

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE HEARING**

Under	The Inquiries Act 2013
In the matter of	The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions
Royal Commission:	Judge Coral Shaw (Chair) Dr Anaru Erueti Ali'imuamua Sandra Alofivae Paul Gibson
Counsel:	Mr Simon Mount QC, Ms Kerryn Beaton QC, Ms Katherine Anderson, Ms Tania Sharkey, Mr Michael Thomas, Ms Kathy Basire and Ms Alisha Castle for the Royal Commission Ms Rachael Schmidt-McCleave and Ms Julia White for the Crown Ms Sally McKechnie and Ms Brooke Clifford for Te Rōpū Tautoko, the Catholic Bishops and Congregational Leaders Ms India Shores for the Anglican Church Ms Maria Dew, Ms Kiri Harkess and Mr Lourenzo Fernandez for the Methodist Church of New Zealand and Wesley College Ms Lydia Oosterhoff for the Survivor Network of those Abused by Priests Mr Brian Henry for Gloriavale Leavers' Support Trust Mr Chris Shannon and Ms Clare Sykes for Gloriavale Christian Community
Venue:	Level 2 Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry 414 Khyber Pass Road AUCKLAND
Date:	13 October 2022

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

INDEX

OPENING STATEMENT BY THE ROYAL COMMISSION	6
OPENING STATEMENT BY THE CROWN	11
OPENING STATEMENT BY SAGE	21
OPENING STATEMENT BY SNAP	24
OPENING STATEMENT BY THE GLORIAVALE LEAVERS' SUPPORT TRUST	27
OPENING STATEMENT BY GLORIAVALE	30
HOWARD WENDELL TEMPLE Questioning by Mr Shannon	34
RACHEL STEDFAST Questioning by Ms Sykes	37
HOWARD WENDELL TEMPLE AND RACHEL STEDFAST Questioning by Ms Basire Questioning by Commissioners	40 97

RACHEL STEDFAST (Affirmed)

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14 **CHAIR:** Yes, Mr Shannon.15 **MR SHANNON:** Ms Sykes will be ...

16 **QUESTIONING BY MS SYKES:** Good morning. My name is Ms Sykes. For those who can't
17 see me, I'm a blonde Pākehā woman wearing a black jacket and white top today. Ms
18 Stedfast is next to me.

19 Could you please confirm your full name is Rachel Stedfast?

20 **MRS STEDFAST:** Yes, my full name is Rachel Stedfast.21 **MS SYKES:** And are you the current Acting Principal of the school at Gloriavale?22 **MRS STEDFAST:** Yes, yes, I am.

23 **MS SYKES:** So you've just seen Mr Shannon ask Mr Temple a few questions, I'll do the same
24 thing. And then Ms Basire and the Commission may have some questions for you.

25 First of all, would you also please give a short visual description of yourself?

26 **MRS STEDFAST:** I am brown haired, blue-eyed, I am wearing a pink shirt and a white jacket
27 and I have a colourful tie around my head.

28 **MS SYKES:** Thank you. And so you provided a short witness statement previously to the
29 Commission dated 12 October and you confirm that is your evidence to the Commission?

30 **MRS STEDFAST:** Yes.31 **MS SYKES:** And hopefully they should have a copy of that document.

32 So, first of all, could you please tell us how long you've lived with the Gloriavale
33 community?

1 **MRS STEDFAST:** I was born at Springbank but when we shifted over to Gloriavale in 1991, I've
2 been there my whole life basically.

3 **MS SYKES:** What qualifications do you have?

4 **MRS STEDFAST:** So I have a diploma in teaching, I have also done further training in quite a
5 few other areas and received qualifications for that.

6 **MS SYKES:** Can you tell us a little bit about that training that you've undertaken?

7 **MRS STEDFAST:** So the training I have undertaken has -- it's kind of ongoing. But we are
8 participating in a nationwide movement, so to speak, so the nationwide movement on
9 training teachers across the country on Te Whāriki, Tātaiako [cultural competencies for
10 teachers of Māori learners], these are really important documents. Te Whāriki is the New
11 Zealand bicultural curriculum for early childhood centres.

12 I have also done multi-sensory instruction and language arts which is, yeah, it's like
13 an English programme for school, school level. The training in Tātaiako was done through
14 Massey University so they came out to Gloriavale and we also went into workshops in
15 Greymouth.

16 There's some other programmes that we've done and it required travelling into
17 Greymouth and meeting with early childhood teachers from all over the West Coast and
18 that was evenings over a long stretch of time.

19 But yeah, just met with all those different teachers, different centre managers from
20 across New Zealand. I've been up to Napier, Wellington, through our working with early
21 childhood centres up there, networking with the principals, yeah.

22 **MS SYKES:** Does that sometimes involve working with Government agencies like Ministry of
23 Education or other agencies, how are they involved in school?

24 **MRS STEDFAST:** Yeah. So Ministry of Education is quite involved in the school at the
25 moment, they come out bi-weekly just to get updates, to help us through this time. Also we
26 have had regular visits from the Education Review Office. I particularly know about early
27 childhood because that's where I've been. So just moving into the school, I don't have a lot
28 of information on the school of the past, I do have information on the current status of the
29 school, but our early childhood is quite, I'm quite into that. So yeah.

30 **MS SYKES:** Speaking about the culture of the school, then, as you've mentioned, can you tell us
31 a bit -- and the early childhood centres -- can you tell us a bit about how disabled students
32 are supported or assisted in their learning?

33 **MRS STEDFAST:** So early childhood I would say would be slightly more advanced in this area
34 than the school, just from being in both, but the school is making major changes and

1 training teachers, individual teachers can actually identify and provide for those children
2 with neurodiversity or -- so we have some students with Down syndrome, we have a
3 student enrolled in our school at the moment with severe cerebral palsy. So we get outside
4 agencies, SES [specialist education services] workers from the Ministry, occupational
5 therapists, workers from BLENNZ [Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ] who
6 come out on a regular basis, they help to train our teachers, they also do teaching sessions
7 with those students.

8 We have a number of students with neurodiversity and different learnings needs at
9 the moment that have occupational therapists coming out and working with them on a
10 regular basis, sometimes bi-weekly and yeah, so our knowledge for the teachers
11 themselves, all our teachers participated in a Providing for Neurodiverse Learners in a
12 workshop, was provided at Shantytown, so we're definitely up-skilling there.

13 Yeah, so it's getting better and better.

14 **MS SYKES:** Thank you. And then speaking about the school culture again and the education
15 programme, can you talk a bit about how the school incorporates Māori culture, te reo
16 Māori, tikanga into the education of its pupils?

17 **MRS STEDFAST:** Te reo Māori is actually -- has been in early childhood centres since we took
18 on the curriculum, the Te Whāriki curriculum, so our early childhood teachers are more
19 advanced in this area. It's generally part of their professional growth cycles, which used to
20 be called appraisal. We also have done a lot of training on the Tātaiako, the five principles
21 in Tātaiako, which is a -- it's cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners.

22 So even getting an understanding on that, I feel we matched a lot of other early
23 childhood centres, New Zealand wide. I did get a document from the Education Review
24 Office, and it was called Te Whāriki 2017, (inaudible), it was about implementing Te
25 Whāriki and they did -- they kind of analysed and did a lot of research on how early
26 childhood centres were incorporating Te Whāriki and when I actually analysed ours,
27 because I was centre manager at the time and I was doing some professional development
28 on it, I was pleasantly surprised to actually see that we were not in the lowest bracket in
29 New Zealand, we were about just above average. So I thought yeah, okay, we've done that,
30 so we can go further.

31 So yeah, the school at the moment is definitely working on up-skilling, training
32 teachers, and incorporating that whole Tātaiako into the teaching practice of every teacher,
33 and making sure that those students who do identify as Māori learners are actually provided

1 for and that our teachers can deliver curriculum content, teaching strategies, and a whole
2 culture that is -- fits with those learners.

3 **MS SYKES:** Thank you. Then my final question about training at the school for teachers and
4 also for parents, is: What sort of training do teachers receive, or all people receive relating
5 to supporting children who make complaints of abuse and any training to do with
6 developing healthy relationships that are safe for the people involved?

7 **MRS STEDFAST:** So all our teachers and parents, managers, leaders, everyone has done training
8 with the STOP and START Programme. We have also done --

9 **MS SYKES:** Do you want to briefly explain what those programmes involve, please?

10 **MRS STEDFAST:** So the STOP and START, they're kind of two different organisations that
11 work together. So we have parents' evenings where professionals from STOP and START
12 both come out and work with all the parents, do training -- yeah, training on how to identify
13 abuse in children, training on how to identify traumatised children, and what's needed for
14 those children, you know, from thereon.

15 So our teachers have also done training with the Empowerment Trust. We have
16 also done training with members from the Police, so we have an assigned PC [Police
17 constable] who comes out for the school and who does lots of programmes with the
18 children like Keeping Ourselves Safe, yeah, just actually training on what actual
19 traumatised children, what abuse looks like in victims and how to actually move them and
20 support them going forward.

21 **MS SYKES:** Thank you.

22 Those are all of my questions. So now I think we hand over to Ms Basire to ask
23 questions of you and Howard.

24 **CHAIR:** Thank you, counsel.