

**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

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

INDEX

OPENING SUBMISSIONS BY THE ROYAL COMMISSION	2
OPENING SUBMISSIONS BY THE CROWN	8
HEMI THOMAS McCALLUM	
Questioning by Dr Cooke	10
Questioning by Commissioners	19
MR EH	
Questioning by Dr Cooke	23
Questioning by Commissioners	42
ELISON MAE	
Questioning by Ms Fletcher	45
Questioning by Commissioners	65
DR SARAH CALVERT	
Questioning by Dr Cooke	69

Adjournment from 10.11 am to 10.32 am

30

CHAIR: Yes, Dr Cooke.

31

DR COOKE: Tēnā koe e te Heamana. Ko Hemi Thomas McCallum tāku kaiwhāki. Koinei a

32

Tania rāua ko Dannette, hei kaikōrero mō Hemi McCallum kua wehi atu. We're now

33

having Tania Tonga and her mother Dannette, who is Hemi's sister, and Tania is going to

34

1 read Hemi's statement to you. I've just been advised that Dannette would like the
2 opportunity at the end of that to speak specifically to her recollections of her brother and
3 the impact on her in particular of the experiences that her brother went through.

4 **CHAIR:** Thank you. Tēnā kōrua. Thank you for coming. We really appreciate it at this difficult
5 time and of course, Dannette, you're most welcome to make any comments that you wish to
6 make. Thank you, I'm going to leave you now with Dr Cooke, thank you.

7 **DR COOKE:** Tania, you have the statement there and you'll press the button.

8 **MS TONGA:** I have, yes.

9 **QUESTIONING BY DR COOKE:** You have the statement that Hemi completed prior to his
10 death?

11 **MS TONGA:** Yes.

12 **DR COOKE:** Can you, just before we start, can you tell us when it was that Hemi passed on?

13 **MS TONGA:** Hemi passed away on 17 March this year.

14 **DR COOKE:** This was therefore prepared in anticipation of his being able to speak today at this
15 hui?

16 **MS TONGA:** Yes.

17 **DR COOKE:** We're going to get you to read it out. You know that if you want to have a break at
18 any time just give us a signal, wave out or make some other kind of appropriate noise and
19 we'll stop and, you know, any time.

20 **MS TONGA:** Thank you.

21 **DR COOKE:** If you would now start and I think, as I said to you earlier, Madam Chair, that
22 we've got Hemi's statement's been signed by him, it's been affirmed, so we can proceed on
23 that basis.

24 **CHAIR:** Yes, absolutely, thank you.

25 **DR COOKE:** Thank you, Tania would you start please reading the statement thank you.

26 **MS TONGA:** "My full name is Hemi Thomas McCallum. I am currently 58 years old born in
27 1963 in Invercargill. I currently live in Christchurch. I have recently been diagnosed with
28 pancreatic cancer and I have been told by my doctors that I only have a few months left to
29 live. It is therefore very important to me to be able to have my story documented as I had
30 wanted to write a book but that is not going to happen.

31 My iwi is Ngāi Tahu and that comes from my father's side and Ngāpuhi which was
32 my mother's iwi. This statement is the story of my early life and the effects that the bad
33 things that happened to me while in care have had on my life.

1 Early life. I was the youngest of seven children, we lived in Invercargill. We were
2 all put into care early in life because of the Once Were Warriors lifestyle my parents led.
3 My father was very violent towards my mother and my siblings, but he never touched me. I
4 understand that we were put in care, and I accept that it was necessary. I understand I was
5 taken from my parents under a warrant and placed in care. I was made a ward of the State
6 when I was two years old. I was sent to camps in Southland because I was malnourished
7 and then fostered out.

8 I have clear memories of my life from a very young age, so I am able to detail what
9 I recall. When I was fostered out, I remember my first welfare officer was a Ms Allen. She
10 was good to me. I remember I cried uncontrollably for the first three months because I just
11 wanted to be with my own flesh and blood. Because of this I could not and would not gel
12 with families I was placed with.

13 I believe I was in around 12 foster homes between two years and nine years old.
14 The only contact I had with my family while in care was that I would get to meet with my
15 mother and brothers and sisters once a year at my aunty's house.

16 I know that there was no family that me or my brothers and sisters could have been
17 placed with because they all lived the lifestyle that my parents did.

18 By the age of six I had admitted defeat and begrudgingly accepted my lot. I became
19 a hard little bastard. Although I was nice on the outside, being taken away from my home
20 and put in care had a big effect on me. To take someone off their mother, as bad as my
21 home situation was, is like taking a kid's heart and throwing it out of the car window and
22 letting trucks drive over it.

23 At the time I vowed not to cry anymore and not to trust adults or the world in
24 general. I do not recall any abuse or bad treatment in the first foster homes. It wasn't until
25 1969 that changed.

26 Time in care. Placement with foster parents in Southland. The worst of my
27 nightmare started when I was about nine years old when I was placed with a family in
28 Southland. It did not end until I was removed urgently by my social worker about four
29 years later in 1973. I had wanted to write a book about my abuse, I would have titled it
30 "Am I going to die today?"

31 The foster father and mother had two children, a daughter who was a few years
32 older than me and son who was the same age as me, but I was very small, and he was much
33 bigger than me. They treated their kids like humans. I was treated like a slave. I understand
34 that they had other kids in their care before me, because my sister was in their care for a

1 period, but she ran away from them. I would refer to my foster father as an alcoholic
2 gambling nut case.

3 Physical abuse. I was beaten regularly if not on a daily basis by my foster father. He
4 would use his fists, kick me with steel capped boots, hit me with hunks of steel, wood,
5 chains, deer antlers, pipes, straps, the vacuum cleaner tube, and dog collars, anything he
6 could get his hands on. I hated when the dogs got new collars as the new ones hurt more. I
7 had welts from the buckle as well as stab wounds from the pin of the buckle. It looked like I
8 had been shot. He would often hit me with objects on the legs, shoulders and collar. He
9 would save my head for his feet and hands. He would make me strip off before he smashed
10 me up. I was only allowed to keep my singlet on like it was a piece of armour.

11 This abuse was almost every day. If he grew tired and was panting from beating me,
12 he would get his wife to beat me. If she was too tired or not around, he would get his
13 daughter to beat me.

14 My foster father would often shoot at me to scare me. For example, one day he was
15 showing off in front of a group of hunters. The son and I were down on the riverbank
16 putting bricks on a walkway for them to shoot at, and my foster father was shooting them
17 out of my hand from 300 yards away with his high-powered rifle. He always had firearms
18 around because of his job doing pest destruction. He would sometimes fire his shotgun at
19 the ground near my feet, that was really very frightening and added to my belief that he
20 would eventually – that he could or eventually would kill me.

21 I wet the bed regularly. If he found out he would beat me so I tried to wash and dry
22 the sheets in secret, but he would still find out. My foster father forced me to fight the son
23 who was much bigger than me. He would never hit his son.

24 Sexual abuse. My foster parents never sexually abused me, but I found out later that
25 my foster father had been raping his daughter and girls that he had fostered. They mainly
26 fostered girls even when I was there, one girl at a time. The girls would mysteriously get a
27 problem and then they would be gone. When I look back, it makes sense, as when my foster
28 father started spinning out and was being brought home from the Police for beating people
29 up. My foster mother would tell him to be careful as though she had ammunition ready if he
30 wanted to play up. He never hit his wife.

31 Unpaid labour. I was a glorified slave for the family. My regular day would be
32 getting up at six am, lighting the coal range, cooking breakfast for them all, timing it all so
33 that I would be pouring their tea as they came into eat. I would then do the dishes
34 afterwards, clean the house and then do my chores.

1 I would have to feed 20 dogs, pigs, chickens, move the cattle, whack down a fence,
2 things like that, all before school time. I would then come home from school and do more
3 chores like chopping wood to fix the house that was covered in bullet holes from my foster
4 father's violence towards me and the animals. My chores were endless.

5 I would do chores on the weekends too, but the good part was that I got some time
6 to hunt for food for myself. I was not fed properly, so I became a brilliant fisherman, great
7 at eeling, and good at pinching sheep and lambs to cook on the fire.

8 Seclusion. I was not allowed inside the house, apart from cooking and doing chores.
9 I had to sleep in an old hut like a storage shed that was the size of a prison cell. It only fit a
10 bed. I was never locked inside the hut because then I would have been protected from my
11 foster father.

12 Psychological abuse. My foster father was the cruellest man to animals. He would
13 beat them and shoot them and would force me to watch. One day he hit a dog against a
14 trailer until it was pretty much dead, then he threw it on the ground, grabbed the shotgun,
15 which was always close by, held it like a pistol and shot him at close range. He always shot
16 at close range.

17 A lot of people knew about my foster father. If an animal came on to our property,
18 he would take it over to their house, knock on their door and silt the animal's throat so when
19 they opened the door, they would find that their beloved pet had been killed. He would
20 never use my name, he would call me the C word or black arse, not being called my name
21 added to the feeling of being worthless.

22 The verbal abuse was constant and being threatened with death happened on a
23 regular basis. My frame of mind while living there was one of terror. He would threaten to
24 put me up on the hook like the sheep when they were slaughtered. He was always killing
25 animals.

26 I believe a lot of people in the community knew what my foster father was like.
27 Everybody seemed terrified of him. There was never any birthday or Christmas for me.

28 Schooling. I was unable to think or concentrate at school because I was always
29 worried about what was going to happen to me when I get home, am I going to die today?
30 In saying that, school was my sanctuary for six hours a day. It was like being let free. I
31 would then act up and be the class clown. Because of my behaviour, I would get the cane
32 and the strap regularly.

33 Visits from Social Welfare. Social Welfare visits were all orchestrated. They were a
34 big set up. My foster parents would put on a banquet and finally give us some new clothes

1 to wear. It was a joke. We weren't even allowed to eat any of the food, it was just a prop.
2 The social workers never got the chance to speak to us alone. Abusers design it this way.

3 I believe that regardless of my situation, all my welfare officers did the best job they
4 could, and I am very grateful to them, especially Ms Allen, Mr Bruce and Lucy Sanford.

5 I think my foster father's reputation in the area, the fact that he was often dealt with
6 by the Police being drunk or in fights and the fact that the house had bullet holes or shotgun
7 pellet marks everywhere would have raised some concerns.

8 Reporting the abuse. While I was at this home, I definitely did not think I could tell
9 anyone about the abuse. I was so scared that he would kill me, and I am not sure I would
10 have told anyone if they had asked.

11 In 1973 I was sent on my only holiday while I was in care. I spent Christmas
12 holidays with a family in Riverton. I couldn't believe it, they had kayaks, motorbikes and
13 caravans and spent every weekend camping, spear fishing, duck shooting, doing all these
14 fun activities.

15 When we had our first meal, I put a little bit on my plate, enough for a mouse. The
16 father at this Riverton home grabbed a whole piece of meat and put it on my plate. We ate
17 crayfish, oysters and blue cod. It was absolutely magic there.

18 I told their son about the abuse and told him not to tell anyone as I thought my
19 foster father would kill me. The son told his parents who told my social worker, Lucy
20 Sanford. She spoke to my foster father and told me I was lying. The Riverton family didn't
21 accept that and wanted answers. I believe that they agreed to me going back to my foster
22 parents as long as my foster father was questioned about the allegations of abuse.

23 Lucy took me back and dropped me off back at my foster home. My foster father
24 wasn't home so she said she would go and visit some other kids and then come back to
25 speak to him. My foster father was actually down the road hiding and watching. As soon as
26 Lucy left, he came flying up the driveway and threw me in the car. He drove at 100 miles
27 an hour to the Police Station. He handed Dick Hibbs the police officer a cash box I had
28 stolen. Dick wrote out the details and charged me with burglary.

29 As we left the station, my foster father walked out first and Dick screwed up the
30 paper he filled out, winked at me and threw it in the rubbish bin. Dick knew my foster
31 father as he had to take him home after drinking and smashing adults on many occasions.

32 My foster father drove back at really high speed and stopped on the way. He said to
33 me "I should get you out and kill you, you little cunt." That was my name when I was in

1 his care, he only ever called me Hemi or Jimmy, my nickname, when Social Welfare was
2 present.

3 Lucy arrived back to speak to him and was questioning him. He had notes written
4 on his arm that referred to everything I had ever done wrong there. I'm not sure what Lucy
5 said but he was triggered, he leapt up, was swearing, threatening me with death and about
6 to beat me up. He was so angry he forgot Lucy was even there.

7 Lucy jumped in and intervened. She stood in front of me to protect me and tried to
8 calm things down. Then she got me in her car, and we left. We had to stop down the road a
9 bit because she was shaking so much. She burst out crying. She had seen a glimpse of the
10 man I had seen every day for four years.

11 Then she took me back to the Riverton family. They had a big talk, and I was signed
12 over to them pretty much straight away. They really wanted me. They really wanted to help
13 me. That was the day I was saved. I was 13 years old.

14 Placement with the Riverton family. Life here was really good. They were a great
15 family. I found it hard to accept their genuine love and honesty. I remember the first cuddle
16 I ever had was from the father of this family. It felt very strange because I was not used to
17 that.

18 They were a hands-on family with some grown up children and younger kids. They
19 were always hugging and kissing their parents and vice versa. It was amazing. From there
20 I went to Aparima College and finished school. I never passed any school certificate exams;
21 my schooling had been so affected by my time at the abusive placement. I lived with the
22 Riverton family for the next three years and went on to live in Gore when I got a job on the
23 Railways.

24 Life after care. I was still living in Riverton when I was discharged from care. I
25 think I was only 15 at the time. Because I had never been in trouble through all of my
26 homes, Social Welfare made an exception for me.

27 My life took a turn for the worse when I started drinking. I went down a path of my
28 own destruction. I committed a lot of offences, most of which was for violence. I amassed
29 over 70 convictions, 43 of those were for serious assaults. I spent a lot of time in prison in
30 the 1980s for serious violence and I had become what my violent foster father had taught
31 me, a very violent abuser, but never of children.

32 The first time I went to prison was when I was 18. It was in prison that I decided to
33 do something about my anger and violence issues, and with help of NZ Care in Dunedin,
34 I completed stopping violence programmes.

1 I have worked in fishing, the building industry and successfully as a self-employed
2 painter for many years. I have had the good fortune to meet and work for some very
3 successful and very nice families. I have painted big buildings across the country, such as
4 Bayfair Shopping Centre in Mt Maunganui and Invercargill Prison. I have recently stopped
5 working because of my diagnosis.

6 Impacts. The impact on me of being placed with abusive foster parents as a nine-
7 year-old was devastating. I was already emotionally and physically defunct but managed to
8 be reasonably happy in myself.

9 Violence. The violence was what I knew from my foster father, to be dished out
10 whenever I wanted to men or women in my violent years.

11 My learning through my formative years at the foster home was the daily violence
12 being inflicted on me, fear of death, threats, abuse and neglect. It was what I carried
13 through my relationships with women. Alcohol was my vice, not drugs. I drank a lot for a
14 long time and that only made things worse.

15 Trust. I have always had trouble trusting adults. I had been let down by my parents.
16 I could not bond with the foster families I was placed with for the first few years and lived
17 a daily hell at age nine to 13. I did bond with the Riverton family because they took me in
18 and were so good to me.

19 Education. My education was pretty much non-existent because I could not
20 concentrate at school and achieve because I was so scared of what I would go home to at
21 that abusive placement. This has affected my financial state because of the lack of
22 education and limited opportunities as a result.

23 Family and relationships. I have three boys, one that is in the Chathams that I do not
24 see and the other two who have gravitated to the gangs. That is not what I wanted for them,
25 but they naturally fell down the path because of the communities they lived in. I wasn't
26 violent with my kids; I didn't see them when they were growing up.

27 I met my partner eight years ago. We have had our ups and downs, but we both
28 know what each other has been through and understand each other. I know that I am lucky
29 to have her in my life. She is my rock.

30 Before I met her, I was pretty much a loner. I didn't want to hurt anybody. By being
31 alone, I don't put anyone in jeopardy or in harm's way, but now I have my head sorted out.

32 Cultural. Although both my parents are Māori, there was no Māori culture at home.
33 So being placed with Pākehā families pretty much all of the time did not have an impact on

1 me. There was no cultural stuff at the abusive foster home, except for the foster father
2 showing me how to put a hāngī down. That was a good thing that he showed me.

3 Any culture or language that I know I have learned later in my life. I don't feel like I
4 missed out on anything by being brought up Pākehā. I now understand my culture, but I
5 don't really want to be part of it.

6 Redress. I have never put in a claim for any form of compensation from either ACC
7 or Social Welfare, but I want to put a claim in and if any money ever came to my estate as a
8 result, I want my partner to get the money and give it to Starship Hospital or to help prevent
9 abuse of kids in care.

10 Recommendations for the future. Before putting kids in the care of strangers, Social
11 Welfare need to get to know the family properly. They have to live with the person to see
12 how they interact with children on a daily basis.

13 Installing cameras would be helpful and if the caregiver has nothing to hide, why
14 not? That would have helped me, surely, they would have been asking why there were
15 bullet holes all over the house.

16 I understand that cameras would be against privacy laws but in this world, I don't
17 see another way. It's impossible to properly screen someone when you tell them when you
18 will be visiting, as abusers will play their silly little games.

19 I also feel that the New Zealand meth epidemic has made things worse and
20 increased the amount of assaults. I see it happening here in Christchurch. If we didn't have
21 that drug in this world, a lot of kids would be better off.

22 In order to prevent kids being taken into care in the first place, we need to hammer
23 this parenting thing. They are starting to do it in prisons where a lot of blokes never learned
24 anything about children or cared about it.

25 Information is also important. The Government needs to write the stats down and
26 document everything to understand just how big the problem is."

27 **DR COOKE:** Thank you Tania.

28 **CHAIR:** I think we should hear from Dannette if she wishes to speak now.

29 **DR COOKE:** Yes, Dannette. You're Dannette Carran.

30 **MS CARRAN:** Yes.

31 **DR COOKE:** You're Hemi's sister?

32 **MS CARRAN:** Yes, I am.

33 **DR COOKE:** You have written out some bits and pieces?

1 **MS CARRAN:** I've just jotted down a couple of things that – to let everybody hear the impact of
2 not seeing him during our time when we were young. So what impact did this have on me,
3 our relationship, not only with me but our siblings? When Hemi went into care with his
4 family that Tania's just spoken about, we would hardly ever see him and it would be
5 arranged that he come into our aunt and uncle's and we'd meet there, so she'd organise it all
6 with Social Welfare. That happened maybe three or four times over that period that he was
7 with the first family.

8 So that would be four years that we hadn't seen him. We were all in foster care as
9 well. We were able to see him after he shifted to his family in Riverton, which was really
10 good. So we were able to go and see him there, visit him at his home there in Riverton. We
11 missed out on having a relationship with him really in his younger years, and him with us.

12 I lost my brother for years and years and we didn't connect until the passing of our
13 mother really. And the only way I managed to get a hold of him at that time was ring all the
14 Police Stations on the West Coast. They found him for me. So we all got together at our
15 home in Winton, where I live with my husband and my family. So, we had our mother at
16 rest at our home there and we hadn't seen him a number of years. We didn't know how to
17 contact him or where. Just somebody said to me, well, try the West Coast, because he was
18 doing a lot of fishing going out and coming back in throughout New Zealand. So that
19 worked, thank goodness. So we've been in -- that was about 1986 when our mum passed
20 away. That was the first time I'd seen him since he left the GRO-B-5 in Riverton.

21 He is a really talented, he's a visual worker, he's a perfectionist at his craft, building,
22 anything, painting and we actually had Hemi do our house up, and perfection, like nobody
23 ever seen. And he took pride in everything he did, and it was mentioned on his statement
24 how and when he met GRO-B-6 eight years ago. And the love of his love and she misses
25 him dearly. And I feel privileged, along with my daughter Tania and I, to be able to be here
26 and speak for him now. Thank you.

27 **CHAIR:** Thank you Dannette. Do you have any other questions?

28 **DR COOKE:** I was going to ask Dannette a question which was this: Because we spoke last night
29 very briefly about your experiences of Hemi and what we do know is he's a man who
30 underwent a significant amount of trauma and trial throughout his life, and we also know
31 that he met his partner and his life changed and he also was entered into work which
32 provided him clearly with a degree of satisfaction.

33 **MS CARRAN:** Yes.

1 **DR COOKE:** You also described him to me last night by using another word, and I don't know if
2 you remember that. I could tell you what it was, but I just wondered if you'd like to –

3 **MS CARRAN:** I'm not really sure which word.

4 **DR COOKE:** It was "monster".

5 **MS CARRAN:** Yes.

6 **DR COOKE:** I just wondered if you were able to tell our Commissioners of why you would use
7 that word when you describe your brother.

8 **MS CARRAN:** I described him to you like that yesterday because that's what he turned into.
9 Drinking, violent. There's probably more times, the only way you'd be able to find out how
10 many times he'd been in prison for was violence through drinking, through needing to
11 hammer someone for something, because it has always been there, because of his treatment.

12 If I can tell you this, he never told me until years later what had happened to him.
13 Because probably he'd know what I'd do, what I've done for one of my sisters, is get them
14 removed from that home. And if I'd have known, if his brothers had known, they would
15 have been in prison too for something they would have done because of it. Because that
16 was his life and it's sad, that somebody has to be put through that and become numb and not
17 caring for himself either.

18 **DR COOKE:** Thank you. Are there any questions that you would want to ask?

19 **CHAIR:** Yes, kia ora Dannette. I'm going to hand you to my fellow Commissioners and to you,
20 Tania, too, but I've just got a couple of questions. Do you mind if I ask Dannette the
21 question. Dannette, you were also in foster care.

22 **MS CARRAN:** Yes.

23 **CHAIR:** As were your other siblings.

24 **MS CARRAN:** Yes, yes.

25 **CHAIR:** And you've told us that you only saw Hemi once every year or so over that four years.

26 **MS CARRAN:** That's right.

27 **CHAIR:** But once he went to Riverton you saw him more often.

28 **MS CARRAN:** Yes.

29 **CHAIR:** A question in my mind is, and you might have some experience of this from your own
30 fostering, who controlled the contact, do you know, do you have any idea?

31 **MS CARRAN:** The contact was, for us as a whole family of being able to get together, was my
32 aunty. She would ask, she would arrange everything with Social Welfare that we be
33 brought to her home in Invercargill. Our mum would fly down from Motueka, my aunty
34 paying for that, so we could be together.

1 **CHAIR:** So, did it happen for all of you that you met just once a year like that?

2 **MS CARRAN:** Yes.

3 **CHAIR:** So, do you know what changed once he went to Riverton, how did it come about you
4 were seeing him more often, do you know that, can you remember?

5 **MS CARRAN:** Because he was with a lovely family that actually communicated through to all of
6 us really.

7 **CHAIR:** So, they embraced you as part of the whānau in a way.

8 **MS CARRAN:** Absolutely.

9 **CHAIR:** Thank you for answering my questions I'm now going to hand you to Commissioner
10 Erueti.

11 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Tēnā koe, kei te mihi atu ki a kōrua me ō kōrua kupu mai i takoha
12 mai ki mua i te aroaro o te Kōmihana, kei te maumaharatia tō hāmua, tō tungāne me tō pāpā
13 a Hemi, kei te mihi atu ki ōna iwi Ngāi Tahu me Ngāpuhi.

14 I want to thank you so much for coming here and speaking with us. We often say
15 that we couldn't do our work without hearing directly from survivors and it's so important
16 for Hemi to have his voice here and see also that he wanted to write a book and how
17 important it is for him to have his strong words here and out in the public here before
18 everyone to learn about what happened to him, the violence and the horror. You've done
19 that on his behalf and that's incredibly brave too, I'm sure he'd be very proud of you both
20 for doing that for him.

21 There's a lot in the evidence here I could speak to, it's remarkable isn't it, it just
22 seems even at the time that he went to Riverton and he had that loving whānau it was too
23 late for him to, you know, it was so deeply rooted and embedded enduring the violence that
24 he had at that time when he was so young and he had the bravery to come and speak to us
25 about that and to recognise that, and we will learn from that, so ngā manaakitanga ki a
26 kōrua me to whānau. Thank you so much for coming in and sharing those words with us
27 today. Ngā mihi.

28 **MS CARRAN:** Thank you.

29 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Tēnā koutou kōrua. First off can I just extend my condolences
30 to you both for this very, very tragic loss taken too early, and can I just say that you
31 actually did him much honour to his memory in the way you read his statement, so thank
32 you very, very much for that, he would be very proud, I think, as your extended whānau,
33 your sibling group and being able to hear and witness you being here today.

1 I did have a question and it was really around the sibling relationship, I think
2 Dannette if I could just direct that to you.

3 **MS CARRAN:** Yes.

4 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** If that's okay. Just if I could just take it a bit further than
5 Commissioner Shaw here. You were only able to see each other once a year. Do you know
6 if you were all scattered around the motu or were you all in the same region?

7 **MS CARRAN:** No, we were all scattered. We actually come under the radar in 1962 here in
8 Auckland first, before we were put in care at different homes. We do have twin sisters, so
9 there was Hemi, twin sisters were placed together for a time, separated for a time as well.
10 There was my other sister just younger than me, she was placed in a different home often,
11 but her and I were placed together in a couple, throughout Southland though. The boys, my
12 brother **GRO-B** older than me, he's passed as well, he was throughout Invercargill and
13 Gore, my older brother **GRO-B** from Invercargill, Gore, the North Island, boys' homes and
14 prison.

15 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** And in being – so you talked about how difficult it was in
16 terms of being able to reconnect with Hemi.

17 **MS CARRAN:** Yes.

18 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Was that the same for Hemi with his other siblings as well?

19 **MS CARRAN:** Yes, although two of the girls, no, actually three of the girls were in around the
20 Tuatapere area which is close to where the family was that he – that this story, his story's
21 about. So, they did see each other now and again, but not often. Basically weren't allowed
22 to via the foster father, the foster family actually.

23 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** So, it was really the transfer to the Riverton family, whānau,
24 that's what triggered the opening up of the spaces?

25 **MS CARRAN:** Yeah, we were able to, any of us kids were able to go and visit him any time as
26 long as we talked to the **GRO-B-5**'s, yeah.

27 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** If I could just ask about the broader sibling group because
28 Hemi was part of that. Was that the same or was it a similar experience then for the rest of
29 your siblings, it was difficult for you guys to have relationships with each other, not just
30 with Hemi?

31 **MS CARRAN:** Yes, I put myself out there to actually keep everybody together. It was like he
32 was released from a prison when he went to Riverton, and it made it certainly easier for us

1 to communicate by phone, being allowed to go and see him, pick him up, take him out for
2 days, you know.

3 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Then just coming back to when you were able to visit with
4 each other, how long were those visits, was it a couple of hours, was it a day?

5 **MS CARRAN:** No, with our aunty, aunty and uncle in Invercargill. We were there for at least
6 two or three days, to go swimming, go to Queen's Park where we used to spend most of our
7 younger life there running away to and having fun. Once upon a time, yes.

8 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** So those would be very happy memories.

9 **MS CARRAN:** Yes, yes.

10 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** That you can treasure taking forward.

11 **MS CARRAN:** Yes.

12 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Do you think they were happy memories as well for Hemi?

13 **MS CARRAN:** With us going together at the short space in time. Not all of us were allowed to
14 stay for the full length of that time though. Maybe a day, a day and a half. And the youngest
15 ones would be taken back to their foster parents.

16 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Was that at the direction of the social worker?

17 **MS CARRAN:** It would have been then, or the parents saying no, they need to be home by – and
18 that would happen, yeah.

19 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Thank you Dannette.

20 **MS CARRAN:** Thank you.

21 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** You've been most gracious.

22 **MS CARRAN:** Thank you.

23 **CHAIR:** Well, your ordeal has come to an end, and you said it was a privilege to appear here, the
24 privilege is all ours, absolutely all ours. Your bravery in the face of the loss of your brother
25 is so appreciated, so tēnei te mihi mahana ki a kōrua. Kia ora, thank you so much.

26 **MS CARRAN:** Thank you.

27 **CHAIR:** We will take the morning adjournment. Thank you, we've got some extra time up our
28 sleep, what time would you like us to appear again? I think we're scheduled to come back at
29 11.45.

30 **DR COOKE:** 11.45 should be okay.

31 **CHAIR:** That will bring us back on track.

32 **DR COOKE:** Will bring us back on track.

33 **CHAIR:** Yes, thank you.

34 **Adjournment from 11.18 am to 11.57 am**