

**IN THE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO  
HISTORIAL ABUSE IN STATE CARE**

**UNDER**

The Inquiries Act 2013

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF**

To inquire into and report upon responses by institutions to instances and allegations of Historical Abuse in State Care between 1950 and 2000.

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**BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF BEVERLY CHRISTINE WARDLE-JACKSON**

**Dated: 7 November 2019**

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## **BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF BEVERLY CHRISTINE WARDLE-JACKSON**

1. I was born on 26 December 1952.
2. My father's name was Edward. My mother's name was Shirley. Both of my parents had been State Wards as children. Although my knowledge of our family history is sketchy, I understand that both my mother and my father were put in the care of the State because their families were poor.
3. Although my father tried hard, we lived in extreme poverty and didn't have a lot of food. Despite this, the children kept coming. It was one of my jobs as one of the older children, to look after the youngest ones.

### Child Welfare

4. My family first came to the notice of Child Welfare in October 1959, when I was almost 7 years old. We were living in a house on the property of Wadestown School. The Headmaster contacted Child Welfare because of concerns about our family. Child Welfare was contacted again in May 1960 by other people who were concerned.
5. I am not surprised by this. Sometimes there was no food in the house at all and my mother would go out all night. I would have to go begging the neighbours for milk for the babies. Our house was also very dirty.
6. On 1 June 1960, I am aware that my whole family was placed under the preventive supervision of Child Welfare. During that time, I was sent away for the first time.

### Florence Booth Salvation Army Home: Newtown

7. I was about 7 when I was sent to the Florence Booth Salvation Army Home in Newtown, Wellington. I was taken there with my sisters Jenny and Judy.
8. When we got there, we were met by Major Christopher. She introduced us to other staff members and showed us our beds. I was in a different dormitory from my sisters.
9. We were taken to a playroom to wait for the other children to get home from school. I couldn't enjoy the toys there. I was extremely frightened and upset. I could not stop thinking about what was going to happen to our family.
10. Some of the staff – those who saw me as the confused and scared little girl that I was – treated me with kindness, but there was an

underlying violent culture to the home. Most of this came from Major Christopher and Lieutenant Barker.

11. I was badly thrashed at Florence Booth for biting my nails. If staff saw that I had bitten them, I got a thrashing. One day, I was so scared about getting a thrashing that I peed in the bath. I got hauled out of the bath by Lieutenant Barker and she thrashed me all over my body. I had bright red welts on my upper legs and thighs and white hand marks over the rest of my body. This was the worst hiding she had given me.
12. Another time, I lost one of the three handkerchiefs we were issued with. A staff member called Barbara found me in the locker room, slapped me across my face and sent me off to Major Christopher. Major Christopher hit me across my palms with a piece of pipe that she called the rod. The pain was excruciating, and my fingers and knuckles swelled. This sort of punishment was the norm at the home.
13. That Christmas, all my sisters went somewhere else and I was left at Florence Booth. I remember being excited because, for the first time in my life, I woke up to a Christmas present at the foot of my bed. Other visitors came during the day bringing gifts and sweets. These were all taken off us at the end of the day by the staff. They said we would get them when we left, but I never saw those lovely gifts again. I was allowed to keep two sweets and one book.
14. The next day was my birthday, which falls on Boxing Day. Normally, the birthday of someone in the Home was celebrated. However, they forgot about me that day.
15. There are some happy memories from my time at Florence Booth, including events that were put on by charities. However, any happy memories are overshadowed by the fear and dread that filled so much of my life during my stay.

### Back home

16. After about a year at Florence Booth, we were taken back home to our parents. They had a house in Porirua. Even though the house was new, we had no furniture and money was tight as always. There were several kids to each bed, and sometimes our power was cut off because of the unpaid bills. We stayed under the preventive supervision of Child Welfare between May 1961 and May 1962. I am aware of records in my file that talk about my father having a violent temper.
17. In mid-1962, my parents were prosecuted by the Education Board because my brothers, sisters and I were not going to school. Sometimes I would be home helping to care for the younger ones, or

because I was sick. Sometimes I stayed home because I had no clean clothes or because there was a school trip on that we could not pay for.

18. During the time we were under the preventive supervision of Child Welfare, my father went to prison. We were never visited by Child Welfare. We had a can of spaghetti to eat on Christmas Day between all of us kids. Child Welfare only turned up when dad was due to be released from prison.
19. It was only when I saw my records that I could see that the preventive supervision continued for some years. It was renewed in 1963, 1964, and 24 May 1965. I'm amazed by this. I had no idea that we actually had status with Child Welfare after returning from Florence Booth. Life did not change during that time.
20. In May 1965, my mother left my father and moved in with a man called Don. Don was a horrible man and, as I was to later discover, a child abuser. Child Welfare also recorded how unsuitable my mother's new home was.

#### Miramar Girls' Home

21. On 11 June 1965, I got home from school to find Child Welfare officers there. They told me that Judy, Susan and Brenda and I were all being taken into Child Welfare care.
22. I remember the social worker who took us to Miramar Girls' Home. She never once asked me or my siblings anything about my feelings or my home life.
23. Just like last time, I was separated from my siblings when we got to the Girls' Home. They got sent away to a different part of the Home. A couple of days later I was enrolled in yet another school. I was introduced as Beverly from the Miramar Welfare Home. I couldn't concentrate at school and every night since I got to the home, I had cried myself to sleep. The bullying got so bad that I wagged school.
24. I was found out, and I had my first bad experience with Ms Tucker. She called me wicked, stupid, selfish and ungrateful and slapped me across the face. I was sent to bed without any dinner.
25. The second time I wagged school, I was taken to the seclusion room by Miss Johanson. When we got to the seclusion room, she thrashed my bare legs with a hearth brush until I cried. She hit me until she was exhausted. I had to spend the night in the seclusion room.
26. In September 1965, I was made a State Ward along with my siblings. I was 12 years old.

27. The only good thing about being a State Ward was that I got taken shopping for new clothes. Everything else was pretty bad. I couldn't keep up at school, so I'd wag every now and then and get into trouble each time. I also ran away from the Miramar Girls' Home. After that, I was taken down to the seclusion room again.
28. I was sitting on a mattress in the seclusion room when a social worker came in and said that I was going to Christchurch. I was kept in the seclusion room until it was time to leave. I cried and begged to be able to stay in Wellington, but it was no use.

### Strathmore Girls' Receiving Home

29. When I got to the Receiving Home, I was taken to a room that had no windows, and a mattress on the floor. A female staff member gave me a nightgown and took all my clothes. There was a pot in the room for me to use as a toilet. The staff forgot to turn the heater off and it got incredibly hot in the room. I banged and begged to be let out, but nobody came. In the morning, I was taken out by another staff member and was made to scrub out my room with a bucket of water and a scrubbing brush. I was given a tray with some breakfast but had to sit on the wet floor to eat it. I was told that I would get the mattress back at bedtime.
30. I sat on the floor all day. I was given my lunch on a tray and nobody would talk to me. I got my mattress back that night. Someone turned all my lights on in the middle of the night and I couldn't help but think it was done deliberately. I spent 3 nights in that room.
31. Most of the girls at the Receiving Home were older than me. They were surprised that a 12-year old had been sent there. Girls ran away a lot and would be put in seclusion when they were returned.
32. We all had to put our pyjamas on every day at about 3:30pm when all our clothing was locked away until the next morning. I was enrolled in yet another school. I just got settled in, when my social worker turned up and told me I was being moved to another Home.

### Riccarton Family Home, Christchurch

33. I was taken to a Family Home, which was run by a husband and wife. They had their own children but looked after Welfare children as well. The woman who ran it was Mrs Hume. I shared a room with 3 other girls who were all older than me. Mrs Hume was impatient and would tell me off for minor things. She also treated the Welfare kids much differently to her own children.

34. Over Christmas, I spent time with my mother and her boyfriend Don. They were living in Christchurch by then. I was sexually abused by Don during that time.
35. I know now that my father had asked if 4 of us could live with him, but Child Welfare had said no. It just wasn't a done thing for a father to be a solo parent in those days. I was angry and sad when I found out.
36. I went back to the care of Mrs Hume after Christmas. I was enrolled in College. I got a uniform which was bits and pieces from other people. It was tatty and did not fit. I was so far behind in my schoolwork that I did not understand what was going on and kept getting into trouble. I did a mountain of work around the house every day. I ironed all the family's clothes and those of the other Welfare children, cleaned shoes, washed dishes and cleaned the bathrooms and toilets.
37. While I was at this Family Home, I told another girl that I had been touched by Don. The girl reported it to Mrs Hume. I was made to give a statement to Police and was examined by a male doctor. Mrs Hume told me I had got myself into a 'fine mess'. A few weeks later, Mrs Hume told me that the Police had done an investigation and found my complaint to be untrue.
38. I couldn't believe it. I told Mrs Hume it was true. She told me it was not important what she believed. It was what the Police and Welfare believed. I was told that this was the end of the matter. I burned with anger and resentment towards everyone for saying I was lying.
39. Because of my unhappiness, I managed to return to Wellington by stowing away on the boat between Lyttleton and Wellington. Unfortunately, I was found and returned to Mrs Hume. Mrs Hume didn't allow anyone to speak to me. I had to do work around the home and in the garden.

#### *Back to Strathmore Girls' Receiving Home*

40. It was not long after this that I ran away again. Mrs Hume would not take me back, so I was taken to the Girls' Home. There I was ordered to strip naked and I was locked in the seclusion room. I was given a night-gown to put on. For the next two weeks I remained locked in seclusion.
41. Eventually, I was let out and was allowed to spend time with the older girls. I only felt safe to cry, locked alone in my room at nights. I felt like I was in a hopeless situation.

42. A few months later, I was told that Child Welfare was moving me to a new home in the Wairarapa called Fareham House. I was told it was a bit like a boarding school for girls.

### Fareham House

43. One of the first things that struck me about Fareham House was that most of the other girls were Maori. I had never lived with Maori girls before. I was put in a dorm with five other girls.
44. Over the next few days I learned the routine. We were woken at 6am daily, made to get dressed and then we would be put through an hour of exercise by Mr Bell, the Principal. There were 28 girls at Fareham House then, six Pakeha and the rest Maori. It didn't take me long to understand that the Maori girls were just like me, and that they too, had been taken away from their families.
45. Like the other places I had been, the rules were strict. We had to do a lot of cleaning around the Home. Some of the cleaning was domestic duties, and quite a bit more was punishment for breaking rules. We were not allowed to leave the grounds of Fareham House for any reason unless we had a staff escort. To deter runaways, our clothing was taken from us each night and locked away in the clothing room downstairs. We had to wear a uniform.
46. There was a school at Fareham House. The school had two teachers. My teacher was a Miss Weir. On my first day of school, she had us on the mat singing nursery rhymes, which resulted in multiple complaints. She didn't handle the pressure very well and left the classroom.
47. I ended up in trouble with staff on a number of occasions, mostly for answering back and giving cheek – I guess like any teenager does.
48. One of the punishments was to be locked in a seclusion room. I remember that the room had a brown gym mat on the floor in the corner. There was nothing else in the room. I had to stay in that room, sometimes for a few days at a time.
49. One time, I took off during a Fareham House trip into Wellington. I made my way to Miramar Girls' Home, where my older sister Judy was. The staff at Miramar were very kind to me and let me spend the night with my sister. It was the first time I had seen her for a while.
50. The next day, Mr Bell came and picked me up. One of the things I still remember to this day is that he tied me up like an animal before I was placed in the back of the van. Once we got back to Fareham House, he took me to the seclusion room. I had to get into pyjamas. I was locked in the seclusion room for three days.

51. I was put in seclusion on another occasion, after Mr Bell tipped up a plate of porridge on my head. This was because I had refused to eat it after being told by the girls that another girl had spat in it. When Mr Bell tipped the porridge over my head, I called him a "filthy pig" and swore at him. I was told to stand up. When I did so, Mr Bell grabbed my arm and twisted it hard up my back. He pushed me and forced me up the main room into the seclusion room on the second floor. I was not allowed to shower to get the porridge out of my hair. I was locked in the room for the day without any food. I was not allowed any books. I stayed locked in that room for a couple of days.
52. Another punishment for me at Fareham House was to be locked in an even smaller room, in the attic. The whole room was bare. There was a small window with a metal grate across it. The room had nothing but a mattress and a potty. On one occasion I was locked in the attic for five nightmarish days. I was only allowed out in the morning to go downstairs for a shower. I had nothing to do.
53. I was sent to the attic on a second time after three of us ran away from Fareham House. I was in the attic, on the second occasion, for about nine days.
54. As I talk about further on in my narrative, I was sent into the psychiatric hospital system by Mr Bell, where I spent many years. I had a short, second admission to Fareham House after I had been in Porirua Hospital for some months, but this did not last long because I was blamed for doing something I hadn't done and was returned to Porirua Hospital, after spending yet another short time in seclusion.
55. It is fair to say that I had a mostly miserable time at Fareham House. I made some friends there, at least one of whom has been a life-long friend. But my overwhelming impression of the place is that it was cruel, unfair and dehumanising.

#### Abuse by Anglican Vicar

56. While I was at Fareham House, staff decided I was to be confirmed into the Anglican Church. I had no real interest in church. I only attended because the Fareham House girls were required to.
57. Another Fareham House girl and I started attending confirmation classes with the vicar. One day, I went on my own to the confirmation class. I realised that the vicar had been drinking. The vicar started to ask me if I had been letting men do things with my body. He lifted up his robe and was holding his erect penis in one hand. He asked me if I wanted to touch it. He rubbed my hand up and down on his penis. He also touched my genitals. I remember that my face was burning hot with shame and I felt revolting and despairing.



58. The vicar told me it wouldn't be wise to mention what had happened to anyone because it could get us both into a lot of trouble. I thought the vicar had liked me. Really, he just thought I was some girl he was allowed to do rude things to. Once again, I felt ashamed and guilty. In particular, I felt really bad that I had done nothing to stop it.

Admission to psychiatric hospitals

59. Like a lot of the girls at Fareham House, I ended up in psychiatric hospital care.
60. I was first taken to Ward 27 at Wellington Hospital where I was seen by a young doctor. I was shown to a bed in the Ward and told to put on a night-gown.
61. I wondered what sort of place it was. Everybody looked so miserable and one woman was doing strange things.
62. I was not long at Ward 27 before I was taken to Porirua Hospital, where I was to remain, on and off, between June 1967 and 1973.
63. In between admissions, I went back to Fareham House, to a sister's foster placement and back to Miramar Girls' Home. I was also briefly placed with an older sister, where I was sexually abused by her husband. It was during this timeframe I met a man and fell pregnant at age 16.
64. Each time, I was returned to Porirua Hospital when my behaviour was perceived to be 'difficult'. I was just a lonely, isolated teenage girl.
65. I remember being taken to Porirua Hospital in an ambulance. When I saw the sign to Porirua Hospital, I was frightened. We had referred to places like Porirua as 'nut houses', 'funny farms', or 'loony bins'. I wondered what I had done to deserve being sent here. I was only 14 years old. I remember the tears flowing again. Nobody cared about me or wanted to help me.
66. Porirua Hospital was another hell for me. When I was first admitted, two nurses told me to take off all my clothes. The only clothing I was wearing was a nightgown and a dressing-gown. I refused. Five nurses all descended on me and I could feel numerous pairs of hands ripping the clothing from my body, leaving me naked. I was told to put on a night-gown.
67. It was not long before a nurse came into the room telling me she had come to give me an injection. When I told everyone to get away from me, the group of nurses descended on me again. Two of them sat on me, pinning me with their weight. A number of hands held me down while the one with the huge syringe thrust a needle into the top of my

thigh. I remember that within a few minutes everything went black and I lost consciousness.

68. I spent the first couple of days at Porirua Hospital locked up in my room. Mostly I slept. I was threatened, constantly by staff, about what would happen if I stepped out of line.
69. I soon found out that I had been placed in the admission ward of the Hospital. I met another teenager there, Wendy, who also became a life-long friend, who told me that most of the people in the ward were mad, but there were a few younger people like us.
70. Following my first few days at Porirua Hospital, I was often put in seclusion. This meant I was locked by myself in a dirty, dark and cold cell for between one and a few days. This often happened when I ran away.
71. Sometimes when I was locked in my cell, I was left in there with just a nightie, and a stitch blanket to cover me.
72. I was regularly attacked and punched by nursing staff. One time, when I was being dragged to seclusion by a female staff member, that staff member deliberately punched me on my body.
73. One of the most frightening things was being attacked by other patients. I vividly remember one time, being attacked by a female patient for sitting on an empty chair. I had handfuls of my hair pulled out. On another occasion, I was beaten up by a female patient. On yet another occasion, a patient threw a chair at me, which hit me in the head.
74. I clearly remember that every little thing about Porirua Hospital seemed to reinforce the feeling of being trapped and powerless. Even when I asked permission to wear some of my own clothing, I was told that my suitcase had been lost somewhere. I had to wear ugly, shapeless dresses that hung down to my ankles. I also had to wear underpants that were big baggy bloomers, that had obviously been made to fit huge women. Knowing that many other patients had worn them before me made me feel disgusting.
75. Every day violent incidents would occur somewhere, usually ending with the nurses assaulting patients and dragging them off to their rooms, kicking them and punching them along the way. It was all wrong, so wrong, but there was no one to tell, no one to complain to.
76. Although some patients needed to be removed for everybody's protection, I still hated seeing the nurses pulling their hair, and punching and kicking them as they lay on the ground. The continual screaming, banging and swearing day and night was overwhelmingly

depressing. I remember I was on edge the whole time, wary of everyone, anxious that I might end up in the thick of it.

77. I learned and saw many things in Porirua Hospital that were so far outside my previous experiences that I didn't know what to think. One day a woman came rushing out of her room holding her arm towards me. I felt sick when I saw a long gaping cut running down the inside of her wrist. This was the first time I had encountered people who harmed themselves. I would witness many more acts of self-harm and many acts of violence towards others.
78. I also started to smoke at Porirua Hospital as all the patients, even us teenagers, were given smokes. It was a way of keeping us calm. This was a habit I was later to strongly regret.
79. It took a long time for me to discover that there was a school on the grounds of the hospital. I was not there for long because of one of the older boys tried to put his hand down my pants every time he came near me. I had no schooling from the age of 14. I hadn't learned anything in school since the age of 11. My education was far behind others of my age because I had not attended school for such a long time.
80. After my brief return to Fareham House, I was admitted back into Villa Nine, where I was locked up. I remember being utterly distraught. For the first few days, I was filled with deep despair and I could hardly bring myself to speak to anyone. I felt more alone in the world than ever before. Deep down, I knew I wasn't mad. I also knew that Child Welfare had nowhere for me to live. They had never once offered me a foster home. As each year passed, it became less and less likely that I would ever have a home or someone who cared about me. I was getting too old for people to care about me.
81. During this admission, nothing had changed for the better. In fact, conditions were even worse than the first time I had been there. The violence was unbearable, as was the constant noise of patients screaming and fighting among themselves and with the staff. Even though there were some new staff, most were as cold and uncaring towards the patients as those who had gone before them.
82. Whenever staff wanted the ward cleaning done, the 'welfare kids' were singled out, and we were bullied and shouted at like animals until the job was done. I remember complaining to the matron one day, as she was passing through the corridor, while I was down on my hands and knees, scrubbing. She told me that I got everything that I needed for nothing. She told me to stop my whingeing.

83. It was a simple choice, really. We had to do every dirty job we were given, or we would be locked up in our rooms, and we would get a hiding on our way there.
84. On top of that, our basic human treatment was low on the list of priorities. It was humiliating when we had to use the ward toilet. There were no doors and no privacy whatsoever. Being on public display was bad enough but cleaning the urine-reeking toilets was one of the worst jobs of all. There were always faeces smeared everywhere, and the stench clung to you long after you left. No matters how hard I scrubbed those toilets, they always smelt just as bad as when I started.
85. I remember that on every second day, selected patients would receive electric-shock treatment. Those who were not, were herded from the wing to the day room where we were locked up until the shock treatments were over. We often heard wailing and moaning noises coming from the ECT rooms.
86. There were significantly more young people in Villa Nine the second time around, than there were during my first stay. Many of the new arrivals were also state wards and supposedly under the care of Child Welfare. Three Fareham House girls who I knew quite well were admitted within weeks of each other. Then a few months later, two more state wards from Fareham House were admitted. Even at my age, I could see the injustice of dumping us girls into mental institutions, simply because there was nowhere else for us to go. It seemed as though we were some kind of social experiment.
87. To this day, I remember when one of the new arrivals, a girl called Jennifer (aged 15) died. Late one evening, Jennifer had a severe asthma attack and collapsed on the floor inside the toilet. I was horrified to see her face turning blue as she gasped for breath. Although someone rang the emergency bell immediately, by the time help turned up Jennifer was unconscious. We waited anxiously for nearly a day before we found out that Jennifer had died. Those of us who knew her were terribly upset, but we were warned by staff not to talk about it. We did talk about it, constantly. We all believed that Jennifer might not have died, had the staff responded to the bell immediately.
88. I also vividly remember that after one escape, I was given electric-shock treatment. A few days later I found out that my friend Wendy, who had escaped with me, had also received ECT the same day as me. It was clear that this was a punishment for trying to escape from that hideous place, although the 'medical' reason given was that I was suffering from depression.

89. As I became more hopeless, thinking that my life was to be locked in a mental institution, I thought about harming myself and wondered what it would be like to be dead. I began hurting myself by making scratches across my wrists using the sharp end of a hair clip. I didn't know why I was doing it; it wasn't until much later in my life that I learned self-harm was often a cry for help.
90. I don't remember making a conscious decision to harm myself; it just happened one weekend. It was visiting day and once again nobody had come to visit me. I picked up the hair clip, bent it and cut my wrists. I told myself that I deserved this pain and that I deserved everything that had happened to me.
91. Eventually, I was transferred to Villa Six. There, my friend Wendy and I were the only teenagers. Many of the adult patients had been there for years. Some of the women had vacant expressions and just sat, hardly ever speaking. Others spoke continually, but only to the voices in their heads.
92. I was given a bed in a shabby dormitory with 12 others. Most of the other patients in the dormitory appeared to be over 40; some were as old as 70.
93. There was very little for us to do other than spend each day with the other patients inside the day room. After a few months, I got used to living in the hospital, and used to the people I was forced to live with. I no longer allowed myself to think about my future. I knew that I had to accept this madhouse as my home. Boredom was one of our main problems. It was hard to find activities every day.
94. After taking myself into Porirua township one day for something to do, I was promptly moved to F Ward. This was the Forensic Ward of the hospital, where the criminally insane and severely mad people were locked away. I was immediately put into seclusion. All I could hear was dreadful wailing and moaning coming from the ward. I had never heard such frightening sounds coming from human beings.
95. I was left alone in a cell-like room which had wooden walls and peeling cream paint smeared with dried faeces. It stank, as did the mattress on the floor, which was the only item in the room.
96. I was then moved into the dormitory, which was an orchestra of moaning, wailing and screaming, punctuated by hysterical howling. I was terrified. I was heavily medicated and was once again forced to clean.
97. The sights in F Ward were appalling. Patients with all sorts of physical deformities and crazed behaviour were sitting in rows of chairs or stumbling backwards and forwards across the room. All were making

loud, ghastly noises. Some were rocking violently back and forth, chanting incomprehensively. Screeches and groans filled the room. I had seen some very strange people up in Villa Nine, but I had never seen people quite like this, and I was frightened. The instant I sat down, one of the patients lunged towards me. Before I could do anything, she grabbed hold of my hair and tried to rip it from my head. She pulled me off the chair to the floor, where she let go of my hair, clenched her fists and started punching me in the face, before she was eventually restrained by nursing staff. I was returned to Villa Six early that evening.

98. As referred to, above, during the period of trial leave with an older sister and her husband, I fell pregnant to a man I met briefly, at age 16. Nobody had explained to me how you became pregnant or how babies were born. I didn't want a baby. I thought of killing myself so I wouldn't have to face what lay ahead of me. There was nobody I trusted enough to confide in.
99. This was one of the occasions when Child Welfare arranged for me to be forcefully taken back to Porirua Hospital. A few days after I was taken back, I overheard two nurses talking about me and the fact I was pregnant. I heard them say that I would probably stay in Porirua Hospital until after the birth of the baby. They said that Child Welfare would probably take the baby and adopt it out. I spent days and days crying in my room. I begged to be let out of the hospital, but my pleas were ignored.
100. After a few months, I discovered that one of my friends was back in Villa Nine. She and I devised my latest escape plan. We managed to hitch-hike to Auckland. Unfortunately, we were found by police. My friend was taken straight to Oakley Hospital. I was held in the police cells overnight and was then taken to appear in the Court the next day. I was remanded in custody for one month.
101. At first, I was taken to Mt Eden Prison. I was then transferred straight to Oakley Hospital, where my friend was.

#### Oakley Hospital

102. I remained in Oakley Hospital for a month, where I lived in a constant state of terror and anxiety. I was terrified by the screaming and fighting among the patients in the ward I had been put in. The hospital was built like an old prison, and every single door was locked tight. I tried to avoid the dayroom and keep to myself in my room, but every day seemed like a year. I ended up staying there for a couple of weeks longer, because my case was adjourned by the Court.
103. When I eventually appeared in Court, the magistrate said to the prosecutor that he failed to see any reason why I, as a pregnant young

woman, was being held in a mental institution. He released me immediately.

104. My childhood, such as it was, had ended. I now faced adulthood. Alone. I was scared and relieved at the same time. I knew I was ill-prepared. But at least my life was in my own hands now, not in the hands of strangers.

*My life after psychiatric care*

105. I returned to Wellington, but I was still not free from Child Welfare. When I returned to Wellington, I was dropped off at a Salvation Army home for unmarried mothers. Four months later, frightened and alone, I gave birth to my daughter. I was 17.
106. Within minutes of her birth, the staff took my baby from me and refused to let me see her. In the days following, Child Welfare officers turned up at the ward with documents for me to sign, releasing my daughter to them for adoption. I refused. I was told by Child Welfare that I would have to find work, or they would take my daughter from my care. I was determined that would not happen. I had to work long days, leaving my baby with a caregiver Child Welfare had found for me.
107. Six months after my daughter was born, I accidentally bumped into her father. He soon realised my baby was his child. We married, although in my heart I knew it was the wrong thing to do. We had a son. It could have been a happy time, but my husband realised he was homosexual.
108. Over the next five years I struggled desperately, trying to cope with my life and with being a mother. During this period, I struggled with many episodes of depression. I became pregnant with my third child to my husband. I made the decision, during that time, to leave Wellington. Without informing mental health services or my doctor, I packed up my two children and our few belongings and travelled on the overnight boat to Christchurch. I chose Christchurch not only because it was the only other place I knew well enough to find my way around, but also because I wanted a fresh start.
109. Shortly after I arrived in Christchurch, I was given a state house to live in. My husband came to live with the family, in Christchurch. We had a fourth child, who was born in October 1977. When that fourth child was two months old, my husband packed up his belongings and left. Although I was devastated, I struggled through. My main concern was my four children. Even though I was on a benefit and had no savings, I made having a real home my focus.

110. Through perseverance, I managed to buy my first house. By that stage I was 25, alone with four children.
111. Despite my determination to do better for my own children, the impact of my childhood was profound. No matter how I tried to forget the things I had been through, they haunted me. Many times over the next few years I would sink into a deep, dark depression and feel like taking my life. Although I was angry with everybody who had been involved in my care, it was myself that I took the anger out on. More than once I slashed into my wrists with razor blades, causing severe injuries.
112. Looking back, I don't know why I did it. But, somehow I did get by from day to day, drawing on some unexplained strength within me. I reconnected with two of my sisters - but being split up as children stood in the way of a close sibling relationship with any of the others. It's funny – for so long, all I had wanted was for us to be together again, but it all became too hard in the end. Too much damage had been done.
113. I have remained in Christchurch. My children have grown up and left home. Sadly, a rough start in life means I have no connection with my oldest daughter, but I have good relationships with the others.
114. Against all odds, I did make a new life for myself. The years were never easy, but somehow I must have been blessed with a mental fortitude that made me want to get through. In 1996, aged 43, I met Ian and fell in love, properly, for the first time. Ian was a successful businessman, and I couldn't have been more surprised when he fell in love with me, too. Not only did he love me, but he treated me like a princess. I don't think anyone had ever really loved me before, and I hadn't known there were such good men in the world.
115. Ian enrolled me in extension study courses at the University of Canterbury, where I was taught and encouraged to write my book, '*In the hands of strangers*'. I was unprepared for the dark depths I was plunged into at times, writing my book. One of the worst episodes occurred when I requested and received a copy of my files from my days as a state ward and in the care of Child Welfare. As I read the notes that had been recorded about me, I wept. Shock, anger and those old feelings of worthlessness welled up inside me; I could hardly believe the cover-ups, Chinese whispers and lies that people had written to justify their treatment of me.
116. I am very aware that mine is just one of the many stories of the 'Lost Children' – the state wards of my generation. We were children who did not have mental illnesses when we entered mental institutions. We were all mentally scarred by our time there. At the most basic level, most state wards were unwanted by their own families. Many of them, like me, remained unwanted as we entered our teenage years – a



time when love and boundaries are desperately needed – because foster parents weren't prepared to take on older children. I can only share my own story. But I know what happened to many of them. Some ended up in borstals and went to prison; others still wander lost and forlorn through life.

117. Some days I cannot believe I survived. But I did. I don't deny the physical and emotional scars that I still carry, but the very things I was missing throughout my childhood – love and a sense of belonging – eventually found me.

### The legal process

118. I instructed Cooper Legal to act for me in relation to my abusive experiences in care in December 2003.
119. I am aware that my legal claim was filed in the Wellington High Court, as part of a claim with three other women who had been in similar placements as me (including one of my life-long friends), in April 2004. I understand that Sonja Cooper and Amanda Hill have given evidence about the legal steps taken by the Crown to delay and bar or stop the legal claims from proceeding, up until at least 2009.
120. In the meantime, my lawyers took individual claims on my behalf against the Salvation Army in respect of the abuse I had suffered at the Florence Booth Receiving Home and against the Anglican Church, in respect of the sexual abuse by the Anglican Vicar in Masterton.
121. I met with the Salvation Army representative, Murray Houston in the later part of 2004, from memory. I met Mr Houston with my husband Ian. I found Mr Houston to be respectful and he listened to my story. We negotiated a settlement of \$15,000. Mr Houston also paid my legal costs, direct to Cooper Legal.
122. The Anglican Church took a different approach, instructing lawyers. I remember that my lawyers were dismayed at the very legal approach taken by the Anglican Church, particularly given what had happened to me. As part of the Anglican Church process, I met with two women who were set up as an investigation team, in Wellington. I was again accompanied by my husband, Ian. The 2 women were very reassuring and again listened to me respectfully. I later met with the Bishop, who made a personal apology to me. After that meeting I wrote to the Bishop, thanking him and saying I had found him to be very genuine. I have no memory of that letter now.
123. Ultimately, the Anglican Church did not offer me any compensation, although I did get a letter of apology from Bishop Brown and it did pay a small amount towards by legal fees. While I acknowledge it was

helpful to speak with the Church people, this is still something that feels somewhat unresolved for me.

124. It was many years later before the first of my State claims, my psychiatric hospital claim, was settled in April 2012.
125. Even though I spent many years, in and out of psychiatric hospitals, where I suffered physical assaults, prolonged periods in seclusion, as well as cruel and inhumane treatment, I received just \$12,000 in settlement of my claim, along with an apology letter from the then defendant, the Crown Health Financing Agency. Again, my legal fees were paid for as part of this settlement, at a reduced rate.
126. My claim against the Ministry of Social Development, whose predecessor had taken me into its care as a child, did not settle for another four years. It was not until mid-2016 that I received an offer of \$12,000 to settle my claim, along with payment of my legal fees and a letter of apology.
127. In making that offer, MSD accepted very little of what had happened to me in care, only accepting that: Child Welfare officers failed to investigate reports of concern when I was living at home, as a result of which I was exposed to neglect and physical abuse; Child Welfare officers did not visit me in accordance with policy when I was living at home; Child Welfare officers failed to visit me according to policy while I was at Porirua Hospital; and Child Welfare officers failed to investigate my complaint that I was sexually assaulted by my mother's husband. Everything else was rejected, mainly on the grounds that there was either nothing on my records to support the allegations, or the actions were not practice failures or breaches of duty.
128. By the time this offer was made to me, I just wanted to put this part of my life behind me. After all, I had started taking legal steps at the end of 2003 and it was now already mid-2016, nearly 13 years later.
129. It was not until early 2017, however, that the final terms of settlement were agreed, and I signed a "full and final" settlement with the Ministry of Social Development. That was the end of my involvement with the legal process.
130. My book was published in 2015, while I was still waiting to resolve my claim against those who had taken me into care, in the first place, and who had put me in many placements where I spent many harrowing years, being beaten, locked up, neglected and betrayed.
131. I was one of many children caught up in a Welfare system that was meant to protect us, but ultimately served only to damage us. While this was a different time, many of the things that happened to me and those I went through care with, would not be acceptable in any era.

132. This is my story. I hope that, by telling it, lessons will be learned. I would certainly never want anyone to experience what I did.

**Dated: 7 November 2019**

***Beverly Wardle-Jackson***

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**Beverly Christine Wardle-Jackson**