

# Application for Core Participant Status

## 1. Names

Oliver Sutherland (Dr); Ross Galbreath (Dr)

## 2. Status

Ex-members of the Nelson Race Relations Action Group and the Auckland Committee on Racism and Discrimination (ACORD), 1970 to 1986.

## 3. Contact details

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## 4. Lawyer

Not applicable

## 5. Reasons for Core Participant status

Over a 15 year period, from 1970 to 1986, we assembled a large number of cases histories of children and young persons caught up in the judicial and social welfare systems. Through personal interviews with them and their families we documented the treatment, often including appalling physical and emotional abuses, that they suffered in a range of state institutions. For many of these cases we lodged formal complaints with the Ministers of Justice, Social Welfare Police and Health, protesting at the way the government departments discharged their responsibilities with respect to these children. These approaches led to a number of formal Judicial, Ombudsman's and Human Rights Commission inquiries, as well as several investigatory inquiries by ACORD and its Māori and other Polynesian associates.

The institutions upon which we principally focussed were: social welfare boys' and girls' homes; police cells; adult prisons to which children were remanded and the Lake Alice Adolescent Unit. The inmates of these institutions were very disproportionately Māori. Indeed Māori predominated throughout the judicial and social welfare systems and so were disproportionately impacted by the racist and abusive policies and practices of these systems. Although fewer in absolute numbers, Māori girls received the worst treatment at all stages of the judicial process, especially in their incarceration rates.

We have researched and analysed the archives of the Nelson Race Relations Action Group and ACORD, including hundreds of pages of transcripts of interviews, correspondence and inquiries. The accumulated results have been drawn together in a major submission, *Justice and Race: a History of Racism and Abuse in Aotearoa New Zealand*, prepared for the Royal Commission of Inquiry: Abuse in Care. Our submission will present an overview of the treatment of children in State care, describing and verifying the systemic institutional racism prevailing in the police, justice, social welfare and health systems of the 1960s to 1980s, including data and statistical analysis drawn from annual Department of Justice statistics. We will also present the stories of numerous children from the ages of eight or nine abused through and during incarceration in social welfare homes, police cells, adult prisons and in the Lake Alice Adolescent Unit, stories vindicated by the official inquiries instigated by ACORD.