showers.

33 One time I jumped out a window and ran away. I got found by the Police the next  
34 day and brought back to be belted up again. After running away, I was locked in the

1 dormitory for a week, only out for meals and during that time I had nothing to do. I wasn't  
2 allowed to go to school, we were punished by trying to run away or other misbehaviour.

3 Physical abuse. The other punishment we had was regularly getting tapped with a  
4 piece of wood on the backside of our legs. It would be hard enough that I was left with  
5 welts and bleeding on my legs. Was the one who -- am I allowed to mention that man's  
6 name?

7 **CHAIR:** Yes, you are.

8 A. Mr Ricketts was the man that did all this damage to us. He always did it. One day  
9 Mr Ricketts took us for a walk-up Mt Albert. We had eaten monkey apples from trees up  
10 the mountain and when we got back, we were punished by having to drink warm Epsom  
11 salts. I couldn't drink it, so they got a teapot and tipped it down my throat. I vomited like  
12 hell. I just felt at the time that I wanted to die. I didn't want to carry on. Can I just have a  
13 break?

14 **CHAIR:** Of course.

15 **DR COOKE:** Yeah. Do you want to have a break in here or do you want to go out the back.

16 A. Just here.

17 **CHAIR:** You just tell us when you're ready.

18 A. Yeah, I'm ready.

19 **Q.** Thank you.

20 A. Do you want me to carry on reading?

21 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** Yeah.

22 A. We were put in boxing rings with older boys, and they would beat the younger ones up.  
23 Staff would put us in a boxing ring and would make us fight. I made one good friend. He  
24 would – him and I would try and stick up for each other. That stopped a couple of other big  
25 bullies from hitting us.

26 There was a kind staff member called Mrs Swan. She used to run into Mr Ricketts'  
27 office when he hit us and tell him to stop. She said if she didn't work there, she would have  
28 taken me to live with her. She was a lovely woman, I appreciated her a lot. Because I think  
29 she helped me – can I just say that?

30 **CHAIR:** Of course, you can, yes.

31 A. She helped me get through a lot of times there when I was suffering and I did appreciate it  
32 and I could have treated her like a mother as well, but I'll carry on, sorry.

33 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** It's all right.

1 A. The other staff, the people who looked after us, I don't think they would have had children  
2 of their own. They would beat us and bang our heads into walls. Sometimes I would be  
3 walking and suddenly my head would be hit into the wall. We were never looked after  
4 properly. I remember having cracks between my toes and sores. The food was terrible at  
5 Ōwairaka. We were again given tripe which we had in the girls' home, swedes and parsnip.  
6 They would make you sit until you ate it, they would spoon it down your throat. We would  
7 have one piece of bread in the morning with a little bit of butter. There wasn't enough food  
8 to eat.

9 Complaint to Social Welfare. I told the welfare officers what was happening to me.  
10 I complained to Mr Skuse because he was my Social Welfare officer at the time and Miss  
11 Wishart. She helped me to try and get over it, but I wasn't in touch with her enough. She  
12 wasn't allowed to, I don't think. Mr Skuse was the main welfare officer, and he would just  
13 tell us to shut up and give us a clip on the ear or on the head.

14 I left Ōwairaka when someone decided that they wanted me. They used to line us  
15 up. People would come and look at you and see if they wanted you. I said I didn't want to  
16 be with them, but they got me.

17 Q. We're now going to talk about a brief period of time when you had a holiday.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. This is – you say at paragraph 54 that the lady who was looking after you was beautiful, she  
20 was a lovely lady?

21 A. I'll just get over, yeah. The lady was a beautiful lady, she was really lovely. The big  
22 motorway was being built up – being built. That was the first part of Penrose which was  
23 very close to us. The Taylor's had a son and him and I – the Taylor's son and I would go  
24 there and play all the time. The men up on the bulldozers used to give us lunch. We used to  
25 have a good time up there. That was the best holiday I ever had ever in my life to get away  
26 from all this abuse.

27 Q. Had you had a holiday before?

28 A. No.

29 Q. Okay. Then it was time to go back into care, wasn't it?

30 A. It was time to go back, yeah. I had three weeks there and it was lovely and then it was time  
31 to go back to care.

32 Q. We're looking at now paragraphs 57 and then 58, but just at 57 you say you kept going back  
33 and forth either in foster care or back to Ōwairaka, remember that?

1 A. Yes. During this time, I just kept going back and forth, yeah, either in foster care or back at  
2 Ōwairaka. I didn't want to go back to the boys' home, but I was only a child, so I didn't  
3 really understand what was happening to me. I would try and run away. I always got caught  
4 though. I hid in a hedge for two days and a lady found me and took me back to her house.  
5 She made me a drink and cocoa and some biscuits; she asked me where I was from, and  
6 I told her Ōwairaka. She rang the Police because they had been looking for me. I was taken  
7 back to the boys' home again after that.

8 Q. You're now going to tell us about your next foster placement, which was in a rural area,  
9 wasn't it?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And you were there for nearly two years and there were a couple who had their own  
12 children, didn't they?

13 A. They did.

14 Q. Yeah, tell us about the male foster carer. Where had he been?

15 A. Male foster care, he was a contractor.

16 Q. Where had he been before being a contractor?

17 A. He'd been – he was Second World War; he'd been in the Army Second World War.

18 Q. And do you think being in the Second World War it had any effect on him?

19 A. I think that he had some PTSD, he cared for his kids more than he cared for me. I was just a  
20 welfare boy.

21 Q. Look at paragraph 62. Can you just read from there onwards please?

22 A. I didn't like the place much because my bedroom was in a shed outside, even though there  
23 was a room in the house I could have slept in. I had no light out there and I only had the  
24 outside toilet. They had one inside, but I wasn't allowed to use it in the house. I wasn't  
25 allowed to sit down in the sitting room by the fire or anything, I was sent outside to my  
26 room, it was just like a prison. At night-time I was so frightened. I had to get out of bed to  
27 go down this footpath to the toilet downstairs, outside toilet.

28 I used to go bird nesting. I used to love little birds; I still love birds today. One day  
29 I saw this nest that had little birds in it, and I thought that they were going to die because  
30 they were cold, that the mother might have left. I took these little birds home with me and  
31 got some worms to feed them but they were half dead anyway. I tried to warm them up, so  
32 I went to bed that night and I put them in bed with me. That was the worst thing I could  
33 have done. I must rolled over on top of them and killed the whole lot and squashed them,  
34 there was a big mess on the bed. Mrs GRO-B-5 asked if I had pooped the bed and I didn't

1 dare tell her. Eventually she guessed and when I told her what they were I got another  
2 beating for that. Then I started peeing the bed and I couldn't help it; I just couldn't stop  
3 peeing the bed.

4 I was so frightened, and I couldn't sleep at night. The thoughts of what was going to  
5 happen to me or what I've done wrong of that day and be told. When I started peeing the  
6 bed Mrs GRO-B-5 came in with a bit of string and told me if I didn't behave myself, stop  
7 peeing the bed she would tie my penis up. That made me more frightened. I don't remember  
8 much about the food. I must have got hungry because sometimes I would feed the dog and  
9 eat the dog meat. Can't have been fed enough.

10 Work and exploitation. At the GRO-B-5 GRO-B-6 one of my duties as a 10-year  
11 old was to go down to the GRO-C's farm with an empty billy and get milk. That was in  
12 bare feet by the way. I would then walk back up to the home again, rain, hail or snow. It  
13 was about half a mile, and I would do it in bare feet – sorry, I was out at a place called  
14 GRO-B in the back of the – I can say it can't I? GRO-B Ranges. Though – up the GRO-B  
15 Hills and down to a place called – it was a metal road those days. Every morning before  
16 I went to school, I used to have to do all my duties and get the milk when I got home. I was  
17 to get coal in, do the firewood, feed the dog, feed the chooks, I was a slave.

18 **Q.** Mr EH, I'm going to start taking you through more specifically some of these paragraphs.  
19 I'm going to do so because time – we've got some time problems. It's really important that  
20 we get some of your – some of the later story out as well.

21 **A.** Yes.

22 **Q.** If you just bear with me. I just want to finish off this particular placement. You describe,  
23 you say that he was a drunkard and used to drink a lot?

24 **A.** Yes.

25 **Q.** And you say he would physically abuse him, but it wasn't sexual abuse?

26 **A.** Yes.

27 **Q.** And you then go on to talk about an incident one day that resulted in there being a concern  
28 expressed by those caregivers that you were flashing and possibly being sexually involved  
29 with a girl in the house?

30 **A.** Yes.

31 **Q.** As a result of that, did anything happen as a result of that?

- 1 A. Yes, I was really beaten up by Mr GRO-B-6. I was stripped of all my clothes and beaten  
2 up with a strap that used to be a razor strap over my back, my backside, it used to be on my  
3 balls and the back of my legs.
- 4 Q. You say at paragraph 71 that he hit your bum, your testicles, your legs and your back, you  
5 were sore and swollen all over, you were really beaten and "he also kicked me, and he only  
6 stopped when his wife told him to." That's what you say at paragraph 71?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. It was soon after that that you – sorry, the female, if you carry on down to paragraph 75 you  
9 say that being hit and being beaten would occur on a regular basis. You say it would  
10 happen at least once a week, see that there?
- 11 A. Yes, yeah.
- 12 Q. And every time he hit you, you refer to it being with fists, kicking and a razor strap?
- 13 A. Yes.
- 14 Q. You also say it would be for things like forgetting the milk?
- 15 A. That's correct.
- 16 Q. And you refer to having to write out lines "I must not forget"?
- 17 A. I must not forget, 500 lines that I had to write out forgetting the milk. I did it on purpose.
- 18 Q. As a result of that you were moved again, weren't you?
- 19 A. Yes, I was.
- 20 Q. And if you go down to paragraph 78 you say there that you were told that it was because  
21 you were a bad boy?
- 22 A. Yes, yeah.
- 23 **CHAIR:** Can I just check something you might have just missed. You told Mr Skuse what was  
24 happening to you, didn't you?
- 25 A. Yes, I did.
- 26 Q. Yeah. Did you show him the marks on your back?
- 27 A. Yes, I did.
- 28 Q. Did he do anything about that?
- 29 A. No, he did not. I was still kept in that home.
- 30 Q. Yeah.
- 31 A. I asked him if I could leave.
- 32 Q. You asked if you to leave the house?
- 33 A. Yes, I did, and he said "no, we haven't got a place for you."

- 1 Q. Thank you for that.
- 2 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** I want you to go over and we're going to talk  
3 about the placement, if you go to, you'll see a heading above paragraph 85 "Unpaid labour."
- 4 A. Yes.
- 5 Q. Do you see that? You say that the caregivers lived on a small hamlet, farmlet should I say,  
6 they had a market garden and 10 cows. You then describe what it was like. Do you see that  
7 in the second sentence of paragraph 85?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. Just read that?
- 10 A. I would have to get up in the mornings before school.
- 11 Q. But you say that, first of all you say, "I was a slave"?
- 12 A. Sorry, yes. I was a slave. I would have to get up in the mornings and before school I'd have  
13 to go and milk – go and milk the cows by hand before, put the cream out, feed the pigs,  
14 have breakfast, get ready and then go to school. It was the same thing at night again, go and  
15 get the cows in, milk the cows again. I had to do market gardens which was about an acre.  
16 We would weed the onions and have to do potatoes. I think that part of my life was a  
17 learning curve for me to be there though.
- 18 Q. You go on in the next paragraph under the heading "Physical abuse" and you say that the  
19 female caregiver was okay, she was like a mother to you, but there's a "but" in there, isn't  
20 there?
- 21 A. There is.
- 22 Q. She would slap you around the stick with legs (sic)?
- 23 A. Yes.
- 24 Q. Around – yes. And tell us, if you go over the page, tell us about the arrangements in the  
25 home.
- 26 A. Yeah, every time that – every time we had a bath I would have to go and wash the older son  
27 GRO-B-9's back. It was – he would have the water in and tell me to get in after him. The  
28 sons would have a bath with freshwater.
- 29 Q. You tell us that you then went to camp at Camp Hunua. I'm going to skip over that.
- 30 A. Yes.
- 31 Q. I'm going to move on to your placement on the farm up north that Social Welfare found for  
32 you.
- 33 A. Yes.



- 1 **Q.** And there is the discussion that commences from paragraph 91 and we're going to start  
2 really at paragraph 92 when you talk about your boss?
- 3 **A.** Yes.
- 4 **Q.** You see that? And just tell us what was he like?
- 5 **A.** Mr GRO-B-12 was my boss, he was disabled from the waist down and he couldn't walk.  
6 He had crutches and he used to drag his legs. Mr GRO-B-12 had a wife. She had been a  
7 school teacher and she was an old battle-axe.
- 8 **Q.** I just want to ask you a question. Social Welfare put you there. Did they know about his  
9 physical disability?
- 10 **A.** I don't know, they must have known that he was like that, I don't know. I don't know why  
11 they would put me there with a cripple.
- 12 **Q.** Another question. Were you the only, to your knowledge, were you were the only Social  
13 Welfare boy who was placed with those caregivers?
- 14 **A.** No, I wasn't.
- 15 **Q.** Was there any before –
- 16 **A.** There was one before me and one after that I met many years later in the Army.
- 17 **Q.** And they were Social Welfare boys?
- 18 **A.** Yes, yes.
- 19 **CHAIR:** Can I just check how old you were at that time when you went up north?
- 20 **A.** 16.
- 21 **Q.** 16 by now, okay.
- 22 **A.** Yeah.
- 23 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE CONTINUED:** Was there any other help on the farm apart  
24 from you?
- 25 **A.** No.
- 26 **Q.** Go to paragraph 94, tell us about what would happen if you were out on the farm, he was  
27 on the tractor and he needed to go to the toilet, what would happen?
- 28 **A.** I would have to help him get off the tractor because he would – used to pee his pants  
29 because he couldn't control himself. This was part of my job at the age of 16 and a half  
30 years old. I would have to get him on to the ground so he could do what he wanted to do  
31 and then I would have to lift him back on to the tractor and get him in. Eventually  
32 Mr GRO-B-12 let me drive the tractor, but I hated going on it.

- 1 **Q.** You've told us that you had to help him off to get – because he wanted to have a pee.  
2 Would the same thing apply if he wanted to have a poo?
- 3 **A.** Yes.
- 4 **Q.** You then talk about there was an accident that happened, the tractor –
- 5 **A.** Yes.
- 6 **Q.** What happened there?
- 7 **A.** One day Mr **GRO-B-12** told me to go and get the sheep in or something like that. Later on,  
8 he came screaming towards me on the tractor and the tractor went over the bank and tipped  
9 him off way down the gully. I couldn't do anything. I said "well, you stay there, I'll go and  
10 get help. You wait here." I told him, "you wait here." I wasn't going to get him back up the  
11 hill and I couldn't get the tractor out, it was stuck. But he made me tie a rope around him so  
12 that I could try and winch him up on the tractor. I got him up to the top and he was  
13 bleeding. It was horrible. I got him to lean over me and walk all the way back up the fence  
14 line so I could get home, get him home. It took me about half a day, and I had to drag him.  
15 When he got there Mrs **GRO-B-12** told me off and gave me a slap over the face "why didn't  
16 you come back home and get help?" I said I couldn't leave him there because he might  
17 have died down there. It was pretty scary; I was only a young boy.
- 18 **Q.** Again, because of the time issue and there's important stuff to get out I'm going to skip over  
19 some stuff, but rest assured that your statement has been read by the Commissioners?
- 20 **A.** Yes.
- 21 **Q.** I just want you to go down to paragraph 102?
- 22 **A.** Yes.
- 23 **Q.** And you say there he wouldn't treat you well and then you describe being hit; how did he  
24 hit you?
- 25 **A.** He used to smack me, whack me with his walking sticks.
- 26 **Q.** You're in care still, did you have any visits from Social Welfare?
- 27 **A.** I had visits from my Social Welfare in Whangarei.
- 28 **Q.** And did you tell them what was happening?
- 29 **A.** I told him, I did tell him, yes, I did.
- 30 **Q.** You say in paragraph 103 that you had visits around four times a year?
- 31 **A.** Yes. That's correct.
- 32 **Q.** When you told them what was happening, did anything happen as a result of that?
- 33 **A.** Yes, I was told just to get on with what I had to do.

- 1 **Q.** So, you then went into – you then left that place and you went into various other foster  
2 homes, and you did some agricultural work for some time?
- 3 **A.** Correct.
- 4 **Q.** I'm going to ask you to move over and let's spend the final few minutes that we have  
5 talking about your final days in State care, because I know that you want to talk specifically  
6 to the Commissioners?
- 7 **A.** Yes.
- 8 **Q.** If you go over to paragraph 115.
- 9 **A.** Yeah, I'll get there in a sec.
- 10 **Q.** You're now working at the sawmill?
- 11 **A.** Yes, correct.
- 12 **Q.** And you're earning money?
- 13 **A.** Yes.
- 14 **Q.** And you have a social worker called Mr Hodder?
- 15 **A.** Yes.
- 16 **Q.** And Mr Hodder had a friend who was a school teacher and Mr Hodder arranged for you –  
17 sorry, for the friend to take care of your money and bank it, didn't he?
- 18 **A.** Yes, correct.
- 19 **Q.** And you don't know what happened to your money in the end, do you?
- 20 **A.** In the end I don't know, I never saw any, I don't know what happened to my money.
- 21 **Q.** And by now you're 18 years of age and you're still in the care of the State?
- 22 **A.** Correct.
- 23 **Q.** And you say at – this is at paragraph 116 – you tried to run away but they'd catch you etc?
- 24 **A.** Yes.
- 25 **Q.** And in 1961 at paragraph 118 you say that you wanted to be on your own and you began to  
26 get into some trouble, you end up in Waikeria?
- 27 **A.** Yes.
- 28 **Q.** Do you think it's Waikeria or anywhere else?
- 29 **A.** I'm not sure, it was a home somewhere, I don't think it was a prison, but yeah, I think it  
30 was – I'm sure it was Waikeria. I was told it was a Borstal.
- 31 **Q.** Right, okay. And then after that, as you'll see from your statement, you end up going  
32 through to Whakatane where you had a sister, you ended up in Wairoa, there was some  
33 trouble with the Police over a watch?
- 34 **A.** Yes, correct.

1 **Q.** And you are in Napier and that's where you meet your first wife when you were 19 years of  
2 age?

3 **A.** Yes, correct.

4 **Q.** And you marry her because you think – you were told that she's pregnant?

5 **A.** Yes.

6 **Q.** Which wasn't so and at that point because she is – you're getting married you get  
7 permission to get married and your time in care ends?

8 **A.** Yes.

9 **Q.** So now we want to talk about your life after care and I know we've rushed through this.

10 **A.** Yes, that's all right.

11 **Q.** So, forgive me for that. The marriage didn't last, did it?

12 **A.** No, 10 years.

13 **Q.** 10 years, and at 133 you tell us you've been married three times in all?

14 **A.** Yes.

15 **Q.** You say you couldn't settle down, you say that where I fell down, you say that "I had no  
16 mother figure, I had no-one to care, no-one to love me, no-one to guide me."

17 Now, tell us about, over at 137, just bring us up to date with the relationships that  
18 you ended up having with your own family, your own siblings?

19 **A.** In terms of my relationships with my family I still have relationships with two of my  
20 brothers, my brother **GRO-B** used to come and visit me, we would go out together and  
21 party, have parties, and we were working on farms. I was working on a farm in **GRO-B**.

22 **Q.** That's okay. Because again this is set out in your statement. Do you see your – are there  
23 members of your family who you see now?

24 **A.** I do.

25 **Q.** Okay. This one?

26 **A.** This one's like a son to me.

27 **Q.** Okay. Now what I want to do now is tell us about, I want you to go to paragraph 146.

28 **A.** Yes, I've got it.

29 **Q.** And you tell us there that you have struggles with your mental health after being in care?

30 **A.** Yes.

31 **Q.** Just read the rest of that paragraph.

32 **A.** Yeah, sometimes I will go into the room, my partner's there and I would just cry. I don't  
33 know why. I think it's always in the back of my mind and I can't sleep without sleeping pills

1 because my mind seems to wander too much. Sometimes I can't remember what I did  
2 yesterday, but I can remember what I did back then years ago. I have considered suicide in  
3 the past. I used to have a drinking problem, and I would drink and not care, and then I  
4 would think about suicide. In some ways I think more open – I think a more open outlook  
5 on life – I can't understand that part, sorry. Can I just have a rest for a minute?

6 **Q.** Sure.

7 **A.** Just got that wrong. In some ways I think I have a more open outlook on life than I used to.  
8 I have learned a lot in life about how to treat children and learning that the way I was  
9 brought up in Social Welfare care was wrong.

10 **Q.** What I want to do now is go to paragraph 158. This is your recommendations for the future,  
11 but I think you have – again, the Commissioners have read that, but you may have  
12 something that you want to say directly to them about what you think should now happen.

13 **A.** Can I just wipe my eyes a bit?

14 **CHAIR:** Take your time.

15 **A.** I hope in speaking to the Commission now, I wrote that but I've got something to say that I  
16 think the way that things are going at the moment that our stories are coming out to you for  
17 you people to pick up the pieces from what we've read and to try and better them than what  
18 they were, and the way that things were going at that time in my time was absolutely  
19 abhorrent and it should never ever, ever have been allowed. And I don't see how the MSD  
20 or whatever you want to call them, Social Welfare Department, would allow such a thing to  
21 go on when they knew what was happening. Why didn't the Social Welfare officers act on  
22 it? And this is for you people to pick up to try and straighten out that, and also do not please  
23 put children way the hell out on farms like I was put, because it's not right.

24 And if you can keep them with whānau, fair enough, but not the older whānau, keep  
25 them with the younger ones, because the older whānau are the old ways, the new whānau  
26 are the new ones, because we think that – we always think of putting them with someone  
27 that's older that will look after them better. That's wrong. To me it's wrong. I think you  
28 should put them with the younger ones, let them bring them up, and check out please of the  
29 children where you're putting them that those foster parents have been vetted, their records  
30 have been seen and that they are pure people that can look after foster children and they  
31 have looked after foster children and it is all good. Don't put them with strangers and  
32 people like that. It's just a Commission that I think that is there.

33 I also would like a re-addressed on my claim, because to me I was given \$1,000  
34 a year of my life for each year of my life which came to \$15,000. To me it's a pittance of

1 what I went through for my life, and I think all other foster children will be the same. If  
 2 you've given them payments already, I think they should re-address it, because to me  
 3 \$1,000 a year of my life for 15 years, 15,000, is just rubbish, four years of lost wages.  
 4 Where did all my money go? I got 100 pounds when I came out of welfare. I got given 100  
 5 pounds. Where was all the rest of my money? Gone. People didn't bank my money. They  
 6 slave, I was a slave and please don't let it happen again, please. I beg you. I beg you. And  
 7 I'll say it thrice, I beg you. Thank you.

8 **Q.** And we hear you.

9 **A.** Thank you. And thank the Commissioner and Commissions, the Royal Commission for  
 10 allowing me to tell my story, I thank you very much. I think it was very good how I feel  
 11 now, I've got it out of my system, and I hope it can stay out of my system.

12 I'm going through counselling. I have one year of counselling left and I think that  
 13 counselling's not going to cure me, it can help, but by giving my story out like I have to the  
 14 public to the world, whoever, it is now going to be better, I hope, than it ever, ever was. I  
 15 can ramble on for years if you want me to but I'm not going to. I could tell you stories that  
 16 you would be surprised to hear of me living on a farm out at GRO-B and no-one feeding  
 17 me because the lady there, and I'll name her, I can name it and I will, because I think it is  
 18 well worth knowing that Mrs GRO-B, her name was, and she was a secretary to the late .  
 19 GRO-C, she's late, the late GRO-C.

20 She was never there to feed me; she was always at a meeting with GRO-C  
 21 in Auckland. I was left on the farm to fend for myself and I had no ways to get into the  
 22 house, I had to do the toiletry outside in the bush and I had to go and shoot a hare or a  
 23 rabbit and cook it over a fire for myself to feed myself and that's on a farm where I was  
 24 placed by Social Welfare.

25 It's wrong, definitely wrong. Sorry. You can go on forever about these — life, life to  
 26 me is important. If it wasn't for this lady here, I would be dead. I wouldn't be alive today.  
 27 Because I tried to commit suicide and that's about it. And she pulled me out of it. Thank  
 28 you, GRO-B-17. Sorry, thank you.

29 My nephew here, I'm close to and I thank him for being here with me today. It's a  
 30 great support and — thank you. And thank you Allan. Have you finished with me yet?

31 **DR COOKE:** I have; indeed, I have Mr EH and I'm grateful to you for your kōrero this morning.

32 **A.** I thank you and I thank everybody, even the public whoever, and I hope you can learn  
 33 something out of this and take it back with you as well, because that would suit me fine.

- 1 **MRS EH:** Thank you to everyone who's helped us on this journey.
- 2 A. Thank you to everyone who's helped us on this journey because it's been a long journey and  
3 I'm going to shut up now and stop talking.
- 4 **CHAIR:** We're going to thank you in a moment. But I just want to make sure that you've got your  
5 support here and thank you, John, and thank you to your wife for being with you. But make  
6 sure you follow-up with the well-being that we can offer you here, don't take — make sure  
7 you take every ounce of that that you need because you've given the Commission and our  
8 whole nation a great service by being brave, by coming forward. I know you feel it's good  
9 for you, but we also know, we've seen how difficult it is as well, how painful. We don't  
10 want you to leave in a worse state than when you came in, so I hope you'll do that. But it's  
11 been a privilege to listen to you. I'm just going to ask; we have a question here.
- 12 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** If I may. Tēnā koe matua. Tēnā koutou, kei te mihi ki a koutou.
- 13 A. Kia ora.
- 14 **Q.** Kia ora, kia ora. Thank you so much for your evidence today and it's jam packed with  
15 insights about the failings of the foster care system. We'll take that and learn from that.  
16 I just wanted to ask about you've mentioned that you're having counselling there now?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 **Q.** But you say that you've only got a year left. I just wanted to ask you about it seems there  
19 are a lot of challenges in finding good counsellors and there's a lot of good people out there,  
20 but also people who lack experience and skills to be good counsellors.
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 **Q.** I wonder what your experience is and why is it only one year?
- 23 A. Because I'd already had counselling before, in Auckland. I travelled from home up to  
24 Auckland for this counselling once a fortnight and that was for six months, I did that, and  
25 I got nothing out of it. I don't think the counsellor was very good. I didn't want to see her  
26 again. That was in January this year, I think. And then this one now, because it's ACC now,  
27 sorry to say that, but it's the ACC now for sexual abuse and that's what the counselling is  
28 today. That's why I'm under counselling. I find the counsellor I'm with now is very good. I  
29 think she's been excellent in her duties, and I see her once a week and I'm going to have a  
30 debrief with her tomorrow about this today.
- 31 **Q.** Excellent, that's good to know. The one year, are you saying you've got ACC funding for  
32 another 12 months?
- 33 A. Yes.
- 34 **Q.** And then you'd need to re-apply again for further funding?

1 A. If I need it. I don't think I ever stop needing it, but I don't want to keep going on forever,  
2 because I think it still brings back memories and I'd rather sort of, when I finish with the  
3 counselling, just stop it.

4 **Q.** It's good to know it's there as and when you need it going forward?

5 A. Yes.

6 **Q.** And I take your point about redress, yeah, we all do.

7 A. Thank you, kia ora. Hello.

8 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Hello, talofa Mr EH. Lovely to see you and GRO-B-17 and  
9 John, thank you for being such strong pillars this morning, or this afternoon now. You told  
10 your story beautifully. We have read it all and of course I had the privilege of being able to  
11 receive it personally.

12 A. Yes.

13 **Q.** Once again, you were able to share with us things that were personal to your life, things  
14 that have happened to you that are etched, embedded deeply in your memory. But I want to  
15 just extend and build on what our Chair has said, your gifting to us allows us the privilege  
16 to put it alongside a number of other brave young men and women who have come  
17 forward, who are continuing to come forward to allow us to build that bigger picture to  
18 understand, so that when you beg of us that it not happen again, we are much better placed  
19 by the time we complete our final report to be able to make some solid, what we hope will  
20 be transformative recommendations to the — back to the Government in honour of such  
21 amazing human beings like yourself who come forward. So, thank you, thank you once,  
22 thank you twice, thank you three times for helping us with our work, malie.

23 A. Kia ora. Can I have just one more word? I forgot about it; I did forget.

24 **CHAIR:** Off you go.

25 A. I would like a formal apology from the Crown. I don't care whether it's from whoever. I'd  
26 like the Prime Minister to have an apology, not just to me, but all children that have been  
27 abused, and sexual abuse and in foster care, what we are abuse in care, I'd love the Prime  
28 Minister, doesn't matter who it is of the day, to have a formal apology and I think that's the  
29 way to go, because we're getting this situation we are where we are today, wouldn't it be  
30 good for the Prime Minister now to step up and say we apologise for all what's going on,  
31 and then everyone has got it that have been abused and we're going through it now. That's  
32 what I'd ask for.



1 **CHAIR:** That again is well heard, thank you, thank you Mr EH. Thank you again to your  
2 wonderful support people.

3 A. Kia ora.

4 **Q.** You're allowed to have some lunch now.

5 **MRS EH:** Thank you.

6 **CHAIR:** We will take the adjournment and we will come back at 2.15. Thank you all.

7 **Lunch adjournment from 1.07 pm to 2.19 pm**