

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
DISABILITY, DEAF AND MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTION 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)
Paul Gibson
Julia Steenson

Counsel: Mr Simon Mount QC, Ms Kerryn Beaton QC, Ms Ruth Thomas, Ms Lucy Leadbetter, Mr Michael Thomas and Ms Kathy Basire for the Royal Commission
Mr Gregor Allan, Ms Sandra Moore and Mr Vaughan Dodd for the Crown

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

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

INDEX

ROSS CLARK – video	192
DR OLIVE JEAN WEBB	
Questioning by Ms Basire	195
Questioning by Commissioners	218
ALISON ADAMS - video	
Questioning by Ms Basire	226
Questioning by Commissioners	241
PETER KEOGHAN - video	
Questioning by Mr Thomas	243
CAROLINE ALICE ARRELL	
Questioning by Mr Thomas	267
Questioning by Commissioners	290

24 **Adjournment from 11.46 am to 12.03 pm**

25 **ALISON ADAMS**

26 **MS BASIRE:** Madam Chair, our next witness is Alison Adams.

27 **CHAIR:** Yes.

28 **MS BASIRE:** You can see Mrs Adams on the screen.

29 **CHAIR:** I can.

30 **MS BASIRE:** Her evidence is pre-recorded, she's watching from Christchurch. With her in
31 support is her daughter Karen and her son-in-law Scott and in front of her she has two
32 photos of her boys Malcolm and Nigel whose evidence she will be talking about.

33 **CHAIR:** Yes.

1 **MS BASIRE:** The photo that you can see on our left is a photo of Malcolm and Nigel aged 16 and
2 17, and the photo on the right is a photo of Malcolm and Nigel aged 61 and 62. So I've
3 explained to Mrs Adams that what we will do is we will watch her video and then there
4 may be some questions from the Commissioners.

5 **CHAIR:** Okay.

6 **MS BASIRE:** Mrs Adams' evidence will cover her sons Malcolm and Nigel, their time in
7 Templeton, the abuse and neglect that they suffered there, their time in Brackenridge and
8 their current life. Mrs Adams talks about a subject that we've heard a lot about, which is
9 the constant struggle for funding and finding staff for her children.

10 Thank you.

11 **CHAIR:** Welcome, Mrs Adams. Thank you so much for taking the time and the effort and indeed
12 the moral fortitude to prepare the statement that you've given to us. I can assure you that
13 we have read your written statement and we're very keen to now see your video
14 presentation. So thank you very much for coming. Can I also note, have you got Karen
15 and Scott there?

16 A. Yes.

17 **Q.** That's good. Thanks to them, although they're out of shot, we're grateful to them for
18 supporting you today and we're also of course thinking very much about Nigel and
19 Malcolm as we listen to your evidence, so thank you.

20 We'll now play the video.

21 A. Thank you.

22 **[Video played]**

23 A. I'm Alison Adams, mother of Malcolm and Nigel. A lot of people will have seen them on
24 television before. They're both intellectually handicapped as well as autistic, so they have
25 dual diagnosis.

26 **Q.** How old are you, Alison?

27 A. I'm 86, will be 87 in two more weeks.

28 **Q.** And how old is Malcolm?

29 A. Malcolm will be 62 in February and Nigel, he's 61 in April, so it's all rolling around.

30 **Q.** How old were the boys when you learned that they had intellectual disability?

31 A. I took them to a child specialist when they were two and three and was told that they were
32 just slow talkers, and that was because they'd been going to kindergarten and the teacher
33 had requested it, they'd had a hearing test, etc, that had been fine, but they weren't talking.
34 And at that time I was told by the child specialist that Winston Churchill was a slow talker,

1 he didn't talk until he was six. So not to worry, they will eventually. But of course it never
2 happened, they are nonverbal, but they have picked up on some sentences which they say
3 repeatedly. It's called "echolalia", which they do, but they do understand everything that's
4 said to them.

5 **Q.** So when they were about three and four years of age, they were assessed by Dr Marshall; is
6 that correct?

7 **A.** Yes, when they were three and four I took them to see Dr Marshall who was also
8 superintendent of Templeton centre. He at that time said that both my sons were severely
9 intellectually handicapped and autistic and to put them in Templeton and forget I ever had
10 them.

11 I couldn't do that, I just couldn't believe what he was saying, because my sons had
12 won baby shows, because back in the '60s you had your carnivals etc and a lot of baby
13 shows, that sort of thing, and they looked normal, and they were going to kindergarten, they
14 hadn't had a problem. But he said no, put them in Templeton, forget you ever had them.
15 And that wasn't for me.

16 At the time, I was divorced, I was on my own with the boys and I was working three
17 jobs, I'd taken in boarders to make ends meet because I wasn't getting any money from my
18 ex-husband, and it was hard. I quit my jobs at that time while I dealt with it and decided I
19 can change things and I decided to open up a children's day nursery, which I went ahead
20 and did -- my boarders left -- and then when I was home with them, but they continued to
21 go to kindergarten.

22 But then the psychologist came on the scene and he went to the kindergarten and he
23 turned around and said they had to go to Ferndale school, they had to leave the
24 kindergarten. Ferndale was for the intellectually handicapped at the time, there was
25 nothing around for autism back then.

26 And so I had already booked them into a "backward" class at the North Beach
27 School, the teacher was happy to give them a trial basis etc, but he wouldn't hear of it, and
28 that's where things started to go wrong, because the boys hated that school, and there wasn't
29 anything I could do about it, because they had to go to school, that was all. Yeah, I thought
30 it was wrong then but from that day on it was all downhill right through their lives.

31 **Q.** Right.

32 **A.** And it was when they were 15 and 16 my back gave out on me, I had surgery, the surgery
33 was not successful, so I have lived with shocking pain ever since I was 38, 40, and I had no
34 choice but to put the boys into Templeton.

1 **Q.** "In 1968 Alison married her second husband Laurie, he was in the United States Navy
2 stationed in Christchurch. Laurie adopted Malcolm and Nigel. This enabled Alison to put
3 Nigel at the private Hōhepa School during the week and he was home at the weekends.

4 In 1970 Laurie had to return to the US to serve out his contract. Alison was not able
5 to get visas for both Nigel and Malcolm and so made the decision to leave Nigel in
6 New Zealand at Hōhepa school and go to the US with her daughter Karen, and Malcolm.

7 In 1973, Mrs Farrow, who ran Hōhepa school, died. Alison received word if she
8 did not return to New Zealand, Nigel would be put in Templeton. She returned home and
9 the boys lived with her and Laurie until they were 17 years old."

10 When you came back to New Zealand, what did you notice about Nigel and the
11 skills he had learned at Hōhepa?

12 **A.** He sewed beautifully, he ate beautifully, his hyperactivity had disappeared, he was a perfect
13 little gentleman actually. When he ate his dinner his little pinkies would stick out, he was
14 quite something.

15 **Q.** What about his verbal skills, had he learned words?

16 **A.** No, they hadn't improved except with singing.

17 **Q.** Right.

18 **A.** And he was talking because the carers at Hōhepa at that time were Dutch, German, and it
19 was run on the Rudolf Steiner method. He was talking in German, Dutch and English when
20 he did come out with things, but singing, he'd sing songs beautifully. He doesn't do much
21 of that anymore, but sometimes I can talk him into it.

22 **Q.** When Malcolm was in the States, what was his functioning like with you in the US?

23 **A.** Good. He had it good over in the States. He went when he was eight and we got him into a
24 school called Happy House and it was only five to a class. So with that, he -- with the
25 teacher and an aide. So he got plenty of attention, etc, and he was in the US Special
26 Olympics for running and softball throwing, and he came second, got a certificate for that.
27 And it would have been when he was about nine.

28 So he had a good life over there, the school was for autism etc, and he was doing
29 very well.

30 **Q.** How old was Malcolm when he went into Templeton?

31 **A.** Went into Templeton, he was the 17 going on 18. It was before Christmas, my daughter
32 was getting married and Malcolm was very hard to manage, he was a very angry young
33 man, he was going around smashing windows, etc, at home, because they were home from

1 the time they were 15 and you couldn't take them anywhere because they'd walk straight
2 out in front of a car, you had to have control of them.

3 **Q.** He went into Templeton on a full-time basis?

4 **A.** Yes, in the February.

5 **Q.** In the February. Now, I understand that you went out to see him after about two weeks.
6 What did you first notice?

7 **A.** Oh, he'd been turned into a zombie, he'd been put on drugs, he couldn't even stand. He was
8 lying in his own urine. I had been told by Templeton not to come out for six weeks and
9 after a couple of weeks I had to go, I had to make sure he was all right, and that's what
10 I found.

11 **Q.** Had anyone asked you for permission to put him on medication?

12 **A.** No.

13 **Q.** Had he been on medication before that?

14 **A.** No. He'd never been on any medication at all.

15 **Q.** What happened when you saw him in that state, what did you do?

16 **A.** I blew my stack at them and said, "This isn't good enough, he shouldn't be on medication,
17 I managed him for 17 years without medication, so why is this happening?" And they said,
18 "Oh well, it's to make life easier for the staff." I said, "What?" I just couldn't believe it.
19 I mean, that's their job to look after them. In the grounds he can go for a run, do whatever,
20 take him down to the swimming pool, but you don't put them on drugs.

21 I told them I wanted him off it, he'd never been on any before. They did take him
22 off and they moved him to a different villa.

23 **Q.** When he was initially in Templeton did he come home for the weekends?

24 **A.** Yes, they came home every other weekend from Templeton. We'd go out and pick them up
25 on the Friday night, they'd be home until the Sunday, we'd take them back Sunday
26 afternoon.

27 **Q.** Now I want you to tell me about the time that you went to get Malcolm for the weekend
28 when it was his birthday, what did you discover?

29 **A.** It was terrible. Went out to get him, it was his 20th birthday and nobody had phoned us, we
30 got out there and found his head had been split open, it was all stitched, his eyes were black
31 and blue, his nose was broken and he had welts all over his body. He was a mess. And
32 I exploded and demanded to see the doctor. The doctor said, "Well, you won't let us put
33 him on drugs." I said, "What the hell's that got to do with it?" I said, "That's nonsense."

1 So I wasn't getting anywhere with the doctor that was there, so we took him down to
2 the Police Station and the Police doctor examined him and said he'd been viciously beaten
3 with a weapon. The Police looked for a weapon but they never found one. And it just got
4 forgotten about.

5 **Q.** To this day do you know whether it was -- who beat him?

6 **A.** No, but it did happen again a couple of weeks later to another person in the villa that
7 I heard about from the staff member, and that boy died. So it was something that was
8 happening out there a lot. There was a lot of abuse and my boys in particular, they were
9 put in different villas, they wouldn't let them be in the same villa, and they were coming
10 home with all sorts of things happening to them, bruises in their ears and sometimes teeth
11 missing.

12 No, it just wasn't good enough. I complained and pretty much got told "It is what it
13 is" type thing. Yeah, it was very hard.

14 **Q.** What did you find the Police's attitude was like when you reported the beating?

15 **A.** Well, their attitude was -- yeah, what had happened, Nigel had gone missing in his pyjamas
16 one night out there, couldn't be found, and the Police were called to look for him. Laurie
17 went out there. I got asked by the Police would he try to convert a car? I said, "No way,
18 but," I said, "look at him, he loves cars, he could be in one." And I said why haven't you
19 brought out a dog to look for him? "Oh, we might need the dogs in a burglary, we can't be
20 bringing them out here." I was absolutely shocked.

21 My husband went all over the Templeton area looking for him and we had no luck
22 in finding him. The next morning -- in fact, I thought somebody had run off with him.
23 I did hear a rumour that somebody else went missing from there and was never found, so I
24 was in a state at the time.

25 This isn't easy. And Nigel the next morning was found by a staff member out the
26 back of Templeton, he'd been out there all night, was found about 9 o'clock, my husband
27 was already out there, so he brought Nigel home to me, and he was freezing, it was a cold
28 night, and so -- and all he would say "birds, birds fly in the sky", and that was him being
29 out all night, he was hearing different animals, but he also has a lot of night terrors, I think
30 some of that might have been involved.

31 These guys haven't got over all the stuff that happened to them by any means. He
32 also suffered malnutrition out there, he wasn't -- because he ate beautifully, he wasn't
33 getting any food to eat because the other residents were grabbing the food off them, he was

1 going around hungry and he went from 10 stone down to seven stone in a matter of a
2 couple of weeks.

3 I took him off to a specialist outside of Templeton, "Well, he suffers from
4 malnutrition" and he wasn't getting enough to eat. So of course I went out there, raised hell
5 again, and I even started going out there every day to make sure that he got fed,
6 because -- and that he sat at a table on his own to eat his dinner.

7 **Q.** When Nigel went missing that night, did Templeton have any explanation for how they'd
8 managed to lose him?

9 **A.** No, they didn't. And he wasn't found until the next morning. I was annoyed with the fact
10 when they found him he was still in the Templeton grounds, therefore a Police dog would
11 have found him. So I put a complaint in to the Police and next I got a call from one of the
12 police officers and I said to him, "You should have had a dog out that night, my son would
13 not have spent the night in the open if the dog had been brought in, he'd have been found."
14 And he said to me, "Well, we can't be out there every five minutes", but he was going to
15 look into it. He looked into it, got back to me, and that was his answer, he said, "If either of
16 your sons ever go missing out at Templeton, we will have a dog out." I said, "What about
17 the rest of the other residents?" I said, "It can happen with them too." "Oh, we can't be out
18 there every five minutes."

19 I mean, it's one rule for the so-called normal, it's another rule when it comes to the
20 handicapped.

21 **Q.** So at the villa that Malcolm was in, there were day rooms?

22 **A.** Yeah.

23 **Q.** Can you talk to me about the effect on Malcolm both physically and emotionally about the
24 day rooms?

25 **A.** Well, it was the same effect really on both of them, Malcolm and Nigel. There were no
26 toilets off of the day rooms, so they couldn't get to the toilet and it was always -- they were
27 just great big rooms with chairs around them, and they couldn't get to the toilet. So they
28 had no choice but to wet their pants, if they tried to go out the door there was a guard on the
29 door to say, "Go sit down, you can't come out" -- Hey, Mal, eh?

30 So of course, now they're incontinent. Everything that they had learned by living at
31 home had gone out the window. They had to start wearing pads for their incontinence, the ir
32 speech or the state where it was at it didn't improve any, they had nothing to do. The only
33 thing that was good about Templeton was the fact they had a swimming pool that they were
34 taken down to, they had the workshops where a lot of them worked, they had a printing

1 shop, they had horse riding, which Malcolm did. Nigel's not an animal lover by any means
2 but Malcolm is.

3 And out in the grounds of Templeton there was plenty for them to do, but they were
4 stuck in those day rooms. They even had a trampoline outside one villa that they could go
5 on. But no, they were stuck in those day rooms all day every day.

6 **Q.** Was the day room locked?

7 **A.** It had a guard on it, they weren't allowed out. If they wanted to go to the toilet, there's no
8 way, they just wet their pants and what have you because staff weren't toileting them or
9 letting them out to go to the toilet.

10 **Q.** What does Malcolm say about the day room, is the day room still part of his memory of
11 Templeton?

12 **A.** It is. When he's in a bad mood, if he's in a bad mood he'll point to the staff, "Get in the day
13 room, get in the day room", and he'd go on about it. This is when he's in a bad mood, if his
14 mood is good you don't hear it as much, but, yeah, it comes out when he's angry.

15 **MALCOLM:** The day room, day room.

16 **A.** Yeah, you have the day room, you went through a lot, didn't you, eh?

17 **MALCOLM:** (Inaudible).

18 **A.** You went through a lot, didn't you, Mal?

19 **MALCOLM:** (Inaudible) in the day room, day room.

20 **A.** You don't want to go in the day room, do you?

21 **MALCOLM:** Yeah.

22 **A.** No, not a nice place. You liked going swimming, which you don't get to do, eh? You like
23 swimming? That was good fun, and you liked horse riding?

24 **MALCOLM:** Yeah.

25 **A.** You used to go horse riding?

26 **MALCOLM:** Yeah.

27 **A.** There was one time he was out horse riding and the staff member that was leading the horse
28 around the paddock, she was talking to him but wasn't looking at him, she was looking
29 where she was going, all of a sudden she turned around and looked and Malcolm was gone,
30 he'd slipped off the back of the horse and was way down the yard.

31 **MALCOLM:** (Inaudible) day room.

32 **A.** We have some funny moments, don't we, Malcolm?

33 **MALCOLM:** (Inaudible).

34 **A.** You remember getting off the horse?

1 **MALCOLM:** Yeah.

2 A. Did you get off the horse?

3 **MALCOLM:** Yeah (inaudible).

4 A. They talk their own lingo, eh.

5 **Q.** So as you were explaining, Malcolm and Nigel were in different villas and they were
6 effectively locked in a day room?

7 A. True.

8 **Q.** Did you notice with Malcolm in particular a change in his behaviour to do with sexual
9 activity that occurred when he was in Maple Villa?

10 A. It wasn't -- with Malcolm, the sexual problems were in Totara. He was in Totara Villa at
11 the time, and yeah, when I brought them home on the weekend and showered them in the
12 morning, both guys were actually backing off of me in the shower, Malcolm was in Totara
13 and Nigel was in Maple, and I thought this isn't right, when I'd come to wash their private
14 parts they'd back away. I knew something was going on. And at that time I had heard from
15 a staff member out there that the charge nurse of Totara used to get a kick out of watching
16 the residents react sexually to each other and I thought I've got to move him.

17 So of course I called the charge nurse of Maple Villa where Nigel was and I said to
18 him, "Have you got a spare bed?" And he said, "Oh, I'll have to think about that one." So
19 he called me back and he said, "I've made room for Malcolm's bed to come down here",
20 and he said, "It's up to you to talk to Dr Marshall about it." So with that, I went to
21 Dr Marshall and I said, "I want my sons together" and he said, "No room at Maple", and
22 I said, "Well, I've talked to the charge nurse there and he said he can fit Malcolm in there.

23 So, with that, I got my own way and Malcolm moved to Maple. The day Malcolm
24 walked into Maple I knew I'd done the right thing. They were happy to see each other.
25 They've got a relationship that -- you've got to be living with them to see it, but they like to
26 be together. They quite often hold hands when they're out and about type thing, it's quite
27 lovely to see.

28 Yeah, but before that even happened, Malcolm, it was after one Christmas when
29 I took them back that they -- because they used to come home for a week at Christmas and
30 I took them back and I phoned up to say I'd be out that weekend to get them, and lo and
31 behold, they'd put Malcolm in Sunnyside. What?

32 **Q.** And Sunnyside is a psychiatric institution?

33 A. That's right. And I couldn't believe it. They said they couldn't manage him, they'd sent him
34 to Sunnyside. So, with that, I went to Sunnyside, I found my son had been placed on a

1 mattress in a cell, he was in the foetal position and he was medicated so highly he couldn't
2 move, he couldn't do anything. And I had a go at Sunnyside, I said to them straight, "How
3 did my son get here?" And he said, "Oh well, he was playing up." Evidently when I took
4 him back after that Christmas he had played up on them and that's what they did.

5 And I said, "Not on, he's got to go back to Templeton." And I said, "What
6 medication have you got him on?" He was put on a medication called Haloperidol,
7 which -- he's autistic, he should never be put on any brain-changing medication, because
8 being autistic he has low dopamine levels and with low dopamine levels in the brain they
9 become medically fragile when you put them on pills that they use for schizophrenia, that
10 sort of thing. And he had become medically fragile at the same time.

11 And of course Malcolm is an epileptic due to the beating he took earlier in his life in
12 Templeton, he'd become an epileptic, which meant he -- where am I? Which, again, you
13 had to be careful what medication you gave him, if his dopamine levels fall he can have a
14 seizure. So as long as he's never given any brain-changing medication, we managed to
15 keep his seizures at bay with the medication he's on. So I was angry.

16 **Q.** Did you manage to get him back to Templeton from Sunnyside?

17 **A.** Yeah, I have called Templeton and said, "I'm bringing him back." I couldn't take him home
18 at that time because he was angry, he was on medication which was bad for him and the
19 doctor said he had to come off slowly of that medication he was on. So I ended up having
20 the staff help me get Malcolm into the car and I took him back to Templeton. When I got
21 to Templeton, I found they were -- they had the door off of the room, they were putting a
22 glass window in so they could lock Malcolm up in there and watch him through the
23 window in the door.

24 **Q.** So they were going to lock him in seclusion?

25 **A.** Yeah. And I didn't like that, but he had to come off that medication so it -- and while he
26 was coming off that medication, he was peeling the ends of his fingers, the skin, and he was
27 doing it to his toes as well, and just tearing the skin off his toes. And I said to them, "Why
28 didn't you put socks on him? You're going around barefoot anyway." So you've no idea
29 what I went through.

30 So once I got the medication he'd been put on down I took Malcolm home for about
31 a week, but he went around smashing windows and all sorts, and it was hard, and of course
32 we were into, at that time, Templeton closing.

33 **Q.** So just before we go into Templeton closing, I want you to tell me about the time that
34 Malcolm had to go to hospital for an erection?

1 A. Oh, yes. I had a phone call from the staff member who said that Malcolm had had an
2 erection for over five days and I was quite shocked. I ended up -- she sort of told me on the
3 quiet and I ended up calling up an ambulance and getting him to hospital. I met him at the
4 hospital and it was shocking. Anyway, the doctor at the hospital said he'd have to be
5 operated on. They had tried to get it down but nothing was working so he went in theatre
6 and was operated on and he came out of theatre and he came to, lo and behold, the
7 operation hadn't worked, so he had to go back and have a second operation.

8 The doctor said to me, "It may not work again", I said, "That's fine." But it still
9 does and Malcolm won't leave it alone.

10 Q. Before he was in Totara Unit, had he had any pre-occupation with that area of his body?

11 A. No.

12 Q. And how old would he have been when this started to emerge?

13 A. This was in Totara that it started. He -- Malcolm never bothered with anything like that,
14 when he went into Templeton that's what happened. Nigel never bothered either, it was
15 something they just didn't do, they didn't masturbate. But now with Malcolm it's all the
16 time. He can't live with anybody else because of it.

17 Q. What do you think triggered it?

18 A. Mmm?

19 Q. What do you think triggered Malcolm's obsession with that area of his body?

20 A. Being abused, yeah. I believe he was abused a lot and that created that, because as a
21 teenager he never worried about it, even as a child he never played with it or created an
22 erection, just didn't happen. It wasn't until he was interfered with that it happened and he
23 was abused. I mean, I have nightmares over it, so Lord knows what they have.

24 Q. Particularly after that operation, did you challenge Templeton as to what was going on in
25 those day rooms?

26 A. Yes, I did, but that's why I managed to get him moved to Maple with his brother, because
27 of what had transpired. I didn't want him back in Totara after his operations, etc.

28 Q. And what was the difference with the Maple unit? I understand it was the charge nurse
29 who ran Maple unit that gave you confidence that Malcolm would be better off?

30 A. He had -- the guys in Maple were known as "The Maple boys" and John the charge nurse,
31 he had them out for long walks. I mean, Templeton grounds are huge and he always had
32 those boys out morning and afternoon for long walks which they really enjoyed, but were
33 criticised by the other villas for it, which is ridiculous, they just probably didn't want it to

1 become part of their lives, but John was a good charge nurse, and he did try to work with
2 the boys and get them ahead in a lot of ways.

3 But the day rooms were the problem, weren't they, Malcolm? Horrible the day
4 rooms, eh? Taking you back in time too. That's the way it was back then.

5 **Q.** With Nigel you said that you'd noticed a change of behaviour when you were showering
6 him when he was home for the weekends?

7 **A.** Yes.

8 **Q.** Do you also believe that he had been sexually abused at Templeton?

9 **A.** Yes, yes, I do. I mean, they never did that before when I went to wash them. I mean,
10 they'd turn around, etc, in the shower for me, but no, they wouldn't, they'd just back up to
11 the wall.

12 **Q.** In terms of abuse, did you witness any direct abuse by staff on residents when you were out
13 at Templeton visiting?

14 **A.** No, they're not going to let you see it happen, but it does happen.

15 **Q.** What about the male staff member who used to sit at the door of the day room with his
16 walking stick?

17 **A.** Yes, he had a walking stick which I did see him use that, he's sitting in the doorway of the
18 day room, I actually walked up behind him to get the boys, because they were in there, and
19 I saw him bring the stick up because Malcolm, as soon as he saw mum, he started to run to
20 the door, and of course the guy that was sitting there, he brought the stick up to stop
21 him -- he hadn't seen me -- and I said, "What are you going to do with that?" He turned
22 around and looked and said, "Oh." I said, "I've come to get Malcolm and Nigel", and I got
23 them out to the car, but yeah, he used that stick I would say.

24 **MALCOLM:** (Inaudible).

25 **A.** All right, Mal?

26 **MALCOLM:** (Inaudible).

27 **A.** Yeah.

28 **Q.** And did you hear staff members swearing at the boys?

29 **A.** All the time, and Malcolm picked up a lot of the swear words out there, it was rather hard
30 to take him anywhere without it coming out of the mouth. Yeah, they did, one in particular.

31 **Q.** What sort of words did you hear the staff say at the boys?

32 **A.** I'd rather not use them. "Bastard" was one, the F word of course, that came out a lot, and
33 not very nice if you've got them out in the community and those words come out of their
34 mouth, you know, but it was taught to them by the staff. I even heard those words out at

1 Brackenridge as well, and some of the staff that had been in this house I've heard that word,
2 and I've told them not to use it because Malcolm was picking up on them.

3 **Q.** "In 1998 Templeton closed permanently. Alison at the time opposed the closure of
4 Templeton as by the 1990s she felt the staff had improved. Her preference was to keep the
5 positive parts of Templeton, the large grounds, the swimming pool, the Riding for the
6 Disabled, the community hall etc, but build purpose-built accommodation for the residents.
7 When Templeton was closed, a small portion of land was used to house some residents.
8 This was called Brackenridge. Malcolm and Nigel lived on the Templeton grounds at
9 Brackenridge for 10 years from 1998 until 2008. In 2009 Alison bought their boys their
10 own home."

11 We know that the boys were at Brackenridge for 10 years from 1998 to 2008. At
12 this stage you were really frustrated?

13 **A.** Yes.

14 **Q.** Templeton's closed, nobody heeded your warnings?

15 **A.** True.

16 **Q.** The boys are unhappier in Brackenridge than they were at Templeton?

17 **A.** True.

18 **Q.** So what was your solution?

19 **A.** Well then, I got to thinking and especially about them moving into the community, it wasn't
20 something I was thrilled about, but I thought well, if I can do it my way and if I can get
21 control, then maybe it could work. So my husband backed me on it and we decided to buy
22 them this house, so I went and saw the manager at the time at Brackenridge and said to him,
23 "Okay, what if I move my boys?" I knew he wasn't going to ask me to do it, so I asked
24 him, "What if I move my boys out into the community and you staff the house?" And I told
25 him how to get the funding for it.

26 **Q.** Can you explain initially the house, so you bought the house?

27 **A.** Yeah.

28 **Q.** So you and your husband raised a mortgage?

29 **A.** Yes.

30 **Q.** On your own home?

31 **A.** Yes.

32 **Q.** And you bought this house?

33 **A.** Yes.

1 **Q.** And then the deal was that Brackenridge, who get funds from the Government, would then
2 fund the staff and the rental of this house; is that correct?

3 **A.** True.

4 **Q.** But things have gone awry in terms of funding, haven't they, right from the word go?

5 **A.** Yeah.

6 **Q.** So before we talk about the funding issue, can you tell us what is really good about the
7 boys living in their own home?

8 **A.** Oh, there's a lot of good, they get out and about. It's like this past weekend they went to
9 Diamond Harbour, they went out on a boat. You wouldn't get that if you were still in
10 Brackenridge, you would be just sitting in that house doing nothing.

11 The staff are very good about getting the boys out and about. If I want them
12 brought around to me because of my age and my state of health, it's not that easy for me to
13 come around here, but they'll bring them around and drop me off and spend time with mum
14 every other weekend as a rule. They've got their own rooms, they don't have to worry
15 about people coming in, invading them.

16 I think it's lot better, I think they do too, I think they accept that this is their home
17 and it's their home for the rest of their lives. That's what's important.

18 **Q.** And the only two residents are Malcolm and Nigel, is that correct, here?

19 **A.** Mmm?

20 **Q.** The only two people living here full-time are Malcolm and Nigel?

21 **A.** Yes.

22 **Q.** And staff come and go?

23 **A.** Yes.

24 **Q.** One staff at night and two during the day?

25 **A.** That's the way it's supposed to be, yeah. They've tried to take me down to one staff, but no,
26 I haven't accepted it. I feel after all they've been through, all the abuse they've suffered,
27 that's the least the Government can do, is supply them with two staff to be looked after
28 properly.

29 **Q.** And their needs assessment back in 2008 said that, that they needed one-to-one care, didn't
30 it?

31 **A.** Yes, mmm, because all that abuse affects them. Nigel still has night terrors. He still loses
32 the plot every now and again. And the same with Malcolm. They go on -- they haven't
33 forgotten and they're not going to forget, I can't forget what's happened to them, and they
34 had to live through it.

- 1 **Q.** In terms of the ongoing effects, just focusing on Malcolm, what's Malcolm like with men
2 that he doesn't know?
- 3 **A.** He's very cautious. He reads -- both boys read body language and they pick up very
4 quickly on who they like and who they don't like, which means that mum picks up very
5 quickly as well. So that I'm very cautious about what staff are brought into the house, and
6 I've got a new team leader now and he'll be the same, he'll be very cautious who comes into
7 the house. He's just getting into an understanding what's been happening with them.
- 8 **Q.** What do you think the biggest impact on Malcolm has been from his time in Templeton?
- 9 **A.** They're more manageable now than what they were, moving into this house, they're
10 happier, they're more relaxed. Malcolm most of the time used to shake like a leaf, he's not
11 doing so much shaking, are you? And of course Nigel still has his moments of going off.
12 They both do. Malcolm will have his grizzly days, just like all of us, we have our good
13 days, we have our bad days, and they do too. But they're more relaxed.
- 14 And some nights are bad for Nigel, and it all comes down to their memory. They
15 have to live with it, and I'm having to live with what's happened to them, and the guilt of
16 having let it happen, which I had no control over, but they deserve what they've got now,
17 they deserve -- they're 60 -- you'll be 62 next month, Nigel will be 61 in April, they deserve
18 to have a comfortable life for the time they've got left.
- 19 **Q.** So the funding struggles, just briefly, I want you to be able to explain what you've
20 explained to me how it's a constant battle about the funding, and what the issues for you
21 currently are for funding?
- 22 **A.** Yes, it worries me. I would like it to go away. I feel the boys deserve whatever funding is
23 needed to run their lives after what they've been through. They should never have been,
24 from kindergarten days onwards, they should have had a better life, which I couldn't give
25 them because of my back surgery, but that's what should have happened.
- 26 **Q.** So Alison, you're about to turn 87, and you must be really worried about the boy's future --
- 27 **A.** Yes.
- 28 **Q.** -- when you're no longer around. What do you want to tell the Government?
- 29 **A.** I want the Government to fund it. I got told 14 years ago it cost \$1 million to keep a
30 prisoner in jail, so what are they bitching about? Pay up the funding that's needed to keep
31 my sons in with the life they had. They didn't pay for the house, I did. And I've spent a lot
32 of money over the years to meet their needs, and surely they can do that with the staffing of
33 the house."

1 **MS BASIRE:** Madam Chair, that brings us to end of the pre-record. And Mrs Adams is happy to
2 take questions.

3 **CHAIR:** Thank you. Mrs Adams, I appreciate that must have been rather difficult for you to sit
4 and watch. We do appreciate that and I hope you don't mind, I think we have got some
5 questions. Is that all right.

6 A. It's fine.

7 **Q.** Good on you.

8 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Hello, I don't have any questions, I just want to say thank you
9 very much for your witness statement today, thank you.

10 **CHAIR:** And Paul Gibson.

11 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Thank you, Mrs Adams. Thanks for your statement and thanks
12 for your courage and advocacy for your sons over so many years, and I hope we're able to
13 influence the struggles you have around funding for support and services, but also my
14 question is about redress. Have you and your boys ever had any redress or compensation,
15 any well-being support for what happened to them and to you over the years, both through
16 either Ministry of Health or through the Education Department?

17 A. Well, there is the fact that they didn't get any schooling, they got no autistic training.
18 Throughout all their life really, they've been with intellectually handicapped instead of
19 getting what they should have got. I mean the age they are now, it's too late for anything.
20 But they should be funded appropriately which they certainly are not. It's a matter
21 of -- you'll have to excuse me because I am old, and I forget things at times, but the funding
22 is important. Their needs need to be met with all of them, it's not only my sons, it's all of
23 those out there need to have their needs met, meet their needs and their funding will follow.

24 **Q.** And has there been any support for you and your well-being now or in the past?

25 A. I didn't quite hear that.

26 **Q.** You've experienced a lot as well because of what has happened to your sons, has there been
27 support or funding or compensation for you or any support or counselling for you and your
28 well-being because of what you've experienced over the years?

29 A. I'm not interested in getting any financial support. What I want is for the funding to meet
30 the needs. At times, like with my two sons, they can't live with anybody else after what
31 they've been through, and I keep having it from Brackenridge, etc, there should be three in
32 the house, maybe four. This is not on. It's just the two of them, they're happy, and as long
33 as we've got the staffing we're fine. And when they went through LifeLinks, LifeLinks did

1 state they should have two staff during the day and one at night. They need to meet those
2 needs.

3 As I say, you meet their needs, the rest will follow. But when the funding is so
4 short. I mean, I got told two years ago you're 70,000 over in your funding. I don't need to
5 hear that sort of stuff, they've been through enough, for God's sake fund the service
6 properly. If you fund it properly, then their needs will be met. There are times when two in
7 a house should be acceptable, especially when they've been abused. And then there are
8 times when three could be, or even one. Fund it properly, as I say, and their needs will be
9 met.

10 **Q.** I agree. Thanks so much, thanks Mrs Adams.

11 **CHAIR:** Just one question or area of questions from me. We've heard in other parts of our
12 Inquiry, particularly in relation to children and their families, that the best thing for families
13 is to be kept together, that children thrive when they're kept together and that the
14 attachment between not just children and their parents but between their siblings, brothers
15 and sisters, is really important for their well-being.

16 You have described today how you fought to get your two boys to be in the same
17 place. That sounds as though it was very important; is that right?

18 **A.** It is very important. I mean, my sons all these years have been coming home every
19 Christmas, they still believe in Santa Claus, and I've got now five great grandchildren, I've
20 got three grandchildren, five great grandchildren, and they're always -- the boys come
21 around every Christmas to my daughter's house and they spend Christmas with them, that
22 has never missed a year, and it is important.

23 **Q.** Yeah. It won't surprise you to know that one of the professional people who've talked to us
24 have said that the most important factor for the well-being of disabled people living in the
25 community is connection with their family. Would you agree with that?

26 **A.** I would definitely agree with that. I think it's important in a lot of ways for the growing of
27 the family if they have to connect with the handicapped person at the same time. I think it
28 brings out the best in them.

29 **Q.** Thank you for that.

30 Mrs Adams, you are one of the amazing women we've heard from this week and I
31 think we'll be hearing from some more and that is the mothers, and we salute you. Thank
32 you so much -- you're making me feel emotional because I feel so touched by the efforts
33 that you've gone to.

34 **A.** Well, Malcolm and Nigel do give back a lot.

- 1 **Q.** Yes.
- 2 **A.** The reason I'm still alive today --
- 3 **Q.** Yes.
- 4 **A.** -- is because of the time I spend with them. They come around every other weekend still
5 and it just -- things they come out with, like last weekend Malcolm looked at a fire screen
6 that I made years ago and he said, "It's a horse", and he's never said that before.
- 7 **Q.** Yeah.
- 8 **A.** There is new language coming with them and it's to do with the new staff I've got, I just
9 don't have enough of them.
- 10 **Q.** Right. Well, you can be extremely proud and we are very proud of you too. So thank you
11 so much for giving your effort, your time to your boys, and thank you for sharing that with
12 the whole of New Zealand who needs to hear this story. So thank you very much indeed.
- 13 **A.** Thank you.
- 14 **Q.** So good bye.
- 15 **A.** Thank you, judge, bye bye.
- 16 **Q.** Not at all. Good bye.
- 17 Time to take a lunch break, I think. What time shall we return? I think at the
18 moment it is --
- 19 **MS BASIRE:** 2.15 will be fine.
- 20 **CHAIR:** Is that fine, 2.15?
- 21 **MS BASIRE:** Yes.
- 22 **CHAIR:** All right, we'll take a break to 2.15, thank you.
- 23 **Lunch adjournment from 1.09 pm to 2.15 pm**