

**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**

**AND Faith Based Institutional Hearings (October 2022)**

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**FIRST SUPPLEMENTARY WITNESS STATEMENT OF REVEREND TARA TAUTARI  
ON BEHALF OF  
METHODIST CHURCH OF NEW ZEALAND | TE HĀHI WĒTERIANA O AOTEAROA  
IN RESPONSE TO NOTICE TO PRODUCE NO 452  
FURTHER DISCLOSURE REQUEST (VARIED ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2022)**

**Dated 16 September 2022**

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**FIRST SUPPLEMENTARY WITNESS STATEMENT OF REVEREND TARA TAUTARI,****IN RESPONSE TO NOTICE TO PRODUCE NO 452****FURTHER DISCLOSURE REQUEST (VARIED ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2022)**

I, **REVEREND TARA TAUTARI**, of Christchurch Otautahi, General Secretary of The Methodist Church of New Zealand, Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa (“**the Church**”) say:

**Mihi**

1. Ko te Atua kei runga kei raro, koia te Kaihanga o te Rangi te Whenua me te ao katoa, tatū ki roto i te ngākau o te ira tangata, tapu, oti atu.
2. Ngā rāranga maunga tū te ao tū te po. Ngā rāranga tangata mate i te ao i te po. Nō reira, koutou kua nunumi ki te ao wairua, whetūrangitia ki tua o te ārai hei maumaharatanga mō tātou ngā waihotanga o rātou mā. Haere mai, haere.
3. Ngā mihi ki te kaupapa o te wā. Ki te Kōmihana me ngā tini Kaiarahi e hapaitia nei i te hōhonutanga o tēnei Kaupapa tapu i runga i te rangimarie me te aroha.
4. Huri noa huri noa i roto i tēnei huihuinga.
5. Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

**Introduction**

6. I make this first supplementary witness statement on behalf of the Church and in response to the Royal Commission’s request for further disclosure in relation to Notice to Produce No 452 dated 24 May 2022, addressed to the Church.
7. My statement responds to Questions 8(d), (g) and (j) of the Notice to Produce No. 452, regarding the Church’s relationship with Wesley College, from 1965-1990.
8. In the time available, I have attempted to provide full answers where possible, but within the bounds of my knowledge, often based on my review of documents.

### Response to Notice to Produce – Question 8 – Wesley College

#### **Question (8)(d) - Information and data relating to any allegations of abuse which occurred in the Wesley College boarding houses, while students were in the joint care of the Wesley College Trust Board and the Methodist Church?**

9. In responding to the Commission's further disclosure request, I have reviewed the Conference yearbooks for reports of abuse at Wesley College between 1965 and 1990. I refer to the College's response to Question 3(d) of Notice to Produce No. 454 dated 24 May 2022.
10. I understand that the College's response to the Commission's further disclosure request for Question 3(d) outlines further instances of violence and physical abuse identified by the School Board and/or Trust Board between 1965 and 1990. As set out in my first witness statement, the Church's role was to provide oversight and it was not involved in the day-to-day operations of the College and its boarding facilities. I have not identified specific allegations of abuse at Wesley College boarding houses reported to the Church during this period, however the annual Conference report from 1965 includes a general reference to discipline at the College:
- (1) The 1965 Conference received a report from the Trust Board that the College decided to create a new position of Vice Principal to assist in the administration and discipline of the College.<sup>1</sup> Mr E. Tauroa, B.Ag.Sc., a Maori Old Boy of the College was appointed.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Current Knowledge**

11. In my 1 July 2022 statement to the Commission, I outlined the direct communications received from two former students by the Trust Board alleging that they had suffered abuse at the College. I am informed by the College that a further claim has been received from GRO-B-1 a former student at the College. This information is confidential and was addressed in the College's 8 July 2022 response to Notice to Produce No. 454:

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<sup>1</sup> 1965 Conference Yearbook, p159 [MET.04.00101].

<sup>2</sup> At p159.

- (1) [GRO-B-1] On 5 July 2022 the Ministry of Education wrote to the School Board enclosing a letter dated 28 June 2022 transferring a sensitive claim by [GRO-B-1] [GRO-B-1] alleges that he was physically and sexually abused by students and a teacher at the College in 1997 and 1998.<sup>3</sup> [GRO-B-1] has not made a claim to the Church.

**Question 8(g) - Please provide all communications between the College and the Methodist Church regarding reported instances of abuse. Please include whether the Methodist Church was informed of:**

- i. **Demographic data of those who experienced abuse?**
- ii. **The nature of the abuse being reported?**
- iii. **How the abuse allegations were dealt with?**

12. I refer to my answer to Question 8(d) above. In preparation of this witness statement, I have reviewed the Trust Board's reports to the Conference for the period 1965 to 1990 and I have not identified any other specific communications between the College and the Methodist Church falling within Question 8(g).<sup>4</sup>

**8j. Explain how the Methodist Church has responded to reports of abuse at Wesley College; and**

- i. **To the extent responses have changed over time, describe the changes and the reasons for such changes.**
- ii. **In relation to all responses to reports of abuse, what have been the advantages and disadvantages of the responses by the Church (especially during periods where the Church had a direct governance role over the College).**

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<sup>3</sup> See email and letter correspondence from the Ministry of Education and [GRO-B-1] [WC.01.00030], [WC.01.00031], [WC.01.00069] and [WC.01.00070]. [GRO-B-1] letters were sent to the College with redactions and were provided to the Commission as part of the College's 8 July 2022 response to Notice to Produce No. 454.

<sup>4</sup> In searching for Trust Board minutes for this period, the College identified minutes from February 1975 to October 1976.

**iii. Describe any particular considerations, processes or steps taken when responding to reports or complaints of abuse received from Māori or Pacific Island peoples.**

13. I answer this question in relation to:

(1) The Trust Board's reports to the Conferences for the period of 1965 to 1990. With the exception of the creation of a new position of Vice Principal to assist in the administration and discipline of the College in 1965, discussed above, I have not identified any records that relate to the Methodist Church's knowledge of abuse at Wesley College.

14. From the information available, the Church's response to the information it received about violence at Wesley College has been to support and provide guidance to Wesley College Trust Board, and through the Board the College, to make changes and address concerns about violence at the College when they came to our attention.

**Statement of Truth**

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and was made by my knowing it may be used as evidence by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

**Dated:** 16 September 2022

**Signature:**

GRO-C

Reverend Tara Tautari

METHODIST CHURCH OF NEW ZEALAND FIRST SUPPLEMENTARY WITNESS STATEMENT OF  
REVEREND TARA TAUTARI | RESPONSE TO FURTHER DISCLOSURE REQUEST – NOTICE TO PRODUCE  
NO.452

QUESTIONS 8(D), 8(G) AND 8(J) FOR 1965 – 1990

SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS

Document ID	Description	Author	Date
MET.04.00101	1965 Conference Reports and Resolutions	MCNZ	1965