

Under the Inquiries Act 2013
In the matter of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State Care and in
the Care of Faith-based Institutions

Reply brief of Steven Michael Groom for Oranga Tamariki – Redress

6 March 2020

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- 1 My full name is Steven Michael Groom.
- 2 I am the General Manager of Public Ministerial and Executive Services at Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children (**Oranga Tamariki**). I have held my current role since October 2017.
- 3 I have provided this inquiry with a brief of evidence dated 27 January 2020. I continue to rely upon my initial statement of evidence.
- 4 This additional brief of evidence responds on behalf of Oranga Tamariki to one aspect of the evidence provided by Sonja Cooper and Amanda Hill on behalf of Cooper Legal dated 31 January 2020 (**Cooper Legal brief**).
- 5 I have limited my comments on the Cooper Legal brief, however my decision to do so should not be taken as acceptance of the statements in the brief provided by Ms Cooper and Ms Hill.
- 6 At paragraph [909], the Cooper Legal brief discusses issues relating to the disclosure of claimant information to third parties. In that paragraph, the Cooper Legal brief states:

“Although MSD and Oranga Tamariki ... will refute the interpretation of their conduct as ‘tactical’, it is a fact that MSD (and more recently Oranga Tamariki) have adversely affected the willingness of our younger clients, particularly, to disclose what happened to them in care, because of the fact that such information will be disclosed to third parties...”
- 7 Our primary purpose in all that we do is to ensure that, where a care and protection concern is raised, responding to the wellbeing and safety of the child or children in our care is our absolute priority. We put tamariki at the heart of everything that we do.
- 8 Sometimes care and protection concerns arise when claimant information includes details about current staff and caregivers who are in contact with children. The principles Oranga Tamariki applies when managing these situations are:
 - (a) the safety of children and young people is paramount;
 - (b) our good employer obligations to our employees and the need to follow a fair process and treat our people fairly and to ensure natural justice for employee and caregivers is maintained;
 - (c) sensitivity and safety of the person providing the information is respected;
 - (d) information will go to the right people at the right time to manage potential risk;
 - (e) timeliness is essential; and

- (f) the process is robust and is able to be scrutinised and withstand scrutiny.

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Steven Michael Groom

