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ROBERT MARTIN - AFFIRMED
EXAMINED BY MS THOMAS

CHAIR: Mr Martin, once you are comfortable, I need to undertake the procedure required by the Inquiries Act 2013 to have you say in answer to my question - (Witness affirmed). Thank you.

MS THOMAS:

Q. I would ask for the Registrar to please place this binder with Robert's brief of evidence before him.

Robert, if you have a pen in front of you, would you be able to sign, that's the last page of your brief of evidence, if you could sign that confirming that is your statement with today's date, thank you. (Witness signs and dates brief of evidence).

Just by way of introduction, Robert, I would just like to confirm that you are an independent expert member of the United Nations Committee for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?

A. Yes, I am.

Q. And you are a disability rights activist?

A. Yes, I am.

Q. You have promoted the self-advocacy movement internationally?

A. Yes, I have.

Q. And has John McCray written a biography about your life called "Becoming a person"?

A. Yes, he has.

Q. Do you have that book in front of you today?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. Would you like to hold that book up and I'd ask for that to be presented to the Commissioners today.

- 696 -

1 Robert, do you have your statement in front of you?

2 A. Yes, I do.

3 Q. You have come to the Commission today to tell us your
4 story?

5 A. Yes, I have.

6 Q. Would you like to read that statement starting at
7 paragraph 1?

8 A. Yes, I will.

9 Q. Thank you.

10.22 10 A. My name is Robert Martin. First, I am a person with a
11 powerful story to tell. Second, I am a person with a
12 learning disability. People first, disability second.
13 Today, I am going to share my story with the Royal
14 Commission of Inquiry. I hope that all New Zealanders
15 will listen.

16 It is time to challenge New Zealanders. The phrase
17 "out of sight, out of mind" is no longer acceptable. I
18 am going to talk to you about my life in institutions,
19 foster homes, care services and I am in your sight today.
10.23 20 And I hope my story will remain within your mind.

21 The early years of my life. I was born in 1957.
22 The doctor damaged my brain during birth with the use of
23 forceps.

24 Just because I was born with a disability, I was
25 being punished for being who I was. Kimberley -

26 Q. If I could pause you there, Robert. We are up to
27 paragraph 4.

28 A. Oh yep. Sorry about that. A doctor told my mother that
29 I was mentally retarded. He told her that there are
10.24 30 places where there are other people know how to look
31 after people like me. He told my mother to send me away
32 and forget about me.

33 So, at 18 months old I was sent away to an
34 institution called Kimberley.

- 697 -

1 I was put away in an institution. I was locked away
2 from the community. I wanted to be with my family. I
3 wanted to grow up with my sister - I missed my family, I
4 cried for them. I wanted them to come and take me home
5 but they did not come. So in the end I gave up crying
6 for them.

7 As a toddler in Kimberley, I was fed and changed and
8 taken care of, but I do not remember being picked up,
9 loved or cuddled because there were so many of us and we
10.25 10 were just a number.

11 I didn't experience what other kids did. I didn't
12 go to birthday parties, feed the ducks or visit the zoo.
13 We were locked away from the community. It was lonely.
14 There were hundreds of people around me but as a little
15 boy I didn't know another human being. Not properly
16 anyway.

17 When I was seven, I was returned to my family.
18 Things did not work out so well at home. I was told I
19 was mentally handicapped; I was dumb, thick as a plank of
10.26 20 wood and would always need other people to do things for
21 me. That hurt because I really wanted to be like other
22 kids.

23 I was sent to a school. It was hard. I would leave
24 my classroom and knock on the window of my sister's
25 classroom calling out to her, "come and play with me". I
26 would be picked on by other kids and my sister tried to
27 protect me.

28 My parents were not given any support or
29 counselling. Things just did not work out. I was made a
10.27 30 ward of the State.

31 Foster homes. As a ward of the State, I was placed
32 in a foster home on a farm. I thought the other kids in
33 the family would play with me but they didn't want to.
34 At school I wanted to join in the games with other kids

- 698 -

1 but they did not let me in their team. They thought I
2 would be useless. I got into trouble at school for
3 raiding the staffroom biscuit tin, only because I was
4 hungry.

5 At my foster home I worked like a slave. If I
6 didn't do all the jobs on the farm, I would get the jug
7 cord. At night I was wetting the bed. To punish me they
8 made me kneel on the wood pile for hours. That was
9 torture. I ran away but the welfare just brought me
10.28 10 back.

11 I ran away from the place again and again until the
12 welfare eventually took me away.

13 I was put into another foster home but then I stole
14 a chocolate bar from a shop, so I was sent back to the
15 institution, Kimberley.

16 Institutions again. From my own experience, I know
17 that institutions were a place of neglect and abuse.
18 They also mean people were denied their human rights and
19 basically denied a proper life.

10.28 20 The right to education, the right to participate,
21 the right to live free of violence, the right to life are
22 all things at risk in an institution.

23 I personally had nothing and no-one. I learnt that
24 I was nobody and my life didn't really matter.

25 Just because I was born with a disability, I was
26 being punished for being who I was.

27 Kimberley. I was 9 years old when I was put back in
28 Kimberley but this time in a different ward called
29 Monowai. It was like the first time I was there. The
10.29 30 conditions at Monowai were horrible. There were 40 kids
31 in a dormitory.

32 When you are shut away from the world, you are not
33 treated as a real person with a life that actually
34 matters.

- 699 -

1 You were not given your own clothes. We had to
2 share a pool of clothes and grab what we could get. We
3 never had our own underwear. They didn't let us just be
4 a kid. We were colour coded into groups and we had stars
5 and labels and categories.

6 We all had the same bowl haircuts on the same day.
7 We were not treated as individuals. In fact, people said
8 we all looked the same!

9 We were neglected. One time I had boils and it took
10.30 10 them a whole day to notice I was sick.

11 There was no privacy. The dayroom opened into a
12 toilet block. There were no doors or partitions.

13 There was nothing to do. Some people stayed on the
14 floor all day rocking back and forth. Especially people
15 with the highest needs. There were so many of them, they
16 were just left on the ground. If someone had an accident
17 and soiled themselves, they were just left in their dirty
18 clothes.

19 You always had to eat your food fast because if you
10.31 20 weren't fast enough, your food went.

21 They would let us do crafting. I never liked it. I
22 would rather kick a ball around and I used to wander
23 around the grounds alone with a ball and a stick and I
24 would kick the ball up onto the roof. I realised that if
25 I kicked the ball on the roof, someone else would get it
26 down. Then I became known as the "problem kid".

27 At Kimberley, I experienced the abuse, I witnessed
28 abuse. I saw staff upset people. One memory is of staff
29 taking smokes off people. Smokes were given out for a
10.32 30 reward and taken away as punishment. If you had any
31 possessions, they would be taken off you. I treasured my
32 great grandfather's watch but it was taken away from me.

33 Punishment was severe and out of proportion to the
34 behaviour.

- 700 -

1 I learnt not to trust people. I learnt to survive
2 as best I could. I became defensive and on guard all the
3 time, just to keep away from violence and abuse.

4 If you were taken to Villa 5 at Kimberley, you knew
5 you were in real trouble. The staff there were just
6 evil. I saw this completely naked boy who had an
7 accident being hosed down by a staff using a fire hydrant
8 hose. He would try to stand up and be knocked over
9 again. I've seen many terrible things but what I saw
10.33 10 that day has stayed with me and still frightens me. It
11 was a warning if you misbehave this will happen to you.

12 The staff would tease people. It was a mean thing
13 for staff to do. Some of the people would shout, "I'll
14 get high, I'll get high", meaning they will get upset and
15 do something like hurt themselves or someone else.

16 But the staff didn't stop and would carry on teasing
17 them, then watch the people lose control and flip out.
18 Often this happened just before the staff went off duty.

19 It was at Kimberley I was first sexually abused by a
10.34 20 male staff nurse. I was so young I did not know what was
21 happening.

22 People who have power over people were easily
23 corrupted. Behind closed doors human rights of others
24 were often violated. This should not be allowed, but it
25 was allowed.

26 Q. I will pause you there, Robert.

27 A. Campbell park. The first time I was sent to Campbell
28 Park I was about 11. When I got there, I was assaulted
29 by the other boys. I got my beans, that is the
10.34 30 initiation test. I was put into a pit where the
31 trampoline was, they all branded me with tennis balls.
32 There were fights there every day. After a while, I
33 started to fight back. I would throw stones. I was then
34 sent home again for a few years. It was not good. I

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1 didn't really know my family. People thought I was too
2 dumb to go to secondary school. The doctor said I was
3 upsetting my Mum, so he was going to send me to a mental
4 hospital, called Lake Alice.

5 Lake Alice. I was about 13 years old. I was put
6 into a villa near the front of Lake Alice with much older
7 people. I hated it. They wanted me to do crafts. I
8 found a golf club and some balls, so I hit the balls
9 around the grounds and then when that got boring I
10.35 10 started smashing them through the windows.

11 One day I went to the shop just outside the gates
12 and took some comics and ice creams, then I got moved
13 into Villa 8 where the staff lock you up. I was locked
14 up there for a few months.

15 Campbell Park. One day I was transported back to
16 Campbell Park. This time I was put into a cottage for
17 older boys. It was different from last time. Some mean
18 stuff went on there. I was sexually abused by the older
19 boys there. I couldn't understand how people could be so
10.36 20 cruel. If you got into trouble there, you had to work it
21 off, clean windows or shift stones. If one person
22 misbehaved, we all suffered the consequences. Someone
23 stole money off the matron and as our punishment we had
24 to march around the grounds all day.

25 **CHAIR:** Could I intervene a moment to ask you to keep
26 mindful of the stenotyper and the signers and speak
27 at a pace that will enable them to keep up with
28 you? Thank you.

29 **MR THOMAS:**

10.37 30 Q. Robert, if you could continue on with paragraph 38.

31 A. Yes. Another example of what we lose in an institution
32 is something you may all take for granted: having a pet.

33 Many children have a cat to cuddle and call their
34 own. Children in institutions do not. I adopted cats

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1 and made them my friends but when I was moved I lost that
2 friend.

3 My attachments meant nothing to others.

4 Children raised in institutions learn that good
5 times don't last, and people and pets come and go.

6 As a result of this very negative, we struggled with
7 how to relate to people. We were always different and
8 somehow catching up.

9 Nowadays, I have pets of my own and I no longer fear
10.38 10 I will lose my pets, my home, my friends.

11 These are things, these things you may take for
12 granted but I do not.

13 Back to the world. When I was released from the
14 institutions at age 15, I had to learn to survive and to
15 survive all over again. I had to learn to live and
16 survive all over again. And this was very hard to do. I
17 realised I didn't know the things that other
18 New Zealanders did. It was like I wasn't a citizen.

19 There was a massive gap between me and everyone
10.40 20 else in my community.

21 I didn't know about the All Blacks - New Zealand's
22 world famous rugby team. But like thousands of other
23 boys, my greatest pleasure was kicking my rugby ball.
24 Little did I know that my passion was matched by millions
25 all around the world.

26 I had never heard of any radical music of the 60s.
27 I didn't know about the Vietnam War, the assassinations
28 of the Kennedys and those things everybody else knew
29 about. It was like I was brought up on a different
10.40 30 planet with different rules.

31 Once I got out of institutions, I was in the care of
32 services.

33 I did not like being treated like a child. I had
34 been abused my whole life, so I took exception being

- 703 -

1 treated like a child. At IHC a lot of people with
2 learning disabilities called staff Mum and the male staff
3 Dad. There was one staff member who told me to call her
4 Mum one day and I told her, "No, you're not my Mum", so
5 she slapped my face, so I told her to "F off". She
6 kicked me, so I kicked her back. I had been abused for
7 years and I'd had a gutsful.

8 I ended up by living and working on a farm which was
9 under the umbrella of IHC. I witnessed abuse of others
10.42 10 by staff members while I was there.

11 There were not enough staff. One of my best friends
12 had a seizure and cut his head open. I saw him and
13 helped him. I got a towel around him and then I had to
14 climb through another boy's window to get to the bottom
15 unit to wake up the only staff member because the place
16 was all locked up. My friend was never
17 the same after that. There was just not enough staff.

18 Another time, there was a staff member and a guy
19 with cerebral palsy who did not get on. The staff member
10.42 20 was really cruel to that guy, so he started a fire. When
21 the staff member got to him they hit him and smacked him
22 around the head so hard it really damaged him. It was
23 shocking to witness this. Another staff member was there
24 and just watched, he didn't do anything to stop the
25 assault.

26 I became active in trying to make the people with
27 the learning disabilities have a voice within IHC. When
28 you were taken out of your workplace or on trips, the
29 side of the buses had IHC in big letters and a stick
10.43 30 figure person with a star on the forehead. People would
31 see us on the bus and they would make faces at us. It
32 made us feel like sub-human. So, we decided to protest.
33 We made signs and protested in the street. In the end,
34 the management removed those labels from the buses.

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1 I do not want disabled people to have the same
2 childhood I did.

3 My hope is that there is an end to segregation,
4 institutionalisation and discrimination.

5 I remember the Springbok Tour of New Zealand in
6 1981. The protests about rights and freedom for people
7 in South Africa. I remember thinking about the rights
8 and freedoms of all people in New Zealand locked away in
9 institutions. I remember feeling like I hardly had any
10.44 10 human rights. Nobody was marching for me or anyone else
11 with a disability.

12 My hope is that all the children of tomorrow grow up
13 in caring, well supported families and communities and
14 societies shift to be inclusive of all people.

15 I believe that every person can live in the
16 community with the right support - no ifs, no butts, no
17 maybes.

18 When assisting people to move from institutions into
19 the community we need to remember whose life it is.

10.45 20 Don't just make decisions for people. Don't just assume
21 you know best. Include the person in all decisions that
22 affect their life.

23 Lifelong impact of abuse in care. I often wondered
24 why I ended up in the places I did, just because I was
25 born with a disability. I now live a proper life but I
26 could have had this as a child.

27 The abuse I experienced and the abuse I saw has had
28 a lifelong impact on me. Even today, I get scared of
29 people who are yelling and screaming. It makes me feel
10.46 30 anxious.

31 In 2016, I was appointed to the United Nations
32 Committee on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities. It
33 was an honour to have this role. I do find it
34 challenging to meet so many people. I find it difficult

- 705 -

1 to trust people and it is hard work to socialise.

2 I have had counselling in the past and still do.

3 Civil claim. I have never made a civil claim. I
4 did participate in the Confidential Listening and
5 Assistance Service.

6 I know other people who have made claims. I know
7 there was a class action for some people that lived in
8 Lake Alice. Some years ago I was told about some lawyers
9 I could go to but I didn't as I thought this would be too
10.48 10 hard. I think it is difficult for people with
11 disabilities to know how to make a claim.

12 If I was going to make a claim, there would be two
13 main things I would claim for.

14 The medication. At one stage when I was at
15 Kimberley, I was given some medication that wasn't even
16 meant for me. Whatever it was, it had a terrible effect
17 on me. It made me lean on my side. The effects last for
18 a long time. I was sent home. My family thought I was
19 playing up, so I got into trouble but it was the
10.48 20 medication. I should never have endured that.

21 The sexual abuse, from the staff member at
22 Kimberley, and all those boys at Campbell Park, it should
23 never have been allowed to happen. At that time in my
24 life, I was displaying many signs of abuse but nobody
25 picked up on these signs or if they were, they were
26 ignored

27 Nobody helped me. Instead I was punished for the
28 behaviour I was displaying. I would claim for those
29 things. They should never have happened.

10.49 30 Hopes for the future. My life in institutions meant
31 I personally had nothing, no-one to call my own and I
32 learnt how I was a nobody, that my life didn't really
33 matter. I also learnt that I was somehow actually being
34 punished for who I was.

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1 I was one of the lucky ones, I got out.

2 I went on to build a good life for myself.

3 Now I have a life packed full of books, music,
4 sports and I have a person to call my own, my wife Lynda.

5 Sorry. But I really had to work to create a life
6 for myself because I didn't know what a life was actually
7 made up of.

8 I would like to see a citizen ceremony for all
9 people who have been institutionalised in New Zealand.

10.51 10 We were shut away from New Zealand society and culture
11 and people were shut away - when people are shut away in
12 an institution, they don't feel like a citizen. This can
13 even feel as bad as the abuse we experienced and
14 witnessed.

15 When I got out of the institutions, I felt like a
16 non-citizen. I think a citizen ceremony is one thing the
17 government could do for us.

18 I also believe families are the foundation of any
19 community and society and play an important role. It is
10.52 20 by being part of a family we learn about the world around
21 us while being provided with safety and security.

22 Children are innocent and it is too risky to leave
23 it to the State to look after children. They need to be
24 part of a family, they need love, opportunities and
25 individual care.

26 We need to do more to make sure that children are
27 safe, loved and cared for, wherever they live. It is
28 everyone's duty to make sure this happens.

29 Disabled children should be able to join in and be
10.53 30 part of all the things that happen in their community.
31 They should be able to go to their own local school so
32 they can learn from their friends in their neighbourhood
33 and be the best they can be and enjoy life like everyone
34 else.

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1 They should be allowed to become adults and not
2 treated as children forever.

3 They can be included in everything and not excluded
4 from everything.

5 Give families adequate support. Make families the
6 only acceptable place for children to grow up. All
7 children belong with families and that includes all
8 disabled children.

9 I feel in lots of ways we have just swapped large
10.54 10 institutions for smaller ones. Residential group homes
11 have different bricks but it is the thoughts, feelings
12 and actions of others that make a place an institution.
13 Everyone has a right to life instead of wasting away in
14 institutions waiting to die. That is not a life.

15 I strongly urge New Zealand to make the rights in
16 the united nation Convention on the Rights of Persons
17 with Disabilities real. All the rights are very
18 important but I want to highlight Article 19 which talks
19 about disabled people have the right to choose where they
10.55 20 live and with whom.

21 I want disabled people to live the life they choose
22 free from violence and abuse. Violence and abuse is not
23 okay. We already have this campaign in New Zealand but
24 we need to make sure that all New Zealanders, that means
25 disabled people too.

26 My dream is that all disabled people have their
27 rights and are treated as citizens of New Zealand.

28 Thank you.

29 Q. Thank you, Robert. I will now hand over to the Chair.

10.56 30 **CHAIR:** Thank you, Ms Thomas. I first of all wish to
31 ask, does anyone counsel wish to ask Mr Martin
32 questions? No.

33 So far as the Commissioners are concerned, any
34 questions?

- 708 -

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34**ROBERT MARTIN****QUESTIONED BY COMMISSIONERS**

COMMISSIONER GIBSON: Kia ora, Robert, thanks for the power and emotion of your story. I'd like to acknowledge you and a couple of other acknowledgments first. We have a strong lineup of witnesses from Aotearoa New Zealand but I know that the global mana, the esteem, which you bring and help the UN, it's almost unique, and acknowledging things like a nomination for a Noble Peace Prize and your story Uniquely Yours is a story of thousands of people in Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world and you are a hero to many of us to bring that out.

Also, acknowledging Paula, thank you for your powerful introduction as well and the strength that it gives to the rights that Robert talks about and acknowledging today being Parihaka Day and the role of the Taranaki children and the invasion and impact on them as well.

The title of the Human Rights Commission Donald Beasley Research: Institutions of Places of Abuse, what makes you say that Institutions are places of abuse?

A. Yes. I believe they are places of abuse. I experienced it, I've seen it on others. Institutions are often away from towns and cities, out of sight, out of mind, so things happen to people and no-one notices what's going on.

They are virtually a law unto themselves. Anything and everything could go on and usually did and I have travelled around the world and seen lots of institutions

- 709 -

1 where people with disabilities still are and institutions
2 are the same around the world. If you've been in one,
3 you've been in them all.

4 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Do you feel that institutions are
5 gone in New Zealand?

6 A. No, I just say no because we might have closed the big
7 ones but we still have institutionalisation as such.
8 Institutions are not just about bricks and mortar, it's
9 the thoughts and feelings that make institutions. I said
10.59 10 this statement many times at the UN, it's still just as
11 prevalent as it was way back in the dark old days to what
12 it is today. You know, people don't have choices, where
13 or with whom they live. If you go out, you all go out
14 together, so that to me is still a form of
15 institutionalisation. No-one is allowed to be an
16 individual and that's what we all are, we are all unique,
17 we all bring different things to this world we live in.

18 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** How do you group homes?

19 A. Well, to me, group homes are like mini-institutions.
11.00 20 They're not quite as bad but there needs to be big
21 changes in the future. Services take away people's
22 choice its and control and are still institutions.
23 Services that support people rather than individuals are
24 still institutions. I believe we need to look at making
25 the rights in Article 19 of the CRPD real; things like
26 being able to choose where and with whom we live with;
27 being able to choose if we want to go out or not; not
28 having to go out altogether all the time; we need to
29 really start listening to disabled people, including
11.01 30 people with learning disabilities about what they want
31 and how they want to live their lives.

32 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Did you see bullying in services?

33 A. Yes. As I read out in my statement, yes, I did see
34 bullying in many ways in institutions and services. I

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1 lived in that and I saw, and it was not good. I thought,
2 how could this be happening to my friends? And it was
3 some of the most abusive things I've ever seen.

4 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** And did you organise a strike?

5 A. Yes, I helped organise a strike when I was part of
6 services and worked on a farm, services ran in Wanganui,
7 it wasn't a real job, we didn't get any pay or holidays.
8 We had to work hard. My friend, a person with a learning
9 disability, wasn't getting a fair deal. He asked me what
11.02 10 we could do. I said we could have a strike.

11 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Did you observe abuse and neglect
12 happening to others?

13 A. Yes, I did. And again I thought how could this be
14 happening? The way other people treated human beings
15 like this, I just thought it was terrible, how could
16 other people with power and control treat people like
17 this? But, I mean, like I said before, institutions were,
18 you know, out of sight, out of mind, and, you know,
19 people didn't come in to make sure that these things
11.03 20 weren't going on. You know, I know Kimberley in the
21 60s was a place that I'd have to say that the powers that
22 be thought it was a really great place. Well,
23 the thing is, it might have been a great place from their
24 perspective but when you actually have to endure what we
25 endured, it was not a great place. And what I saw
26 happen to people with the most highest needs, it was just
27 terrible. I mean, it was just shocking to see other
28 human beings treat other human beings in this way.

29 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** When you talk about abuse and
11.04 30 neglect, how common was it?

31 A. Well, I saw this every day. It was common in
32 institutions to see many forms of abuse. Some staff
33 would tease people and then go off. And I'm sure they
34 were laughing from one side of their face to other. You

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1 know, when the night staff come on, they would have to
2 deal with the situation of one of them. The neglect was
3 everywhere. For example, people with toileting accidents
4 were left and not cleaned up. Being sick and not being
5 nourished. People being left to walk and bang their
6 heads on the wall and for so long they made holes in the
7 walls. I did not understand how people could be so
8 cruel. Staff would use smokes as an Award and
9 punishment. In services, I did see a bit but not as
11.05 10 much. It was much more subtle. For example, staff going
11 into people's rooms and taking their possessions, talking
12 to people in a real derogatory way. We had to treat
13 staff with dignity and respect but they did not treat us
14 in this way.

15 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** And finally, what can we do to
16 keep people safe?

17 A. Well, this is a big question I think. There are lots of
18 things and they all need to happen together to stop
19 abuse. First, implement the rights in the CRPD. More
11.06 20 individualisation in services. Let people decide how
21 they want to live. More options for things to do during
22 the day where people can live. I think people need to
23 have choice of who they live with and choose the staff.
24 More independent monitoring of services. More advocacy
25 for people who do not speak. Oh, more advocacy for when
26 people do speak up. Having the opportunities to do more
27 things in their community and having more people in their
28 lives. Having friends visit. Teach people about
29 violence and abuse and what to do if it happens to them.
11.07 30 For example, I know that People First, a Disabled Persons
31 Organisation, I am a life member of, has a course called
32 Keeping Safe, Feeling Safe. This course is written for
33 people with learning disabilities to learn about violence
34 and abuse and what to do if it happens to them. But we

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1 have no money to deliver the course. And of course we
2 know we have this in New Zealand, you know, for families,
3 and I think we need to include people with disabilities
4 as well because it does happen to people with
5 disabilities. Make sure the helping services, including
6 the Police, are trained and accessible for people with
7 disabilities. End segregation. Instead of being
8 invisible, become visible.

9 **COMMISSIONER GIBSON:** Thanks Robert, it's been a
11.08 10 privilege and we will take lessons from today and
11 from your book and perhaps further questions in the
12 future, somehow tapping into your UN expert
13 experience as well. Kia ora, thank you.

14 **CHAIR:** Thank you.

15 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** No questions from me, Robert,
16 just to say, to echo the thoughts of Commissioner
17 Gibson, it has been a real honour and privilege to
18 hear your story this morning and all power to you
19 as you continue at the highest level globally to
11.08 20 keep bringing light to the issues in the disability
21 community. Thank you very much.

22 **COMMISSIONER SHAW:** Just to offer my sincere thanks for
23 the work you've done and I think we can all sense
24 the cost that giving evidence has been to you today
25 and it has not gone unnoticed. And so, very real
26 thanks for putting in that hard work and enduring
27 this public spectacle, it will not go wasted.
28 Thank you.

29 **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Thank you for your evidence today,
11.09 30 compelling, much appreciated, kia ora.

31 **CHAIR:** For myself, Mr Martin, I echo the words of my
32 colleagues, thank you for your evidence for the
33 Royal Commission. It is a treasure for us to have
34 your testimony and your insights. Thank you.

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1 **MS THOMAS:** Thank you, Robert. I am just wondering -

2 **CHAIR:** Would it be helpful for us to take the morning
3 adjournment now, so as to rearrange things?

4 **MR THOMAS:** Yes, thank you.

5

6 **Hearing adjourned from 11.10 a.m. until 11.35 a.m.**

7

8 **MS THOMAS:** Just before I formally call Dr Else as a
9 witness, I would like to take this opportunity to produce
10 two exhibits, and they are from Dr Maria Haenga-Collins,
11 who would dearly loved to be able to present today but
12 was unable to. I will produce as an exhibit her Masters
13 and PhD for the Commission to have available to consider
14 and peruse for the future. So, I produce now the Masters
15 thesis titled "Belonging in whakapapa, the closed
16 adoption of Maori children into Pakeha families" by
17 Dr Maria Haenga-Collins as Exhibit 12.

18 **CHAIR:** Does any counsel wish to raise an objection to
19 that course being adopted? No. Thank you.

20 **MS THOMAS:** And I will produced PhD thesis titled
21 "Closed Stranger Adoption - Maori and Race
22 Relations in Aotearoa New Zealand 1955-1985" by
23 Dr Maria Haenga-Collins as Exhibit 13.

24 **CHAIR:** Same position? Thank you.

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