**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY TULOU – OUR PACIFIC VOICES: TATALA E PULONGA**

**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

**Royal Commission:** Judge Coral Shaw (Chair)

Ali’imuamua Sandra Alofivae Mr Paul Gibson

Dr Anaru Erueti Ms Julia Steenson

**Counsel:** Mr Simon Mount QC, Ms Kerryn Beaton QC,

Ms Tania Sharkey, Mr Semisi Pohiva, Ms Reina Va’ai, Ms Nicole Copeland, Ms Sonja Cooper, Ms Amanda Hill for the Royal Commission

Ms Rachael Schmidt-McCleave, Ms Julia White and Ms Alana Ruakere for the Crown

**Venue:** Fale o Samoa 141 Bader Drive Māngere AUCKLAND

**Date:** 23 July 2021

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1. **CHAIR:** And we'll leave the floor to you, because you wanted to say something to conclude.
2. A. Yes, so I wanted to thank you, Commissioners, for hearing me today, and also recognising
3. that my evidence and other people's evidence have been dealing with a lot of pain and
4. harm, and so just acknowledging that you're hearing a lot of painful things and thinking --
5. and that I'm thinking about your well-being.
6. I wanted to thank -- I really wanted to thank my lawyers and investigation team. I
7. don't think that I would have been able to do this if the Commission hadn't thought through
8. carefully who would be taking my evidence. And I just think it's amazing that you've got
9. like a Pasifika investigations team. They helped me from the very beginning, they
10. understood what I was talking about, it didn't feel like that I had to explain things. And
11. I just think that the cultural sensitivity around that has been really important to me and it
12. gave me more courage to know that I was doing the right thing because I told you that I had
13. a lot of conflicts about that.
14. So in particular I wanted to thank Sharkey who I think has, you know, really great
15. to talk to and amazing lawyer, Stephanie, Reina and Helenā. And I wanted to thank the
16. well-being person Maikali who's worked really hard to build a trusting relationship with
17. me, and I haven't been easy to connect with, but he has made me feel really comfortable
18. giving evidence today. And I wanted to thank all my friends and family who are listening
19. in there or are supporting me. Thank you.
20. **CHAIR:** We join you in thank you, I think did you want to -- I think you're going to be honoured
21. with a waiata, yes.

# [Samoan song]

1. **MS SHARKEY:** Fa'afetai lava Ms TU. I'll be in touch with you and I'll pay you for your
2. comments later okay? Thank you very much. We'll talk soon.
3. A. Bye.
4. **CHAIR:** We'll take the lunch adjournment now and resume again at, Ms Sharkey?
5. **MS SHARKEY:** 2.15?
6. **CHAIR:** 2.15 we'll resume, thank you.

# Lunch adjournment from 1.14 pm 2.15 pm

1. **CHAIR:** Good afternoon everybody, welcome back to the last session of today's hearing, and I'm
2. going to invite Ms Va’ai to come forward to present our witness.
3. **MS VA’AI:** Kia orana tatou katoatoa, our first witness is Dr Sam Manuela.
4. **DR SAM MANUELA**
5. **CHAIR:** Good afternoon Dr Manuela, welcome to the Royal Commission. Can you see me?
6. Before we start can I just ask you to take the affirmation. Do you solemnly, sincerely and
7. truly declare and affirm that the evidence that you will give to the Commission will be the
8. truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?
9. A. Yes.
10. **Q.** Thank you, I'll leave with you Ms Va’ai.
11. **QUESTIONING BY MS VA’AI:** Thank you. Kia orana Dr Sam Manuela. Meitaki for being
12. here today. Before we begin I'm wondering if you could please introduce yourself and tell
13. us a bit about your background.
14. A. Yes, kia orana tatou katoatoa. My name is Sam Manuela, I am a senior lecturer in the
15. School of Psychology at the University of Auckland. I am Cook Island through my father,
16. we are from Manihiki in the Cook Islands and we live in Nikao. We also have links to Atiu
17. and Pukapuka. Through my mother I am European, she is from Te Kuiti down in the King
18. Country. Myself, I am born and raised here in New Zealand in Auckland.
19. At the University of Auckland within the School of Psychology I teach across
20. undergraduate psychology, I teach cultural psychology within our introductory psychology
21. courses. In stage 3 I teach in a paper on culture and psychology focusing specifically on
22. Pacific issues that are psychology relevant. In postgraduate I facilitate a course on
23. ethnicity, identity and culture where I encourage students to draw on their own ethnic and
24. cultural expertise to explore topics around sexuality, spirituality, masculinity, identity,
25. language, and how these relate to our people's every day lives as well.
26. In addition to teaching I'm a researcher as well. I'm currently leading two research
27. projects, one is funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand. And this project is
28. going to be a survey of mental health in the Cook Islands, which has not been done before,
29. so I'm quite excited to head over to the Cook Islands once the Covid situation calms down a
30. bit. Another project that I'm leading is funded by the Royal Society of New Zealand, it's a
31. Marsden Fast-Grant study. That study will be looking at how Pacific psychologists in
32. New Zealand incorporate their cultural knowledge and expertise into their psychological
33. training and working with their clients.
34. **Q.** Thank you. Very impressive young man. Dr Manuela, in light of your background as an
35. academic, why have you decided to answer the call to be here in the Fale o Samoa as an
36. expert witness for the Pacific hearing, Tatala e Pulonga?
37. A. My research expertise focuses specifically on the identities and well-being of Pacific
38. peoples, so that is a large theme across the broad range of research projects that I do. When
39. I first was asked to be part of this Inquiry I was a bit sceptical about why personally I was
40. asked, but after talking with yourself and the rest of your team, they helped me realise the
41. broader implications of what the survivors have experienced and looking at the statements
42. as well and hearing some of the statements that I've -- throughout the week, I see a lot of
43. the themes that they have experienced as well resonate with what I have specialisation in.
44. **Q.** Thank you. And I've seen you here at the hearing, you've been here for the past couple of
45. days. Would you agree that ethnic and cultural identity are some of the stronger themes
46. coming out of the Pacific survivor stories?
47. A. Yes.
48. **Q.** As you are well aware, ethnic and cultural identity and the ways in which they're linked to
49. well-being are very complex. What I'd like to do is unpack these concepts and walk
50. through the ways in which your work through the study of cultural identity and well-being,
51. just looking at how they're closely linked with our Pacific survivor stories. So I'll start off
52. with something that you refer to in your statement provided to the Commission. You refer
53. to something called "psychological perspectives". What does this mean, Dr Manuela?
54. A. So psychology as a discipline is a relatively young discipline. It has grown in prominence
55. since the 1800s. Where psychology has been developed has largely been in North America
56. and Europe. And so when I'm talking about psychological perspectives, what I'm referring
57. to primarily is the theories and the methods that have been developed within psychology,
58. but how these methods and theories have been developed within their own cultural context
59. as well, that being primarily North America and Europe. And so when I do talk about
60. psychology perspectives it's recognising that psychology as a discipline is quite Eurocentric
61. and it is predominantly based on western value systems.
62. **Q.** So just to clarify, whenever you refer to psychological perspectives, what you're talking
63. about is a Eurocentric western view of psychology, is that correct?
64. A. Yes, in addition to what I do in psychology, I guess I'll clarify a little bit further as well.
65. My background is in social psychology, so it looks at how -- the relationship between
66. people and their social environments that also intersects another specialisation which I have
67. which is in cultural and Pacific psychologies as well. So I'm in kind of a unique position
68. here being -- having expertise in two different areas of psychology. Part of that is
69. recognising the cultural biases that are embedded within the disciplines that we are taught
70. as well. So what I'm doing here is looking at the cultural biases that are embedded within
71. psychology as a discipline and how Pacific knowledges can be part of that and can enhance
72. the discipline as well.
73. **Q.** We'll just put on our western Eurocentric hat for a minute. I'm going to ask whether you
    1. can share how ethnic and cultural identity are understood from this perspective.
    2. A. Yes. So ethnic identity, there are multiple theories that can help explain from
    3. psychological perspectives what that is. Social Identity Theory is one of the major ones.
    4. So Social Identity Theory posits that people will categorise themselves into particular social
    5. groups. That can be ethnicity, it can be gender, it can also be things like religion, people
    6. can identify themselves in terms of the churches that they belong to as well. And so
    7. recognition of these different groups that we belong to is ways in which people can form
    8. their own identities. So identity itself isn't a singular thing, it is a multi-faceted,
    9. multi-factorial construct. So our identities are a constellation of our perceived
    10. memberships across various groups.
    11. So for instance, under a Social Identity Theory perspective, ethnic identity would be a recognition
    12. of an ethnic group that you belong to and your perceived membership within that group as
    13. well. With that membership, often there is what we would call an in group. So the in
    14. group is what is the group that you identify yourself as belonging to. And then there will
    15. also be various out groups. So these are the different groups that we use to compare and
    16. contrast ourselves with.
    17. These comparisons are usually done in a way in which we can see ourselves in a positive light, and
    18. so people will tend to make clear distinctions between one group and another group, make a
    19. distinction of themselves belonging to one group and view that group membership in a
    20. positive way. So that's under a social identity perspective.
    21. If we look more deeply into the content of ethnic identity and what that actually entails. So ethnic
    22. identity is then suggested to comprise of recognition of belonging to an ethnic group, so
    23. understanding the labels that signify an ethnicity that you can identify with.
    24. Attached to that is also the feelings and the attitudes that you have about your membership with
    25. that group as well. So it is a sense of belonging to that ethnic group, it is the positive or the
    26. negative attitudes that you can have about that ethnic group as well.
    27. Further to that, and this is a source of some contention within psychological
    28. literature as well, is the behaviours that are associated with ethnic groups as well. Quite
    29. often this is seen as cultural practices, stances, and language as well. So when we're
    30. looking at ethnic identity, we're looking in terms -- sometimes we're looking at the content
    31. of that, which I have just discussed now.
    32. Crucial to ethnic identity, it is important to recognise that we aren't born with an identity, it is
    33. something that develops over time. And so ethnic identity development is a long process
    34. and within psychological literature there has been what has been described as stages in
74. which people can go through. The first stage would be a diffuse stage. So this is when
75. people have done very little to no exploration around what their identity means to them, and
76. they don't have a very clear understanding of what their ethnic identity means to them
77. either.
78. Another stage is what is called foreclosed. This stage it is where people understand that they
79. belong to an ethnic group, or they know that they are part of a particular ethnic group, but
80. they have not done any exploration around what that means to them.
81. Another stage is moratorium. This part is where people have searched around what their ethnicity
82. means to them, but there is some confusion around what that meaning means, and what that
83. means in relation to their own ethnicity.
84. And finally, there is achieved. So the achieved status suggests that people have explored what
85. their ethnicity means to them, they have a clear and secure understanding of what that
86. means to their own self-concept.
87. Ethnic identity development generally occurs through adolescence. So as people
88. are growing up, they're going through these particular stages, starting at the diffuse stage,
89. perhaps going back and forth between foreclosed and moratorium and then eventually
90. hopefully coming to an achieved status where they have navigated what their ethnic
91. identity means to them.
92. However, with young children and babies as well, and I'd like to connect this to
93. some of the evidence that was provided by expert witness Dr Seini Taufa where we can
94. ascribe identity to someone. So as a baby, like the baby that was just crying now, that baby
95. will be given an ethnic group label. That baby doesn't describe what -- doesn't say what the
96. ethnic group label is. As that young baby gets older, eventually she will come to
97. understand that she is Samoan, or she is Cook Island. As she gets older she'll perhaps start
98. to explore what that means for her and what that means for those around her. And
99. hopefully at some point she will have an understanding of what that actually means and that
100. will then form a strong part of her ethnic identity.
101. **Q.** Thank you. So we've still got the western hat on and can you explain how well-being is
102. understood through this particular lens?
103. A. Yes. So well-being is a bit of a surprisingly difficult concept to define easily. And but
104. largely what researchers in this area have -- kind of agree upon is that well-being is the
105. ways in which people appraise or evaluate their life in a positive manner. So this can often
106. be associated with things like quality of life, positive or negative affect, happiness and life
107. satisfaction. Some key theorists in well-being, they posit that well-being can be understood
108. across six key domains. So these include self-acceptance, which is exploring the, or
109. understanding positive attitudes about yourself, environmental mastery, so that is when
110. people are able to make use of the opportunities around them and are able to manage their
111. day-to-day life. Positive relationships with others is another one, so this is when people are
112. able to engage in very meaningful and reciprocal intimate relationships with others.
113. Personal growth, where people can recognise their own development over time. Purpose in
114. life, so people have goals, they can move towards their goals and know that their life holds
115. meaning, and autonomy as well. So people feel that they have the ability to guide their
116. own life and regulate their own behaviour.
117. So what I have described there is what I would call subjective well-being. So
118. subjective well-being is where this is people deciding for themselves what well-being feels
119. like and looks like for them. But we, as a social psychologist, I always am mindful that
120. people are embedded within social systems. So we must balance their own appraisals of
121. their life with what I would call objective indicators of well-being as well.
122. These objective indicators of well-being are things that people can have control
123. over, sometimes they can't have control over. Things like housing, having safe, warm,
124. comfortable homes, a safe home environment, education, employment, health, these things
125. contribute to well-being as well. So although people can evaluate their own lives and the
126. ways in which they need to, we must be mindful that there are other things that contribute
127. to that well-being as well.
128. Quite often when we're looking at things like objective indicators of well-being,
129. there can be a tendency to equate that with success. So having a good job means you're
130. successful, that can -- I think the research generally shows that people with higher
131. qualifications and education tend to be employed in higher paying jobs. There is a saying,
132. I guess, that money doesn't buy happiness. This is a myth and it is not that money buys
133. happiness, it's that being financially secure affords you stability and security when times
134. get tough. So this is the ways in which we can understand the objective indicators of
135. well-being, that having a high paying job is going to afford you that safety net which is
136. going to support or enhance your own subjective well-being as well.
137. **Q.** So if we're still viewing psychology through this western framework, can you explain the
138. relationship between ethnic identity and well-being, how they're linked?
139. A. Yes. So when I talked about Social Identity Theory, one of the key aspects of that theory is
140. that people are motivated to see themselves in a positive light. And they will tend to make
141. these comparisons between their in group and their out group in a way that is going to
142. bolster their self-esteem. And so with ethnic identity, particularly those who have a very
143. secure and good understanding of what their ethnic identity means for them, quite often we
144. will see that this is paired with positive self-esteem, that it is paired with mastery in other
145. areas of their life as well.
146. There are several meta-analyses that have been conducted. A meta-analysis is when multiple
147. studies that have been done independently of each other are pulled together, and we look at
148. the average of the results across all of these different studies. And they have consistently
149. shown that a strong or positive ethnic identity has a positive relationship with well-being
150. outcomes. And these well-being outcomes can be diverse, it can be self-esteem, it could be
151. good mental health, it could be a positive self-concept.
152. And so when we see these links here, we just know that ethnic identity is
153. positively related to all these other positive life outcomes, but there are ways in which that
154. relationship can be influenced as well, in light of ethnic identity, perhaps one of the biggest
155. contributors to influencing that relationship would be things like ethnic discrimination,
156. marginalisation, prejudice and things like racism as well.
157. **Q.** You've just mentioned that discrimination can influence the relationship between ethnic
158. identity and well-being. Are you able to expand on this a little bit more?
159. A. Yes. So in addition to those meta-analyses that highlight the overall positive relationship
160. between identity and well-being, those same meta-analyses have been conducted to explore
161. the relationships between discrimination and well-being. I have an image that I have
162. developed that will help illustrate these relationships that I'm talking about. Yes, so on the
163. left-hand side there we can see that ethnic identity will positively influence your
164. well-being. Likewise, discrimination is going to negatively impact your well-being.
165. So what we have here is people, we're telling people that your ethnic identity is
166. good for your well-being. We're also telling people that discrimination is bad for your
167. well-being. So what happens if your ethnicity is the target for discrimination? What we
168. see here is these two opposing affects, positive in one direction, negative in the other. So
169. the relationship between ethnic identity and well-being and the relationship between
170. discrimination and well-being is very complex. And the literature does not show a very
171. clear picture of that relationship either.
172. In some instances, ethnic discrimination is going to -- sorry, ethnic discrimination can enhance the
173. negative effects of well-being. In some instances we see that discrimination has no impact
174. on well-being, in other instances we see that discrimination increases well-being. And this
175. really depends on the ways in which we understand the relationship between these three
176. constructs.
177. I will talk a bit later about some research that I have done in relation to this on Pacific identities
178. discrimination and well-being. But I do want to make note here that generally what we are
179. looking at is a very complicated situation and there is no single way in which people are
180. going to respond to ethnic discrimination, it depends on a whole range of different factors,
181. ethnic identity is one part of that puzzle.
182. **Q.** Now we're going to switch hats, we're putting our island hat on now, or ei katu as we're
183. both wearing today. I'm going to take you to paragraph 25 of your statement where you
184. say, "Understanding Pacific ethnic identity requires moving beyond psychological
185. perspectives." Can you please share what you mean by this?
186. A. Yes, so when I talked about the cultural context and the cultural biases of psychology,
187. moving beyond that means reframing the knowledge base that we are working with in
188. psychology as well. And so what we can do here is look at Pacific epistemology, and
189. epistemology is the nature of the knowledge and the nature of the construction of
190. knowledge. And this is where we can inform our understanding of something based on the
191. world view of Pacific knowledges, or Pacific epistemologies. I'm intentionally pluralising
192. them here because there is no single Pacific knowledge system. We are constantly working
193. with multiple Pacific knowledge systems. And psychology needs to be reflecting that as
194. well.
195. So when we take a Pacific perspective, we are often doing so from our own unique
196. Pacific perspective. I'm here today as one voice, as a Cook Island man to give my
197. perspective of psychology as that is informed by my understanding of my culture. But I'm
198. also drawing upon common elements across diverse Pacific cultures to inform this
199. understanding as well.
200. And so when we are trying to understand any kind of Pacific perspective, especially in relation to
201. Pacific identities and well-being, my specific focus is going to be in the context of
202. Aotearoa. So how this has developed within this country. Pacific perspectives also make
203. sure that we are mindful and aware of the social, the cultural and the historical backdrops of
204. what we are dealing with at the same time. So for Pacific peoples in New Zealand, this
205. means that we are taking into account the influence of Christianity being introduced to our
206. region, the migration story of our people to this country, the Dawn Raids that happened to
207. us as well. And this is the historical backdrop that we have in this country where the young
208. people, young Pacific people that we have in New Zealand today are the products of their
209. history that they have come from.
210. It is also recognising that the diversity that exists within the Pacific, our Cook Islanders, our
211. Samoans, our Tongans, they are all reflected here in New Zealand, but there's also other
212. levels that we need to be mindful of as well. Myself, I am born and raised in New Zealand.
213. We also must be mindful of those who are recent migrants to this country too, that the
214. experiences that they may have in this country will likely be different to the experiences
215. that I have here.
216. There are other aspects that we need to take into consideration as well. Ethnicity does not act
217. alone. They are not -- it is not the only thing that make up who we are. We have our
218. religions, we have our spiritualities, we have our sexualities, we have our physical health as
219. well. All of these things are forming the wider picture of who we need to -- of what we
220. need to understand to know who we are.
221. But these all have their own culturally nuanced meanings as well which have changed over time
222. and they change depending on where we are. What it means to be Tongan in New Zealand
223. is not the same, likely not to be the same as what it means to be Tongan in Tonga or
224. Tongan in Australia. The histories of these countries are different, the cultural context of
225. these countries are different as well. So a Pacific perspective is recognising all of that in
226. addition to recognising the cultural knowledge that we hold in this country too.
227. **Q.** Thank you. In your statement you mentioned the word "vā" and vā is a concept that we've
228. heard even just as early as earlier today.
229. A. Yes.
230. **Q.** And also yesterday. But there are so many layers to this pan-Pacific concept. Can you
231. explain how you see the vā working in the context of abuse in care?
232. A. Yes. For me, and this is my understanding as well, I will talk about what I think vā is first.
233. And it has been spoken about quite a lot throughout this Inquiry this week. For me, vā is
234. the space between people, it is also the space between people and objects, people and their
235. land. And when we talk about space, we're not talking about a physical gap, we're talking
236. about a social space. It is a space that isn't defined by distance, but it is defined by
237. connections. And so it is within the space in which we -- in which relationships are formed
238. and it is in which relationships are nurtured and in which they are maintained.
239. So vā in the context of abuse in care, if we're thinking about the importance and the value, the
240. sacredness of these relationships that we have, these relationships are tapu, our vā is tapu.
241. Abuse in care is a violation of that relationship. It is a damage to the vā. And so it is
242. important for us to be able to recognise what that damage looks like and it is also important
243. for us to be able to nurture that space, nurture that vā and to repair it as well.
     1. **Q.** You've shared how cultural and ethnic identity are understood from psychological
     2. perspectives. From your perspective as a Pacific professional, how is cultural and ethnic
     3. identity, how are they viewed through a Pacific lens?
     4. A. I will start by critiquing some of the theories that I just mentioned earlier. When I talked
     5. about the -- those stages of ethnic identity, of being diffuse, foreclosed, moratorium and
     6. achieved, that gives an impression that identity is a linear process, that is something that we
     7. have a trajectory towards. Research in Pacific locations and with Pacific peoples is
     8. different. We don't look at identity as a linear process. Perhaps a more apt description is
     9. that our ethnic identity is a journey, and it is a journey that doesn't have a destination, it is a
     10. continuous thing that we are always navigating.
     11. So when we're thinking about these journeys that we go upon, there may be some
     12. similarities so what we see in psychological perspectives, but what psychological
     13. perspectives miss is a lot of the social and cultural and historical contexts in which we are
     14. embedded in that shape these journeys that we go along.
     15. So part of this is recognising that our journeys can be marked by periods of confusion, periods of
     16. exploration, and periods of tension as well. To be Pacific in this country means that you
     17. are being Pacific against a backdrop of discrimination and against a backdrop in which
     18. systems have been developed in a way that does not take who you are as a Pacific person
     19. into account.
     20. We are also, although many of us are born in this country, we are tauiwi, we are visitors to this
     21. country as well. Our Tangata Whenua here we are connected to through our own
     22. relationships, but Aotearoa is not our land, our land is elsewhere. That we are connected by
     23. our oceans, it is important for us to recognise the ways in which our identities are tied to
     24. our lands as well.
     25. When we're looking at, I guess, the ways in which psychology can resonate with the Pacific stories
     26. of our identities, identity for Pacific peoples which psychology would classify us as a
     27. collective culture in comparison to an individualistic culture, our self concepts could be
     28. understood as interdependent. So our identities are formed based on our relationships or
     29. memberships within different groups.
     30. It is common for many Pacific peoples when they introduce their selves, you might meet someone
     31. and you say "Tell me a bit about yourself." They will say something like -- I'll use myself
     32. as an example, which I did at the beginning, I am Cook Island, my father is from Nikao,
     33. he's from Manihiki. What I'm doing is signifying that I'm connected, you know, my family
     34. links are important, my place where I am located is important. These groups in which
244. I belong to are important. So my identity is dependent on my relationships with other
245. people.
246. That would be a psychological perspective that would resonate with us as Pacific peoples. But in
247. addition to that, taking, I guess, a more Pacific perspective within that, vā is a way in which
248. we can understand our identities as well. So my identity is understood through the
249. relationships or the vā that I have with others. So this would be meaning that ourself,
250. ourselves are relational, or what we can call the relational self. So our identities are formed
251. based on these relationships that we have. In psychology it is understood as an
252. interdependent self-concept. In Pacific it is the vā, it is the relationships that bind us
253. together and that form our identities. So that means that I guess in one way the self is a
254. Eurocentric concept because the self and Pacific is intricately tied to do so many other
255. people.
256. My own research that I have done in this area, a little bit more about my specific expertise; I am a
257. quantitative researcher, though I do draw extensively on Pacific knowledges, which does
258. put me in that unique position of doing culturally-informed quantitative research. My PhD
259. and masters focused on psychometrics. Psychometrics is -- I'm trying to explain this in a
260. way that is --
261. **Q.** Please explain.
262. A. I feel like I'm giving a lecture. If I wanted to measure weight I would get out my scales and
263. I would measure your weight. If I wanted to measure the distance between us, I would get
264. out my ruler and I would measure that. If I wanted to measure your identity, I can't take out
265. your brain and measure it that way, I potentially could, but the information I might get from
266. that isn't really what we're looking for. Psychometrics is a statistical method that we can
267. use to get an indication of what identity is.
268. Part of that is what I would call a latent construct. So it is recognising that there is
269. something there that I can't directly measure. But what I can do is I can look at how you
270. respond to things that are related to this thing that I'm trying to measure. So this is where
271. we see things like identity scales or if you've ever done a survey where there's a 1 to 7
272. strongly agree, strongly disagree, these kinds of things.
273. What I do in psychometrics and what I have done is developed a measure of
274. Pacific identity and well-being. So it asks people questions that are related to their
275. identities, and looks at patterns within those responses as well. That is something called
276. Exploratory Factor Analysis followed up by something called Confirmatory Factor
277. Analysis. So it is looking at the patterns in ways in which people respond to these
278. particular items.
279. The patterns that I noted in the surveys that I conducted with people were very
280. much reflective of the themes that we see in Pacific literature around what Pacific identities
281. encompass. This includes our sense of belonging to our ethnic groups, to our communities.
282. It includes the positive attitudes that we have towards our ethnic groups as well, which I
283. have called in my own studies Group Membership Evaluation.
284. It also -- my studies also capture something that I have called Religious Centrality
285. and Embeddedness which looks at the extent to which religion is intertwined with our
286. Pacific cultures. I have also noted something called -- which I have termed "cultural
287. efficacy", which looks at the extent to which someone feels that they are able to participate
288. comfortably within a Pacific cultural context.
289. In addition to that is domains around well-being which in my research has focused
290. on family well-being and also societal well-being as well. So our Pacific identities are
291. constructed of many of these different things, of the ways in which we see ourselves
292. belonging to groups, the positive attitudes that we have towards those groups, the extent to
293. which we feel that we can participate within those groups, the extent to which we feel that
294. our religions and our faith is intertwined with these groups, and the ways in which we feel
295. supported and are satisfied with our families and the societies that we live in.
296. **Q.** Can you explain, religion is such a big thing for Pacific people, can you explain what role
297. religion plays just a little bit more?
298. A. We would need to go a little bit further back into history before the missionaries came
299. through the Pacific and introduced Christianity. So before then we had, and we still do
300. today, we had a cosmology of beliefs, our atua, our gods of the sea, the skies. And they
301. exist, they existed for many, many, many years and then as missionaries came through and
302. they introduced Christianity to the Pacific and this was readily adopted, not readily
303. adopted, over time it was adopted and incorporated into Pacific nations within the Pacific.
304. So what we saw was a fundamental shift, I would say, in Pacific cultures then where the values
305. within a Christian religious framework were different to those to the values embedded
306. within a Pacific cultural framework back in those days. And so we started to see a shift
307. there. One example may be the ways in which views on gender changed, where gender
308. pre-Christianity may have been more fluid, understood differently with fa'afafine,
309. akava'ine. Gender was different. The introduction of Christianity saw a shift in the
310. understanding of gender roles in the Pacific. So this is ways in which Christianity has had
311. an influence and shaped who we are today.
312. And today, I would argue and would suggest many would argue as well, that our religions have
313. become so intertwined with Pacific cultures that we can't separate them anymore, even the
314. social structures that we have can revolve around religiosity, which I want to clarify is
315. different from spirituality as well. So spirituality is looking at how we are connected to
316. things that transcend who we are as people, and religiosity or religion would be the social
317. structures in which that spirituality can be performed. Both have influenced our Pacific
318. cultures.
319. In New Zealand, especially during the Dawn Raids, our churches -- sorry, I'll go back a little bit.
320. In New Zealand, especially with the first migrants coming to New Zealand, our churches
321. were pivotal, absolutely pivotal. They provided that village away from home where you
322. could be connected with people who you knew, who you understood, and who understood
323. you as well.
324. And so the social role that religion and churches play in Pacific lives is absolutely vital and critical
325. for us. And is also reflecting the ways in which we can't separate them anymore, they are
326. so enmeshed together. In saying that, there is a growing proportion of Pacific peoples,
327. when we see in the census, who do not declare any religious affiliation as well. So not all
328. Pacific people are religious. Again, just highlighting there the diversity within our Pacific
329. cultures here today. But religion still is impacting on people regardless of their religious
330. affiliations or not.
331. **Q.** We've heard from survivors who have shared about how their cultural identity has been
332. stripped because, you know, they can't speak their own language. Can you explain what
333. role does language play here?
334. A. Yes. I mentioned earlier that ethnic behaviours was a bit of a contentious area in
335. understanding ethnic identity. And language is one of those perfect examples of that.
336. I myself do not speak Māori, Cook Island Māori, but I identify as Cook Island. If we were
337. to flip that a little bit. If I could speak French, that doesn't mean that I would necessarily
338. identify as French. So what this is showing is that yes, language is very intricately tied to
339. our identities, and quite often we can view language as identity. And this is a controversial
340. issue within Pacific research spaces as well. When we -- I have heard people say that, I
341. will use Samoans as an example, that you can't be Samoan if you can't speak the language.
342. And I understand that sentiment. There is knowledge located within languages that can't be
343. translated into English. There is an essence that belongs to them. And it is why we are
344. taking great care to protect our languages.
345. But that doesn't mean that those who are, for whatever reason, are unable to speak their language,
346. are unable to identify with their ethnic groups either. Part of why that is so important to
347. recognise is that language is something that belongs to us but it is also something that can
348. be taken from us. We saw here in Aotearoa through colonisation where Māori were forced
349. not to speak their language in schools. We also see that various ways in Pacific, in the
350. Pacific nations as well, where there is growing prominence of English speaking too.
351. I believe in New Zealand 95% of Cook Island people who are born in New Zealand are unable to
352. speak their language. And compare that to Samoans, I believe it is about 60% of
353. New Zealand-born Samoans can speak their language. So we need to be mindful of the
354. nuances that we see across the Pacific and the relationship between languages and identity
355. as well.
356. But language is an important marker of identity, but it is not all that makes up our identity as well.
357. I say this with a bit of caution. I don't want to give the impression that our languages are
358. not important. They are absolutely vital for us and they are vital for our continuation of our
359. cultures and of our histories, because we are an oral culture, our stories and our knowledges
360. are passed through our oratory. So we must protect those languages.
361. We must also be mindful that our relationships, or our personal relationships with our languages
362. are not uniform either. That people, through no fault of their own, have been disconnected
363. from their languages, and that there are critical periods throughout your development that
364. are easier to learn a language; usually during adolescence and perhaps into your kind of
365. later teen years. There is a, I guess what I would call a critical period for language
366. acquisition, where you have that time and space to learn your languages.
367. This does depend on your surroundings though. If you are in an environment where the languages
368. are not spoken, you're not going to pick it up and it's not going to be very easy to pick it up.
369. In New Zealand, the primary language of instruction is English. For many of our Pacific
370. peoples we have to be able to speak English. But all of New Zealand does not have to
371. speak Cook Island Māori. So there is a bit of imbalance there, I guess, in terms of the
372. values in which our society can place on different languages.
373. But again, it is important to note that it is not just languages that make up our ethnic identities,
374. there is our sense of belonging and connection to that. Which is why in my research that
375. I did I initially had the same ideas of language being a marker of identity. The methods
376. that I use in terms of developing items to reflect identity and language were very difficult to
377. kind of get out within the statistical methods I was using. And that was because a lot of
378. people who were unable to speak the language strongly identified with their ethnic group.
379. So it became a bit of a problem in what I was trying to do.
380. So what I did instead was lend from literature and research on self-efficacy. So self-efficacy,
381. meaning the beliefs that one has to be able to do something. And so I drew on that concept
382. and developed this area of cultural efficacy. So this meant that I'm not, I guess, taking kind
383. of tick box approach to what it means to be a Pacific person that you have to be able to
384. speak Cook Island, that you have to be able going to church; it is looking at the dimensions
385. that we can connect to and how we vary along those dimensions. And cultural efficacy in
386. that respect meant looking -- rather than saying you must speak a particular language to be
387. Pacific, it's asking people how comfortable do you feel within a Pacific cultural setting. So
388. that may mean perhaps if I don't speak the language I can still feel comfortable within that
389. context so I can kind of score myself quite highly on that.
390. **Q.** Just reflecting on language acquisition, we heard this morning from Ms TU, a Samoan
391. survivor who shared about being adopted into a Palagi family. There was that real sense of
392. disconnection and in her words discomfort. Something that you've raised in our previous
393. talanoa is a phrase called "ethnic labelling". Can you explain what ethnic labelling is?
394. A. Yes. Again, I will connect to the evidence provided by expert witness Dr Seini Taufa who
395. spoke about the ethnicity data, and I guess we can think of ethnic labelling as that tick box
396. exercise of which ethnic groups do you belong to. These are the markers of ethnicity,
397. which is -- I want to clarify, is something separate from ethnic identity. Ethnicity is -- can
398. be understood as the -- a social construct that reflects the geographic and cultural heritage
399. of a particular people. Ethnic identity is your sense and sense of meaning and sense of
400. attachment to that. Our baby that was crying earlier, I could give that baby an ethnic label
401. as a parent. But that does not necessarily mean that as that baby gets older that that baby is
402. going to identify with that identity that I have given them, or with that ethnicity I have
403. given them, in the same way that we might see ethnic identity.
404. So this is what I would call an ascribed identity, so it is an ethnic label that we give to others. So
405. this is also recognising that identity is interplay between yourself and other people. So it
406. does -- and ethnic identity context, it does start with us giving ethnic labels to our children.
407. What we can often see is for -- and also for many Pacific peoples, is when there are those
408. with multiple ethnic backgrounds -- myself, for example, I am both Cook Island and
409. European. On a survey or whatever, I would have to tick two boxes, Cook Island and
410. European. But it is -- that is my ethnicity. My identity is something different. My identity
411. is how I feel and how I am connected to those boxes that I have ticked. I guess the labels
412. force me to identify in a particular way. But my identity allows me to do so in a way that is
413. more fluid and reflective of how I feel. So we must be careful that we don't conflate these
414. ethnic labels with your own personal sense of ethnic identity there.
415. **Q.** You've just mentioned that identity is fluid and I understand there is a concept called
416. "identity fluidity", which you have touched on before. Can you expand on what identity
417. fluidity actually means and the way that this relates to ethnic identity development?
418. A. Yes. So our -- if we looked at the ethnic identity development process, or journey, it is not
419. something that is consistent over time, it fluctuates as we try to navigate what that means
420. for us. Even if you have a secure understanding of your own identity and what that means,
421. these identities are multi-faceted. I will use our Pacific peoples as an example of that.
422. When we first came to New Zealand we were perhaps identifying ourselves in terms of the
423. villages that we belong to or the churches that we belong to. We weren't identifying
424. ourselves as Cook Island or Samoan. But once we came to New Zealand, we were labelled
425. Pacific Islanders. So that was something that was given to us. And it is also something that
426. we have adopted in some sense, either through necessity or through the ways in which our
427. socialisation and experiences in this country have forced us to as well.
428. Those initial migrants that came to New Zealand were labelled as Pacific Islanders despite that
429. they were perhaps not viewing themselves in that way. But they were all sharing a
430. common experience of trying to acculturate to New Zealand society. They had children,
431. their children were born into a context where their experiences were going to be very, very
432. similar to them.
433. Through very good intentions, many Pacific parents encouraged English speaking for their children
434. as what they saw as a way to survive New Zealand society. New Zealand viewed us as a
435. single community of Pacific Islanders, despite us knowing very well that we have different
436. histories, languages that make up this diverse group of who we are.
437. And so our subsequent generations were born into this context where they had more in common
438. with each other than what they had in common with the generations that came before them.
439. And so they were developing this broader identity, Pacific identity which spoke to the
440. common experiences that they were having. At the same time they knew that they are
441. Niuean, or that you are also Cook Island, or that you are Samoan. So what we are seeing
442. here is a multi-layered ethnic identity, where sometimes you are Cook Island, sometimes
443. you are Pacific, it really depends on where you are.
444. Today I am Cook Island, at the University of Auckland I am Pacific. Why? Because there is not
445. many of us in my faculty. So there is strength in our numbers. And the way in which we
446. can connect more easier is by recognising that we are Pacific. So we have a stronger voice.
447. We can access more resources as a wider collective rather than a constellation of smaller
448. collectives. So that stronger relationship between who we all are does serve a good purpose
449. for us. It does come at the expense of losing sometimes that specific nuance that gives us
450. that uniqueness of what makes each of us special in our own ways.
451. So identity fluidity can refer to the ways in which our identity changes depending on the context in
452. which we are in. Some aspects of our identity will be more salient in some spaces than
453. they are in other spaces. Likewise, because identity develops over time, there may be
454. instances where your understanding of your ethnicity and your ethnic identity can change
455. over time. Even if I was to go back to the psychological perspectives, and achieved identity
456. does not necessarily mean that one can experience confusion about what their ethnic
457. identity means to them either.
458. So there is a constant back and forth. Identity, as I said earlier, is a journey and journeys have
459. bumps in the road and they wind, they go up and down. And they don't have that
460. destination either. So that is one way in which we can see that fluidity. But we can see that
461. fluidity on paper as well. When we're looking at data, we can get the impression that
462. identity or perhaps ethnicity is a stable construct.
463. But what we have seen, and what has been evidenced by many of the survivors here, is that people
464. can be mislabelled. So we are -- if we were to follow that one individual across time, at the
465. various points at which they have -- their data has been entered into our systems, someone
466. has been Māori, suddenly they're Samoan, suddenly they're Rarotongan. Parents, when
467. they label their children, especially if the parents are of different ethnic backgrounds, the
468. way in which they label their children can differ as well. Mum might define her child as
469. Samoan, but dad might define his child as Tongan. The child is both Samoan and Tongan.
470. But depending on who -- I guess maybe depending on what mood dad is in today, he might
471. just tick the Tongan box or something like that.
472. As that child gets older and they grow in their understanding of what their ethnicity means to them,
473. the way they tick that box can change as well. They might tick Tongan and Samoan, or
474. they might just tick Tongan. It depends on what their experiences were like growing up.
475. As we saw with many of our survivors, some were disconnected from their families and
476. perhaps did not have that sense of connection and belonging to that ethnic label that they

30 may have to tick.

1. So in that instance, what we're seeing there is fluidity again on discrete data. So there's multiple
2. ways in which our identities can be fluid in both our understanding, but also in the official
3. statistics that we have about who we are as well.
4. **Q.** Now, we're still continuing our journey, we've still got our Pacific hat on. I'm going to talk
   1. to you about well-being, ask you about well-being and what that means from a Pacific
   2. perspective in psychology.
   3. A. Yes, so when I was talking about identity earlier, I mentioned religion, senses of belonging
   4. and things like that. This is same -- the same ways in which we can conceptualise Pacific
   5. well-being as well. I have a slide that I would like to share that highlights Pacific models
   6. of health. So these models can illustrate the broader, holistic conceptualisations that
   7. people, that Pacific people or Pacific health theorists have about how we can understand
   8. what health and well-being can look like and can be understood from a Pacific perspective.
   9. On the left-hand side is Fonofale. Fonofale was developed by Fuimaono Carl Pulotu-Endemann.
   10. He uses a fale as a way to articulate different dimensions of Pacific people's lives. The
   11. foundation of the fale represents family, the roof represents culture, and on this image there
   12. are four posts. Each post represents something as well. So one post represents physical
   13. health, one represents spirituality, one represents mental health, and the last post it says
   14. other, but that represents things like gender, education, employment, income and things like
   15. that. Surrounding that fale is a cocoon that represents environment, time and context.
   16. That fale, the way that it represents health and well-being is that the architecture of the fale needs
   17. to be in balance. If the foundation of the fale is weak, the rest of the fale can collapse, or
   18. the structure will be compromised. This means that to understand Pacific health means we
   19. need to understand the importance that families have, that if a family is experiencing
   20. hardship in any way, shape or form, that this can impact on their physical health, this can
   21. impact on their spirituality, this can impact on their mental health, this can impact on the
   22. ways in which they can express their cultures. So it is a representation of the holistic ways
   23. in which health is understood within a Pacific world view.
   24. The one on the far right-hand side is Te Vaka Atafaga. It is a Tokelauan model of health
   25. developed by Kupa Kupa, who I believe he is in the nursing industry. He uses a vāka as a
   26. way to understand Tokelau models of health. Similar to the ways in which Fonofale
   27. represents a Samoan perspective, I guess. Kupa here -- one thing that I want to point out is
   28. something called ‘inati, this is a Tokelau concept of social support. I'm not Tokelauan so
   29. I hope I do my explanation justice here. In Tokelau, ‘inati is a cultural way of providing
   30. support for others. For instance, the example that is given in the publication of this
   31. framework, he talks about a mother who has lost her husband, her husband has died, and so
   32. the rest of the village will provide for her and the children as well. That culturally
   33. embedded way of supporting her is called ‘inati. And it is something that is part of their
   34. cultural practices, it is not something that is questioned, it is just what is done.
5. In the middle there is Fonua, a Tongan model of health developed by Sione Tu’itahi within the
6. Health Promotion Agency, and each of those circles represents a different domain, very
7. similar to Fonofale and Te Vaka Atafaga. In the middle you have your spirituality and as
8. you go outwards there's mental health, physical health, your community and the
9. environment and the different levels in which these need to be understood as well, at the
10. individual level, the family, local, national and global levels.
11. I highlight these three models of health here so we can appreciate the differences that exist within
12. them. Fonofale is Samoan, it's slightly different to Te Vaka Atafaga which has its own
13. unique Tokelau concepts within it, which is different to Fonua which has its own Tongan
14. phrasings to describe what is going on there. But there is commonalities across them.
15. There is the family, spirituality, the physical body, the communities that we belong to as
16. well.
17. I will note that with Te Vaka Atafaga, family is represented by the lashings that tie
18. the different components of the vaka together. Like we see up here on our fale, the lashings
19. that keep the wooden structures together, Kupa articulates those lashings as family, as tying
20. everything together.
21. **MS VA’AI:** Madam Chair, I'm wondering whether this is a good place to take a break.
22. **CHAIR:** Yes, I think so. We've got a lot to think about, so I think we all need to take a break, and
23. have a think about it and we'll come back to finish your evidence in the second half of the
24. afternoon. Thank you.
25. A. Thank you.

# Adjournment from 3.29 pm to 3.50 pm

1. **CHAIR:** Welcome back everybody. And welcome back to you Dr Manuela. Thank you Ms
2. Va’ai.
3. **MS VA’AI:** Thank you. Dr Manuela, so just summarising what you've said so far in your
4. evidence, right at the beginning you discussed psychological perspectives which is a
5. Eurocentric, Palagi way of viewing cultural identity and well-being. Now we have our
6. Pacific hat on, our ei katu and you've taken us through Pacific perspectives of cultural
7. identity, in particular Pacific models.
8. A. Yes.
9. **Q.** So if we could just bring that slide up please Hene.
10. A. Yes, so to finish with this part here, these three models are just a few of a wider array of
11. Pacific models of health and well-being that are available and that exist within our cultural
12. landscape. My own spin on this, I guess, is again related to vā. So my interpretation of
13. well-being for Pacific peoples and how this can be understood through vā, again the vā is
14. the space between us, it's that relationship between us. We can extend upon these models
15. that exist here by understanding how well-being can be reflected through the vā that you
16. have with each of these different dimensions of life; what is the nature and the quality of
17. the vā within your family relationships. We can extend that to what is the vā between you
18. and your culture as well. Though culture is not a person, nor is it an object, it is something
19. that we have a relationship with. Likewise, our mental health can be understood as the vā,
20. the relationship that you have with your own mental well-being; your physical health as
21. well.
22. So my professional perspective of Pacific well-being, based upon my consolidation of these
23. various models, is that vā for Pacific peoples can be understood as the totality of the quality
24. of the relationships that we have across these various domains of life, recognising that
25. people are -- we have relationships with people across each of those dimensions as well.
26. **Q.** Your research touches on discrimination and racism as well within this context. Can you
27. explain how it's linked to both well-being and identity?
28. A. Yes.
29. **Q.** For Pacific people, sorry, Dr Manuela.
30. A. Yeah. Earlier I showed a diagram that had the opposing effects of identity and well-being
31. on -- sorry, identity and discrimination on well-being. What I have done in my own
32. research is explore how that relationship looks like. What I have found, or the research that
33. I have done in various surveys and the subsequent analyses that I have conducted with that
34. has shown -- I have shown that ethnic identity moderates the relationship between
35. discrimination and well-being.
36. In this particular study that I did, I looked at how people who reported high levels of ethnic identity
37. relative to low levels of ethnic identity on the identity measure that I developed. Those
38. who experienced discrimination, people who reported higher discrimination, what I found
39. was that they were protected from the corrosive effects of that discrimination. So the
40. reports of their life satisfaction, their satisfaction with their physical health and their
41. satisfaction with life were not affected directly at least by the impacts of that
42. discrimination. That suggests to me that ethnic identity provides some kind of
43. psychological resource that buffers you against the negative impacts of ethnic
44. discrimination.
45. In addition to this, those people who reported lower ethnic identity scores, what I found was that
46. they also reported lower satisfaction within their families, lower satisfaction with their
47. physical health, and lower satisfaction with their life overall.
48. To me what this suggests is that ethnic -- sorry, discrimination has a more harmful effect on those
49. who are still trying to understand what their ethnic identity means for them. That does not
50. mean that those with a secure understanding of their ethnic identity are also not impacted
51. by that discrimination, it does mean that their identity does provide some protection against
52. that.
53. Furthermore, if we are to understand conceptually what identity and well-being is for Pacific
54. peoples, in psychology perspectives we look at identity as its own concept, we look at
55. well-being as its own concept, and we model the relationship between the two using
56. various statistical methods.
57. In a Pacific world view, identity can be understood in terms of the vā between myself and other
58. people. Well-being can be understood in terms of the vā between myself and across these
59. various domains in life.
60. Because of vā, we can't conceptualise identity and well-being as distinct concepts within a Pacific
61. world view. Like how I mentioned earlier that religion and Pacific cultures are so
62. intertwined, this is the same for Pacific identities and well-being. Our identity relies on the
63. quality of the relationships with ourselves and with our other people and our well-being
64. relies on the quality of the relationships with other people as well. Because of this, I guess
65. we can say that identity is well-being and well-being is also identity. Or perhaps we just
66. don't have the words in English to articulate that as we can in a Pacific way.
67. **Q.** I remember having a discussion with you in preparation for this and when I asked you, is
68. there a Pacific word for well-being?
69. A. Not that I know of. There is no distinct translation into well-being, but there are ways in
70. which our languages reflect that how our relationships are fully embedded in our ways of
71. knowing and our ways of being. If I was to say, if I was to greet you in my language, I
72. would say kia orana. That means I wish you good life. That to me is well-being. It is
73. reflected in everything that we do. We don't greet you as hello, we greet you by wishing
74. you good life.
75. **Q.** Meitaki. In your statement you provided you reflected on our Pacific survivor stories and
76. you categorise them into different themes. I'm just going to walk you through these themes
77. and wondering whether you could share your thoughts; firstly on family?
78. A. Yes. So many of the survivors talked about how they were either completely disconnected
79. and taken away from their families and put into other places. Others talked about how their
80. family environments were of a different ethnic and cultural background to them. Others
81. spoke about how their family environments were unhealthy and not a good place for them
82. to be in.
83. If we think about the ways in which we look at the importance of family, for instance like
84. Fonofale, if the family unit is not strong, then the rest of the person is going to be
85. compromised. And families are important for us. They are something through which we
86. draw our strength. Which can in some instances be a double-edged sword because families
87. are so important to us, if that family is not well, the damage can be horrific, as we have
88. seen by the survivors. But that is also, in my opinion, where we can intervene. It is also
89. where we can heal as well.
90. **Q.** Another theme or category that you have mentioned or highlighted is culture. Can you
91. please share your observations on that?
92. A. Again, many of our survivors talked about being disconnected from their cultures and their
93. languages. If we think about how important it is for you to develop your own identity, how
94. this is connected to other positive outcomes, your self-esteem, your well-being, not having
95. access to your culture through no fault of your own, means that you have been cut off from
96. that source of well-being as well. It can also be a way for you to connect with others.
97. As people, what we know in psychology is that one of the most harmful things to a person is
98. isolation. And to be disconnected from something that connects you to other people in
99. ways in which other cultures may not understand. You have been isolated through no fault
100. of your own. We know people die in isolation and we know that those social relationships
101. can form a protection there. Our culture is more than the way we view and understand the
102. world, it is part of our health as well. So for many of our survivors when I reflect on their
103. stories that they have shared, I feel their pain and their longing for wanting to be connected
104. to that. Because it is through those connections that healing can be found and can occur,
105. but it is through those connections as well in which you can be protected. My own research
106. demonstrates that as well.
107. But I must also make note that some survivors, though on paper they have been labelled Pacific,
108. for them their ethnicity is not a centrally defining aspect of their identity. And we must be
109. mindful of that as well. To me this means that any Pacific-orientated approach to redress,
110. what has happened to our survivors, must also take into account the diverse ways in which
111. people are Pacific. There is no one size fits all for a Pacific person. The way that they
112. orient themselves or connect to their ethnicity or their culture must be taken into
113. consideration, even if that means that a Pacific way may not be for them.
114. I reflect now on the evidence provided yesterday by one of the survivors who spoke about his
     1. experience of being present in this fale where he was contending with the fact that he
     2. discovered abruptly that he was Samoan, believing he was Māori. That he attributed a lot
     3. of the hardships and abuse that he experienced to Pacific peoples in the school that he was
     4. at. And I felt that being present in this space in some ways brought to light a lot of that
     5. trauma again that he had experienced. But he was also very careful to ensure that he did
     6. not believe that this was reflective of Pacific peoples entirely. But it is an example of how
     7. our care and approach must be nuanced to the individual needs of our survivors.
     8. **Q.** Looking at identity and discrimination, what are your reflections on those two themes?
     9. A. Again, looking at the ways in which culture and identity can provide that protection for
     10. those who have been disconnected from their families and from their culture, what we're
     11. seeing is people who have been stripped through no fault of their own of something that
     12. they deserve. The discrimination that they have experienced as well, though at times,
     13. though they spoke of the discrimination that they experienced in the places in which they
     14. had been placed into care, this discrimination happens all over the place as well. And we
     15. must be mindful of that too. Many of them spoke about, even our survivor this morning
     16. who was adopted into a European family, her physical appearance denotes who she is.
     17. Despite her perhaps only knowing her ethnic background, her ethnic identity is still
     18. developing. Her journey is still continuing. Growing up she was treated in a particular
     19. way. They viewed her as a particular way, despite her not seeing herself in that way.
     20. So when we look at identity, I don't want to put responsibility on to an individual. Individuals are
     21. within a wider system. So people, other people and societies have their role in the harm
     22. that they have done to their survivors as well. What our country has done in terms of the
     23. Dawn Raids, very overt forms of discrimination can give permission, for lack of a better
     24. word, for other people to treat us negatively, to discriminate against us. And so we need to
     25. be sure that while we are doing our best to provide that cultural support and safety for our
     26. young people as they are growing up, that we are also pairing this with societal shifts and
     27. attitudes towards inclusion and acceptance and embracing of the diverse peoples that call
     28. this country home as well.
     29. **Q.** Having listened to survivor stories throughout the week, are there any other reflections or
     30. themes that you've thought about so far?
     31. A. Yes. One would be the intergenerational trauma that has been carried on. I was born in
     32. 1986 after the Dawn Raids. But my reality is shaped by that. This is the same for many
     33. other people as well. These events influence policies and we are all affected by those. So
     34. we must be sure that we are mindful of how this trauma is carried by all of us, but this
115. trauma can manifest itself in ways that are even more harmful on others. Our survivors
116. within their families, their families are also the products of the histories within this country
117. as well. I don't know the situations of these families, but I do know that these families were
118. in trouble for whatever reason that may have been, and this trouble has then been passed on
119. to the survivors who have done their best to deal with it as much as they can.
120. So the intergenerational trauma is another theme that I have seen. Connected to that and to also
121. relate that back to culture and identity, it is within our families that our identities and our
122. cultures are passed on. Our culture is passed on between generations and when that family
123. breaks down, that intergenerational transfer of knowledge and of identity is lost.
124. **Q.** Finally, as a Pacific, as a Cook Island professional working in psychology, what is your
125. hope for our Pacific people, our survivors in this space?
126. A. One is connected to another theme that I would like to talk to, and that is about resiliency.
127. So I have noted how strong each of our survivors have been to come, share their stories as
128. hard as it can be for them to relive that trauma that they have experienced. Resiliency is
129. about someone's ability to adapt to a situation that is harmful to them. It is a way to survive
130. that and then to return back to who you are, to return back to your happiness. The survivors
131. did not talk about resiliency directly, but they have shown it indirectly.
132. Our Commissioners, I have noted that you have mentioned resiliency. I do have some critiques of
133. resiliency as a thing that I hope you take into consideration as well. Part of this critique is
134. recognising the racial dimensions of resiliency. There is an unequal distribution of power
135. within this country. If people are to be resilient, we need to understand what that resiliency
136. looks like and who is being asked to be resilient.
137. We know that Pacific people experience discrimination and other hardships in this country and we
138. expect them to be resilient against it. Our resilience is more than that. What does Pacific
139. resilience look like? In some instances it looks like this. It is our people coming to you to
140. tell you their stories, the ways in which systems have failed them, systems have
141. marginalised them, and what they have done to try to survive that.
142. So resilience also looks like resistance. It is resistance against these systems that fail us. It is us
143. holding those in power to account to ensure that they are doing what they should be doing
144. to protect. One thing with resilience, a critique that is shared by scholars in Māori research
145. as well, is that if we are to encourage resilience, we do so at the risk of accepting these
146. inequalities and these inequities. We do not accept them and our survivors have expressed
147. that in many, many different ways that they do not accept this.
148. So yes, individually our survivors have shown great resiliency and to our survivors I thank you so
     1. much for sharing your stories. Individual resiliency is one thing, and collective resistance
     2. is something that is going to be paired with that resiliency as well. We must ensure that
     3. what they have gone through can't be done again.
     4. Your individual resiliency to our survivors, I hope that you can take strength from our collective in
     5. seeking your redress to what has been happened to you. I also try to share my hopes and
     6. understandings of your own identities in ways in which you have been taken from them, in
     7. ways you can't control. You belong to us and we belong to you. It is hard to not get
     8. emotional about these things. As an academic and researcher we're taught in psychology to
     9. be objective to these things. But this is our community, we can't deny that who we are are
     10. not reflected in the testimonies of our survivors. We must also be authentic in what we do.
     11. We have to be sure that we present ourselves as whole people throughout this entire process
     12. just as our survivors have presented themselves as whole people as well.
     13. So to our survivors, again I extend to you my warmest gratitude for you and your families and
     14. thank you for everything that you have shared with us and I hope to you all that you do find
     15. ways in which you can connect with who you are, because you belong to one of the greatest
     16. legacies in this world. Perhaps you don't understand it just yet, but there are people out
     17. there who will champion you regardless of your own experiences that you have gone
     18. through.
     19. **Q.** Meitaki ma'ata Dr Sam Manuela. I understand that you're happy to take questions.
     20. A. Yes.
     21. **Q.** Thank you Madam Chair.
     22. **CHAIR:** Thank you Dr Manuela, I'm going to ask my colleagues if they would like to any
     23. questions.
     24. **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Kia ora Dr Manuela, thank you so much for your enlightening
     25. statement today. Yeah, I thought -- there were so many things in there so I just don't know
     26. where to start, but I'll just focus on our terms of reference, let's think about that. I thought it
     27. was really interesting in thinking about the nature and effects of abuse and neglect,
     28. discriminatory statements on someone whose identity wasn't fully formed or robust in
     29. terms of ethnicity and the negative impact that those statements would have on that not
     30. fully formed ethnic identity. It's really useful for us to understand, to think about the
     31. nature, the full extent, nature of discriminatory statements for example. And I wondered --
     32. and also the flip-side of that about healthy, robust identity would mean that you are more
     33. resistant to those attacks, right, I wanted to hear that and you said that, that's great, it's great
     34. to know that.
149. I wonder too whether -- I'm not sure whether you were talking in your statement
150. about the stigmatisation of identities too, and how that can be internalised by the identity,
151. you know, by the person so that if you're called lazy, you know, so forth, then you actually
152. -- it starts to form part of your identity. Would you agree with that that these are some of
153. the effects?
154. A. They're not uniform effects. We can see that sometimes. I have shown in some research
155. that I have done that there can be societal attitudes that can be shared by Pacific peoples
156. who may also hold negative views or hold negative stereotypes against Pacific peoples as
157. well. Where the source of those attitudes come from, I don't know, but there definitely is
158. people who are Pacific peoples who would hold attitudes that would be similar to kind of
159. more dominant discriminatory attitudes as well.
160. **Q.** Yeah, I think that makes sense, if you're told something over and over again by the
161. dominant cast or what have you, then there's a risk that it is internalised and it then
162. becomes part of your identity, right?
163. A. Yes.
164. **Q.** So that's another way of looking at the harm of discrimination on survivors, yeah?
165. A. I think to that point as well, the way that it can -- that can manifest itself can be important
166. to consider. So it could be things like trying to push children into a certain profession or
167. trying to persuade them to -- "Why do you want to study this, you should be doing
168. something else." And so it can be a recognition that our people don't do a particular
169. profession. And so --
170. **Q.** Yes, yeah, the Māoris will do the trade and so forth.
171. A. Yeah.
172. **Q.** Yeah, exactly, yeah. And I did -- I think it's a really -- now moving to healing if you like, I
173. think it's a really important insight that you had about how on identity, to be nuanced about
174. it. Because if we look at it, say, at one end of the spectrum you've got a more sort of fully
175. formed sense of identity kind of closed, if you like, and at the other a more cosmopolitan
176. identity, see it as a spectrum, do you know what I'm talking about?
177. A. Yeah, I would say that identity is -- has multiple dimensions, and that we can vary along
178. each of those dimensions. And so a more psychological perspective might have a more
179. kind of concrete idea of perhaps like a more global identity perspective of ethnic identity,
180. but within Pacific peoples what we're looking at is these specific dimensions which relate
181. to identity as well. And to what extent do people connect to each of those dimensions too.
182. So that could mean that you could be highly identifying as a Pacific person, but not
183. religious. And so what we can do there is look at the extent to which the dimension along
184. religiosity is important to yourself concept as a Pacific person.
185. **Q.** I appreciate, because you talk about our multiple affiliations and identities, yet it seems to
186. me that when it comes to -- you seem to be saying that ordinarily for Pasifika peoples or
187. Māori, what have you, that would most likely prioritise their ethnic identity over the other
188. parts, the other affiliations they might have?
189. A. It depends on the context that we're in as well. So usually for ethnic minorities, because the
190. ethnicity is much more salient and prominent, that tends to be something that becomes their
191. defining feature in society. So it tends to be something that they would tend to identify
192. more strongly, because that is the way that they're treated more often.
193. **Q.** Yes, I think so. And particularly if you're subject to discrimination, that that part of your
194. identity would be more prominent than perhaps your religious or your class affiliations or
195. your gender or so forth?
196. A. Yes, yes, but they're each important as well, because within our ethnic understandings,
197. there's those own nuanced understandings of things like gender and religiosity as well.
198. **Q.** To give you an example, when they had the US primaries for the US election several years
199. back and Obama was running with Hillary Clinton, my wife, who's also Māori, was torn
200. between whether she should support Obama or Hillary Clinton because it was race and
201. gender, and I was obviously for Obama, and then eventually I think she moved back
202. towards Obama again, but that -- because of the work that we do, the field that we do, we
203. strongly self-identify as being Māori obviously, so it's a very strong part of our identity, but
204. it shows just that even then --
205. A. Yes.
206. **Q.** -- there's complexities.
207. A. Yeah.
208. **Q.** Great, thank you so much for your evidence, really enjoyed it.
209. A. Thank you.
210. **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Tēnā koe Dr Manuela.
211. A. Tēnā koe.
212. **Q.** Thank you for your expertise today. It's really made sure that we've focused on a Friday
213. afternoon, that's for sure. My question is, can you help unpack a little bit when you talked
214. about the theory that one is born without a cultural identity and learns it, which for me is a
215. difficult concept because of the idea of whakapapa and being born with that. And I think
216. we heard from a survivor this morning who spoke to that, even though not being brought up
217. in an environment where she learned about her culture, she naturally had this draw towards
218. it. And I understand that with other survivors being disassociated with their culture due to
219. a traumatic event subsequent to birth. So I kind of need to get you to unpack that theory a
220. little for me please.
221. A. Yes. So when we are born, what I was referring to specifically there is an ascribed identity.
222. So the ethnicity which people will give to a child on any kind of official document or
223. anything.
224. **Q.** That isn't necessarily their blood?
225. A. It could be.
226. **Q.** Could be, okay.
227. A. Yeah. Also recognising in terms of, I guess, just thinking about cognitive development as
228. well, as a baby, babies, I don't even know what babies think, but they're definitely not
229. thinking in terms of identity or culture as well. And when I say we aren't born with an
230. identity, perhaps a better thing to say would be we are born into a culture that we learn over
231. time, absolutely recognising that who we are is connected through our whakapapa as well.
232. But the understanding that comes with that is something that develops over time of what
233. that means to them.
234. **Q.** Thank you. The other question I had was around you talked about ethnic labelling being
235. different from cultural identity, which was very useful. So does it follow then that ethnic
236. labelling has an impact on someone's cultural identity?
237. A. Yes, absolutely, yeah. The labels that we use are things that we can identify with, and the
238. language that we have to articulate a particular identity that we have as well.
239. **Q.** Because I think we've seen lots of evidence of that from being wrongly labelled.
240. A. Yes, absolutely, yeah. And I guess what we risk with conflating ethnicity and identity is
241. that if we look at the statistics and we see ethnic disparities in, say, health outcomes, if
242. we're conflating ethnicity and identity, we could be representing those disparities in terms
243. of a deficit that belongs as part of the cultural understandings or part of the culture of a
244. particular group. Which is definitely not the case but it is something that can be implied if
245. we attribute, it's something called the cultural attribution fallacy where we attribute ethnic
246. differences that we see between groups as being explained by their cultural practices
247. without any evidence that it is cultural practices that have led to these differences that we
248. see.
249. **Q.** Thank you. Excellent. I also really enjoyed your kōrero around resistance not to accept
250. what is wrong as an important representation of resilience, not just getting through a
251. traumatic event and stabilising one self. I think that was really insightful. Thank you very
252. much. Tēnā koe.
253. A. Thank you.
254. **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Kia orana katoatoa Dr Manuela.
255. A. Kia orana.
256. **Q.** Meitaki ma'ata for your talanoa this afternoon. Really rich insights that we're able to take
257. away and soak up. Thank you for explaining so well the intricacies and how imbued
258. culture, passion, faith are so interlinked, it's very hard to see one from the other. You
259. explained how we can do -- you can measure individuals, right, in terms of well-being, but
260. one of the things that we hear constantly, and it doesn't have to just be here in our space,
261. but it's pertaining here to our space in this fale now, is collective; it's the collective
262. well-being of the aiga, the kāinga, the magafaoa. Is it possible to actually measure that in
263. such a way that we're able to then influence systems? Because Pasifika are always forced
264. together with Māori into little boxes and we can't always see the flow of the narrative. Are
265. you able to comment on that or...
266. A. There are measures of collective well-being that exist. I don't know a lot about them, I do
267. know that they do exist. In terms of collective well-being, we would need to consider what
268. are the indicators that we are going to use to reflect that, and do those indicators accurately
269. reflect Pacific well-being. Quite often what we can and do see is things like those objective
270. indicators, like housing, access to education, these are important aspects for collective
271. well-being as well. How, if we look at home ownership rates amongst Pacific peoples we
272. know that it is quite low, at the same time that rents are very, very high. So what does the
273. living situation look like for multiple Pacific families, and are we -- how are we using that
274. living arrangement as an indicator for something like economic well-being. You know,
275. those are just the kind of collective objective indicators that we have that we know are
276. related to health outcomes and education outcomes and things like that.
277. Other aspects of collective well-being do speak to a lot of our cultural aspects as well. To what
278. extent are Pacific people able to practise their languages, to what extent have -- recognising
279. then as well, you know, how endangered is a language. This is one way that we can assess
280. or try to assess and understand collective well-being by looking at language use but being
281. careful not to alienate people who are trying to learn the languages as well or recognising
282. that there are multiple ways in which you can connect to your culture as well.
283. And we can -- even though they are individual measures, I'm involved in a number of studies that
284. do survey populations, I work with populations. Some longitudinal studies as well, so we
285. can track individuals over time but also track groups over time as well. The importance of
286. these big datasets is vital, because they do provide information about groups, the more data
287. that we have, the more intricate we can model the specific relationships that affect, that are
288. affected by the nuance that exist within groups as well. So it's important that we do
289. multiple levels, individual, community, national approaches to collective well-being as
290. well. Noting that, I guess, taking a more theoretical and conceptual approach, that our
291. well-being is inherently relational. And so it is something that is going to be inherently
292. collective as well.
293. How to measure that, I'm not sure. I do know that there is a paper by Fiona Cram, she is a Māori
294. researcher, she's published a paper providing suggestions on how can measure Māori
295. well-being, which I think would be quite useful to read. I can't remember it off the top of
296. my head.
297. **Q.** That's fine, we'll find it. Just one more question please, Dr Manuela, and it really relates --
298. a big issue that we've been tasked with and which you've heard about perhaps this week is
299. the concept of redress, how do you right the wrong. And you've been very generous in
300. your talanoa this afternoon about making sure we understand the nuances and don't just
301. lump everyone together under a pan-Pacific label. This really comes to -- it's a policy
302. question perhaps, you know, around is it enough to just say in a document, in a report, in
303. any other way that might be culturally appropriate, or do you think that that is wide enough
304. to be able to afford a survivor a Pacific survivor who might be looking at it and say oh I can
305. apply a Tongan framework to that, I can apply a Cook Island framework to that?
306. A. I think there are ways. And I've seen documents before that have drawn upon multiple
307. perspectives and infused them all into various ways, into the way that they do their
308. methodologies of something, or say things around family violence prevention and
309. intervention programmes that have drawn on a kind of broader framework, but also make
310. reference to specific cultural frameworks within there as well. So I think there definitely is
311. space. How that looks like I'm not entirely sure, but I think -- one important thing for me,
312. I guess, and I'll use the Dawn Raids again, I think next Sunday is the Dawn Raid apology
313. by the Government. Apologies are meaningless without actions, really. And so what does
314. redress look like, I think, is the main thing to -- not the main thing, but a thing to ensure
315. that the policies don't just exist on paper but they are fully enacted, yeah.
316. **Q.** Much appreciated, fa'afetai, fa'afetai, fa'afetai lava.
317. A. Meitaki.
318. **CHAIR:** I'm the lucky last. Really most of the things I wanted to say have been covered, but
     1. I just wanted to make it clear that we deeply appreciate the fact that you've brought your
     2. scholarship and your expertise and for me personally what you have done is provided
     3. frameworks, ways of thinking to help us properly understand what our survivors have been
     4. telling us. They have framed it from their own personal deeply held and deeply moving
     5. experiences, and we don't lose sight of those, but to have them brought up and -- I don't
     6. want to say codified but I'm going to say it. I hope you don't think I'm disparaging them,
     7. but just to give us a -- I think the word framework is probably better, really helps us to
     8. understand it, because we have to turn those accounts into recommendations of the sort that
     9. my colleague here has just talked about. Do you say "and any other appropriate way", or
     10. can we be more specific, more helpful.
     11. In that regard I just wanted to thank you for two very important revelations, or
     12. important thoughts that you've given us, which we will take away and may even call on you
     13. again in future. The first relates to the implications for care of children, vulnerable adults
     14. in the future, and that's Pacific people. That is your reference to the vā that exists between
     15. family members, because what's happening when children and others are taken out of their
     16. own family environment, as you've pointed out in paragraph 65, the vā that exists between
     17. family members doesn't have the same meaning as the vā between a person and unfamiliar
     18. others. And I think that for me has been a very important idea that you've really put your
     19. finger on something, what goes wrong when you take a child from a home, when you take a
     20. disabled person from their home and place them in an institution. You're losing the
     21. familiar, you're losing the relationship. So in terms of our recommendations for care for
     22. Pacific people I think we must bear that in mind, it's very valuable.
     23. The second thing relates to the redress. I think your emphasis again on the vā, the
     24. merging of well-being and, what was the other bit, well-being and --
     25. A. Identity.
     26. **Q.** -- and identity. Very important for people who will be giving the redress in future, that that
     27. is recognised, acknowledged, stated so that it can be well advanced. So those in those two
     28. really important areas, care and redress, you've given us really valuable insights for which
     29. I thank you. And don't be surprised if he come knocking at your door again in the future
     30. because I think we've got a lot more to learn from you.
     31. So on that note, many thanks for the scholarship and work you've done to put into
     32. this paper which I think we should all read again very carefully and thank you for coming
     33. today.
     34. A. Meitaki, thank you.
319. **COMMISSIONER ERUETI:** Great to see you on a mission to decolonise the science of
320. psychology bro.
321. A. It's a long mission.
322. **Q.** Go hard.
323. **CHAIR:** On that note our first week of hearings is drawn to an end. We will start again on
324. Monday, I believe at 10 o'clock, am I right on that? Yes, so if you're interested please
325. return. Thank you to all of those who have come. I know not all of you have been here all
326. through the week, but one in particular I see has been Halo, thank you, he's always here.
327. With the turn-out of the Pacific communities to support and listen has been very moving for
328. us and we're greatly appreciative of it. And I think it's time that we closed and that we
329. get -- is Reverend Aptinko still here? Here he is, so please we invite you again Reverend to
330. close off our proceedings for the week.
331. **REVEREND APTINKO:** I want to close with the Gospel of John chapter 10 verse 10. "Thieves
332. come only to steal, kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life and heaven in
333. full." As Christian faith leaders and Pacific community leaders we are called to champion
334. what Christ has started; supporting, caring and providing for our people who live a life in
335. full. And as I said in the morning, compassion is not about saying it and thinking, but it's
336. about moving us to respond and giving, as Christ was moved and filled with compassion
337. when he saw people who were like lost sheep without a shepherd. So he responded by
338. healing and feeding the multitude according to the gospels.
339. Care institutes need to care with compassion to do that our Pacific community is in
340. need of a system composed by those who has the wisdom of God and are driven by
341. compassion. I relate the Pacific investigators and the working team to the good shepherd.
342. That you are now on the ground level, level with those who are suffering, connecting and
343. giving to those who are suffering to have a good life restored. Let us pray. **[Prayer in**

# Rotuman]

1. **CHAIR:** Thank you Reverend.

# Hearing adjourned at 4.49 pm to Monday, 26 July 2021 at 10 am

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