

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
LAKE ALICE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT UNIT INQUIRY HEARING**

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'imua Sandra Alofivae
Mr Paul Gibson

Counsel: Mr Simon Mount QC, Ms Kerryn Beaton, Mr Andrew Molloy,
Ms Ruth Thomas, Ms Finlayson-Davis, for the Royal
Commission
Ms Karen Feint QC, Ms Julia White and Ms Jane Maltby
for the Crown
Mrs Frances Joychild QC, Ms Alana Thomas and Tracey Hu
for the Survivors
Ms Moira Green for the Citizens Commission on Human
Rights
Ms Susan Hughes QC for Mr Malcolm Burgess and Mr
Lawrence Reid
Mr Michael Heron QC for Dr Janice Wilson
Ms Frances Everard for the New Zealand Human Rights
Commission
Mr Hayden Rattray for Mr Selwyn Leeks
Mr Eric Forster for Victor Soeterik
Mr Lester Cordwell for Mr Brian Stabb and Ms Gloria Barr
Mr Scott Brickell for Denis Hesseltine
Ms Anita Miller for the Medical Council

Venue: Level 2
Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry
414 Khyber Pass Road
AUCKLAND

Date: 15 June 2021

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

INDEX**TYRONE MARKS**

Questioning by Ms Joychild	83
Questioning by Commissioners	106

RANGI MORRIS WICKLIFFE

Questioning by Ms A Thomas	110
----------------------------	-----

JOHN CHARLES WATSON

Questioning by Ms Finlayson-Davis	119
Questioning by Commissioners	130
Questioning by Ms Joychild	137

MICHAEL PATRICK DOOLAN

Questioning by Ms Maltby	138
Questioning by Mr Molloy	147
Questioning by Commissioners	157
Questioning by Ms Joychild	163

1 tika. So tēnā koe mo to karakia, mo to kōrero ki a mātou.

2 **RANGI MORRIS WICKLIFFE**

3 **CHAIR:** Nau mai haere mai, Rangi, thank you for coming, we really appreciate it and we
4 completely respect your desire to give your evidence in the way you want, so it's entirely up
5 to you, ki a koe te tikanga. So I'll just start with the formalities and then I'll leave it to you.

6 Rangi, do you solemnly, sincerely, truly declare and affirm that the evidence you're
7 going to give today will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

8 A. I do.

9 Q. Thank you. Over to you. Just to say that we have read all the evidence that you've sent in.

10 A. Okay. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, Commissioners and everybody that is
11 listening. I am here today to tell my story and bear witness to my journey through Lake
12 Alice. I'll be telling you about the impacts of rape, sodomy and torture. I will walk you
13 through Lake Alice, I will identify the offenders who raped and sodomised me. I shall also
14 identify the torturer and the tormenters.

15 I'd like to advise the Commissioners and the Commissioner and everything else
16 that the content of this is quite graphic. I'm well and truly aware there's a possibility that
17 I may be re-traumatising people on the outside world as well as in this room. I apologise
18 for that. I need to tell my story and I need to tell it from what I know and how I feel.

19 I will start my story and my witness statement two weeks ago. Upon receiving the
20 e-mail saying that I was coming up here to tell my story, the emotional turmoil started
21 straight away. I was physically sick, nervous, I cried and cried and cried. It was probably
22 the most horrific crying that I've ever done in my whole life. I know that by coming here
23 today that I will be re-traumatising myself, but I am ready, I am strong and I have a lot of
24 support.

25 I will be talking to you today also about solitary confinement cells that are
26 disguised as seclusion rooms. I will be talking to you about a behaviour modification
27 machine disguised as Aversion Therapy or unmodified ECT. I will be describing in detail
28 the traumatic effects that this kind of torture has on a brain of a developing 10 year old
29 child.

30 I will start my journey by introducing myself, I am Rangi Morris Wickliffe. I
31 have been raped and sodomised and tortured. I will begin with my admittance into Social
32 Welfare care as a State ward. As a 6 year old. I went to various foster homes from age 6.
33 13 foster homes in 12 months. Each one of these foster homes was called BFH, break
34 down in foster homes. There were four particular foster homes I was in and I was raped. I

1 am not going to disclose who these people were because the platform today is about Lake
2 Alice.

3 At the age of 10 I was admitted to Lake Alice Psychiatric Hospital. Upon arrival
4 there I was taken there, I wasn't told where I was going, I thought I was going to a lake
5 where you canoe, fish, I had no idea that I was being taken to a psychiatric unit.

6 Upon arrival there I was taken into a room where I was asked if I needed anything
7 to drink. Which I said yes. I drank a cup of liquid, sweet tasting liquid, that I have,
8 through research, found out that is called Largactil. I got drowsy, I went to sleep, woke up,
9 I don't know what time it was, what villa it was, what day it was, and I was inside a, what
10 looked like a hospital ward with people asleep or lying on the beds.

11 I looked up, looked around, that's all I saw and then went back to sleep. I woke up
12 again and I had a throbbing headache, dry mouth and didn't know what happened. At that
13 particular time the adolescent unit had not been opened, so they put me into a villa with
14 adults as well as other children. I'll describe the villa to you because I cannot remember the
15 number. It was downstairs were two main bedrooms where adult patients resided. On
16 going up the stairs to the right and to the left there were dormitories.

17 In between those two dormitories were what's referred to as seclusion rooms. It is
18 a locked cell door with a small glass window on the front of it and when you go into that
19 cell, if you're lucky the windows will be boarded up where there is no light coming in
20 through the windows at all. You are in a black solitary confined cell on a mattress with no
21 water, no food, and no light. Keeping in mind that this is a 10 year old child.

22 The punishment for this was because I had been caught kicking a ball next to a
23 window. I didn't break the window. At the time I didn't think nothing of it until I was
24 locked in a solitary confinement cell. I was locked there up to three to four days. On the
25 fourth day I was allowed to come out of the cell and into the day room and walk around. I
26 had not received ECT at those stages. What I had received was sodomy and rape by the
27 two adult patients who lived downstairs. The patients' names was GRO-B and GRO-B.
28 GRO-B was a convicted murderer and had a propensity towards sexual deviant behaviour
29 towards children. I don't know any history about this other person called GRO-B but what
30 I went through with them was absolutely shocking.

31 On my first night there in the villa I wasn't woken up, I just felt a heavy weight on
32 my body, I felt my pyjamas being ripped off, and I was sodomised and raped. I couldn't see
33 who it was that did this to me because I was lying face down on the bed with my head held

1 into the pillow while they raped me. It wasn't until two or three weeks later that they told
2 me it was them. They continued to rape and sodomise me over a period of months.

3 On top of that, when I took my complaints to staff, I was given ECT. Unmodified
4 ECT. I'll give you a description of what the situation was like with the children involved.
5 Someone said pandemo -- whatever. It wasn't like that at all, it was pure and simple terror.
6 You had up to seven children in a day room who were crying, screaming, scratching,
7 banging their heads against the wall, urinating and defecating like little animals,
8 whimpering, calling out to their mums and dads and screaming. Not all children did that.
9 There were some children that sat back on the chairs in total shock. Once again, I'll go
10 back to the back. We were only children, we haven't got the capability to understand what
11 this was all about.

12 To be forcibly dragged up the stairs and into the room where Dr Selwyn Leeks
13 was waiting by the bed, there were four staff members that took me up. One's name was
14 Lawrence, another one was Blackmore, Hunt and I can't remember who the other staff
15 member was. Two of these staff members held my legs, another two staff members held
16 my arms down. Dr Selwyn Leeks placed electrodes on my head, smiling, calm, no sign
17 from a little boy's point of view of any danger, of any form of something bad was about to
18 happen.

19 Dr Selwyn Leeks turned the machine on. The pain that you feel from the
20 electricity surging through your head is undescrivable. The scream that comes out of your
21 mouth is also undescrivable. The terror was so intense that you lost all bowel movement.
22 You would think that would be embarrassing enough, but because of the pain of shock
23 treatment, it's a burning, searing pain going through your head, your body convulses in such
24 a way that it feels like your bones are going to break. You convulse. Your legs, your arms,
25 you're being held by adults so your back is arching. You're screaming, thinking that if
26 I bite harder on this rubber it won't hurt so much. If I scream louder, they might stop. But
27 it didn't work like that.

28 Dr Selwyn Leeks, while he was electrocuting me was asking me "How do you
29 feel?" Of course being a young child with a rubber stopper in his mouth screaming your
30 lungs out you can't answer. So he decides to move the electrodes from my temple region
31 down to my jaw and said to me "Yes, I think that's the spot. I think I can make you scream
32 louder." And he did. Dr Selwyn Leeks moved the electrodes along my jaw line, along my
33 neck, along my shoulders and the punishment was non-existent, I hadn't done anything
34 wrong that I know of.

1 At the time what does a child think about? How does a child describe that abuse?
2 A developing brain of a 10 year old child bombarded with electricity multiple times, I'll
3 leave it up to your imagination what that does to the behaviour of a child.

4 There were many occasions where these individuals raped me and sodomised me
5 in different areas of the hospital. There was also a staff member who signed me out of the
6 hospital and took me home to his home because I'd been misbehaving at Lake Alice,
7 I wasn't allowed to go home to my mum and dad. He took me to his home, he raped me
8 and he sodomised me. His name was John Blackmore. I'm not sure of his position at Lake
9 Alice, but he was a charge nurse as far as I know.

10 When you have children in a psychiatric hospital mixing with criminally insane
11 patients as a child you soon learn who these people are. You soon learn to hide, you soon
12 learn to manipulate so that you are keeping yourself safe. There was no supervision of
13 children during the night. One night watchman came around at midnight and that was it.
14 So the children that were in these villas were left vulnerable amongst criminally insane
15 adult patients to fend for themselves in the night. So we as children gathered together to
16 find out ways how we could get around the adults, how we could get around the staff. We
17 just wanted to be children. We just wanted to play like normal children. We just wanted to
18 be home with mum and dad. I was personally told "Your mum and dad don't love you,
19 Rangī, they don't want you, you are a State ward and we will do what we like."

20 Hearing that from an adult destroyed my relationship with my family. I thought
21 they had abandoned me. I thought they knew what was happening to me. I thought that
22 everything that had happened to me was because of what I had done. That is a huge burden
23 to be put on to a 10 year old child. It is a huge burden to carry around the images inside my
24 head about the screaming children, the crying children. It is a reoccurring nightmare in my
25 life every couple of weeks.

26 There was a situation in Lake Alice where a friend of mine and myself decided to
27 escape from Lake Alice while we were out on day leave to go to the pictures. So we did.
28 Two 10 year old boys running off. We stole a Vanguard. My friend drove while I worked
29 the accelerator and the clutch on the floor. We were caught by the Police. We told the
30 Police that we ran away because we were getting electrocuted. We didn't say the word
31 "ECT", we didn't say the word "torture" and we certainly didn't say the word "sex abuse".
32 As a 10 year old child, how do you know those words? "They're hurting us" is all we could
33 say and "they're electrocuting us." The Police, "We don't care, you are escaped psychiatric
34 patients from a psychiatric hospital", which was the portrayal to the public when we

1 escaped. They did not say that we were 10 year old boys, they said we were criminally
2 insane patients that had escaped from day leave.

3 We were taken back to Lake Alice, shaking, crying, and in my case urinating and
4 defecating, knowing what was coming. I knew I am going to get punished with unmodified
5 ECT. I was terrified. I was given ECT by Dr Selwyn Leeks. The same men that held me
6 down when I first got there, Mr Lawrence, Mr Blackmore, Mr Hunt, and I still can't
7 remember the name of the other nurse.

8 Dr Selwyn Leeks gave me ECT, he got the staff member to hold my head to the
9 side or push it to the side and said to me "I'm going to knock you out and this how I'm
10 going to do it, Rangī. See this little silver knob? That's going to clean you out, you're not
11 going to feel a thing. Watch this." He banged a button, I was out. I don't know how long I
12 was out for, I don't know what ward I was in. I do know that when I woke up I was lying
13 face down on a hospital bed. I had leather strops on both arms to the side of the bed. I had
14 two leather strops on each leg which was strapped down to the bed. I regained
15 consciousness and looked over and a patient was standing there and I asked him "What
16 happened, why am I tied up?" He untied me.

17 While he was untying me I felt a burning, itching sensation in my rectum area.
18 After being unstrapped from these strops like little boys do I investigated the problem.
19 I felt something there so I pulled it. I just about blacked out from the pain. I was told by
20 other patients that I had been gang raped by up to eight adults who were criminally insane.
21 All along my body there was what I thought was jelly over my face, over my hair, over my
22 rectum area. It would have been about 15 minutes later when Dr Pugmire, who I believe
23 was the Superintendent of Lake Alice, came to see me and said there had been an incident
24 and put cream on my wound.

25 There were other activities that the children could indulge in, such as school.
26 I went to school once. I got a D in maths and was given ECT unmodified. Of course I did
27 not want to go back to school again so I was made to go into the gardens and make beer
28 crates for 20 cents a week. I was also given ECT, unmodified ECT for failing to eat my
29 vegetables, for doing normal things that I thought children were allowed to do. How wrong
30 was I? How wrong was I to think that I'd get along in a place like this? How wrong was
31 I to think that people loved me in a place like this, that people cared for me in a place like
32 this. They did not.

33 What bothers me is the fact there is an unsustained attack on the developing brain
34 of a child while immersed in sodomy and rape. That is not sex abuse, that is not child

1 abuse. That combined together for weeks on end and months on end, that is torture.

2 The impacts are horrendous. Part of that impact is the spiralling behaviour of an
3 emotionally disturbed young child as his behaviour problems spiral out of control into
4 institutionalisation and incarceration. I have spent 36 years of my adult life in adult prisons
5 and 10 years of my adolescent life in State care. I have suffered severely from reoccurring
6 nightmares. I have suffered severely from poor decision-making or making decisions while
7 I've been in the mindset of revenge for what has happened to me. Revenge. The hate, the
8 fury, and a burning desire for vengeance from a young teenager through to an adult has
9 consequences.

10 GRO-C

11 That is what I thought. I don't
12 want to be here. My life is hell. I am constant reminded every day of what happened to me
13 as a child, each time I do number 2s I feel the scarring. Each time I have a shower I see the
14 white marks and the squiggly lines that come with unmodified ECT. When I hear the
15 squeal of a child in play I am terrified. I sit back and try and evaluate and make some sense
16 of why children actually scream like that when they're happy. In my world in Lake Alice
17 children only screamed like that when they were being tortured.

18 It is huge burden to carry. I have to lock myself away from people because I get
19 triggered by noise, I get triggered by sound, I get triggered by smells. I go to the hospital
20 and I smell the liquid that they soak the electrodes in before they electrocuted me. I can't
21 stay in a hospital, I run. I get out of there as fast as possible knowing that the terror is
22 coming and that I make a bad decision while I'm terrified. Terrified of a smell, terrified of
23 a sound, this is torture.

24 I am 59 years old. I've lived a life of nightmares. I've been criminally convicted
25 for burglaries and various other crimes. For each time I was convicted by a judge I felt
26 traumatised. How could you send me to jail for being a property offender when you can't
27 send the perpetrators to the crimes that were committed on me to jail or even justice? For
28 53 years I have waited for justice and the truth. In 1998 I featured alongside other
29 survivors on the 20/20 programme. My affirmation, publicly on national TV, was truth and
30 justice. 22 years later here I am today. There is still no truth and there is still no justice.

31 I would like to let the Commission know that with this kind of trauma there are
32 health effects as well. My health has declined severely in the past 3 to 4 years. I am a
33 survivor of three counts of cancer, I was told by my doctor because I thought it was from
smoking, I was told by my doctor, no, it's from stress. And my answer to that was how

1 could I possibly be stressed if I've been in prison all my life? It suddenly dawned on me
2 that the abuse that happened to me as a child manifested itself later on in my life and sent
3 me out of control. The psychological damage that has been done from this torture is
4 undescrivable. And why I say undescrivable, how do you describe terror from a little boy's
5 point of view? How do you describe that to your mum, your dad, your aunties, young
6 uncles? You can't. So they naturally assume that you're telling lies. They naturally assume
7 it can't be true.

8 The effect of that on a child and keeping in mind a 10 year old child, is enormous.
9 I am absolutely terrified to be here today. I psychologically got myself ready and every
10 part of me wanted to run. Every part of me said no, don't do it. But I have to. I have to for
11 my family, for the men who find it very hard to describe and articulate what happened to
12 them. Not all of us came out of this switched on, or so to speak.

13 I will be talking to you about intergenerational systematic abuse. I have a GRO-B
14 went into State care and was abused. It broke my heart as well as his mother's heart,
15 GRO-B to make the decision of sending GRO-B after what I'd been through to State care.
16 I thought that things had changed. I thought that GRO-B would be safe. But he wasn't.

17 GRO-B I live with that trauma of knowing that we allowed GRO-B to be abused
18 in State care. That is a huge burden when it is your GRO-B that has gone through or that is
19 going through what you have yourself GRO-B. It is with shock horror that I tell the Royal
20 Commission today I have GRO-B who is now in residential care. I have another
21 grandchild who is now in prison. Both these two grandchildren of mine are fathers. I am a
22 great grandfather.

23 The pain, the suffering runs right through my family. That is horrendous. I will
24 not allow my great grandchildren to be ever abused by anybody. Over my dead body. You
25 will not touch my great grandchildren. I am referring to the State. You have committed the
26 ultimate sin of intergenerational systematic abuse. How do I as a father, a grandfather, and
27 a great grandfather fix this? I can't.

28 No-one gave the caregivers of these children permission to rape, sodomise and
29 torture. As if that wasn't bad enough. They released me back to my family with the trauma
30 of what happened to me to be dealt with by my family. It's extremely hard to go through
31 life when people are judging you for what you have done. People have said many, many
32 bad things about me as an offender, a property offender. No empathy, no remorse, no guilt.
33 I say to the Royal Commission, blasting a child's brain with voltage high enough to just

1 about break your bones and expecting that child to have a normal life afterwards it's not
2 going to happen. I will suffer for the rest of my life. I will suffer because I don't want my
3 great grandchildren to suffer.

4 Once again, here I am telling my story and once again I feel in here, in my heart,
5 that no-one is listening. And why I say that; for 53 years I complained, I've utilised
6 services to help me. I've had forensic psychologists, forensic psychiatrists say all sorts of
7 things about me. None of them knowing about my past or that I'd been to Lake Alice.

8 I think in our society that people forget that as an adolescent you have an
9 adolescent file. That file is not available to judges on sentencing days. It is only your adult
10 file that you've created in your years in adult that a judge gets to see. They don't get to see
11 the adolescent file, they don't get to see the behaviour of a child that turns into an adult
12 criminal offender. They get to see what you have done as an adult. That too is
13 traumatising. The public and judges and lawyers should be entitled to see any adolescent
14 files so they can progressively map where it all went wrong.

15 In this case a 10 year old child is given back to his family. There are reports
16 written up clearly about his behavioural problems, his criminality, his convictions. Very
17 quick to be written up, persecuted for the rest of my life about what I did wrong,
18 incarcerated should my peers find me guilty of these criminal things. And yet, there is
19 nothing on my files to suggest any achievements being made while in State care, or
20 institutions or prisons. No achievements. Nothing.

21 Lack of education? No, I'm an educated person. What's missing? Why is it that
22 every time I see a file it's about what I've done wrong, it's about what my family have done
23 to me in order for me to be who I am. Every mistake is pointed out. Every psychological
24 report that has been written on me points out of my bad behaviour. But there's nothing on
25 there that says anything about what the State has done to me and my family.

26 Just recently I took the advice of the Royal Commission and decided I would go
27 and try an ACC thing. I don't know nothing about ACC. So I went. Signed the
28 appropriate papers and lo and behold, a month before coming to the Royal Commission to
29 tell my story, I am labelled a sociopath, a liar. Amazing that. Amazing, those are the same
30 words that were used to abuse me in the first place. Rangi, the compulsive liar. They have
31 sealed my fate with this so-called diagnosis of a sociopath. I was then explained to by the
32 ACC "We can't find your medical records so we'll only pay you out for your post traumatic
33 stress, your depression and your psychological problems after sexual abuse of 2016 to
34 2021. That's it." When I read that they're still abusing me. This is only four weeks ago.

1 So yes, I was absolutely angry, I wanted to jump up and down, do the haka,
2 whatever. But the wise Rangī decided to, no, I'll take it to the Royal Commission so to let
3 you know the avenues you have given us in order to help us heal and move forward is just
4 about impossible to get around.

5 So I bring that to the Royal Commission today in regards to that. I also bring
6 today to the Royal Commission this witness statement is about the State, it's not about the
7 Royal Commission, this is about the State.

8 By all means I wanted to come here and fire up and just let rip. But a sudden
9 understanding came over me in the last couple of hours, I got to meet some very dear, dear
10 friends, dear friends that I've known since I was 10 years old that are sitting in this room
11 right now. They have given me the courage to talk today.

12 The one friend that I needed to see, the one friend that was with me when we went
13 to the Police, the one friend that went through what I went through is sitting in the public
14 gallery today. And I am so proud that he is here. I am so proud that he is still able to hug.
15 That makes me proud.

16 My name is Rangī Wickliffe. I have been raped, I have been sodomised. The
17 little boy inside me has spoken. And that is my witness statement for the day. Thank you
18 very much. **[Applause]. [Karanga]**

19 **CHAIR:** Tēnā koe e Rangī. There's nothing to be said. You've moved me deeply. I only want to
20 say this. This room you could hear a pin drop. So know that you have been heard. And
21 what has been heard is your real account of what happened to you and what has been heard
22 is your cry for justice and accountability. And we thank you for your bravery, for your
23 forbearance for going through what is a brutal process. We understand that. And for doing
24 it for the sake of others.

25 Beyond that I can say no more other than to thank you deeply from all of us for
26 what you've gone through. Ms Thomas, do you wish to close?

27 **MS A THOMAS:** Āe, hei whakakapi noa --

28 **CHAIR:** Āe.

29 **MS A THOMAS:** -- hei tēnei wāhanga. I āu e whakarongo ana ki ngā kōrero i tere toko ake te
30 whakaaro i roto i āu i tētahi o ngā kīwaha he whakatauki roto i te ao Māori, 'Te piko o te
31 māhuri terā tipu o te rākau', nā, ahakoa ngā whakahāweatanga i pa kino nei ki runga i ngā
32 tamariki Lake Alice, kei reira te rā whakaaro i roto i ā au. I hara i a rātou te he.

33 **CHAIR:** Āe.

34 **MS A THOMAS:** Nā whai ano kua hāmenetia rātou nā whai anō kua mauheretia rātou nā whai

1 ano kei reira terā kinotanga e pumau tonu ana i o rātou whatumanawa engari e hara i a rātou
2 te hē, ana terā whare nā erā tangata i runga i terā. Rangī, Tyrone, thank you very much.

3 **CHAIR:** We will take the lunch adjournment. Thank you.

4 **Lunch adjournment from 1.15 pm to 2.18 pm**

5 **CHAIR:** Yes.

6 **MS FINLAYSON-DAVIS:** Good afternoon Commissioners, the next witness is John Watson.

7 **JOHN CHARLES WATSON**

8 **CHAIR:** Good afternoon, Mr Watson. Thank you for coming. I'm just going to ask you if you'll
9 take the affirmation, is that all right?

10 A. Yes, thank you.

11 Q. Do you solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that the evidence that you will give
12 today will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

13 A. It is, it will be.

14 **QUESTIONING BY MS FINLAYSON-DAVIS:** Good afternoon Mr Watson. Before we begin
15 and turn to covering the matters you've covered in your statement, I understand you wanted
16 to start by saying something.

17 A. Yes, I would like an affirmation to be made to the two men we heard this morning, Tyrone
18 and --

19 Q. And Rangī.

20 A. And Rangī, yeah, Tyrone and Rangī, two youngsters I knew very well, and I'd just like to
21 pay tribute to them today for what they said and their strength and the way they presented
22 themselves. I was really, really fixed by that. It was outstanding, outstanding, and they are
23 strong young men, but of course we all know the vulnerabilities that they've been through
24 and to be able to speak today was -- and hear them was just outstanding.

25 Q. Thank you. Mr Watson, on to more practical matters. Just to confirm that you have before
26 you the statement you prepared for the Commission dated 15 January 2021?

27 A. That is correct, yes.

28 Q. Mr Watson, you are a registered clinical psychologist; is that correct?

29 A. That is right.

30 Q. And as part of that profession you are a life member of the New Zealand Psychological
31 Society, a member of the New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists, the Australian
32 and New Zealand Association of Psychiatry, Psychology and the Law, and the International
33 Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect; is that correct?

34 A. That is correct.

- 1 Q. And in the course of your career, you have given expert evidence at the Family, Youth,
2 District and High Courts of New Zealand; is that correct?
- 3 A. I have.
- 4 Q. And as part of that role completed over 3,000 specialist psychological examinations and
5 assessments?
- 6 A. Yes, I have.
- 7 Q. I want to turn to your time at Holdsworth. You were employed at Holdsworth from late
8 1972, is that correct, as a housemaster?
- 9 A. That's right.
- 10 Q. And that role continued until the middle of 1975?
- 11 A. Yes, when I became principal of the Social Welfare Girls' Home in Palmerston North.
- 12 Q. Can you explain for us what the role of a housemaster is?
- 13 A. As I saw it, it was a - the job was caring for young children in the care of Social Welfare.
14 One of the important things was that Holdsworth had children from age about 10 to 14, so
15 they were basically youngsters at the time and had been placed in Social Welfare care due
16 to problems in their homes for various reasons, and essentially they were very vulnerable,
17 quite disturbed children, there's no doubt about that, they were needed - they were in need
18 of care and protection when they arrived at Holdsworth.
- 19 Q. And Holdsworth at that time housed up to 60 children, is that -
- 20 A. Yes, it was, yeah, yes, Holdsworth School, yeah, as it was named.
- 21 Q. And at the time that you arrived at Holdsworth, who was the principal at that stage?
- 22 A. Marek Powierza.
- 23 **CHAIR:** You're the first person I've heard say that name, so could you say it again so we can all
24 learn it?
- 25 A. Mark, M-A-R-E-K, Powierza, P-O-W-I-E-R-Z-A.
- 26 Q. So there's a V in there, yes, it's pronounced V?
- 27 A. Yes, it's pronounced Powierza but it's P-O-W-I-E-R-Z-A.
- 28 Q. Yes, thank you very much.
- 29 A. He was the Principal.
- 30 **QUESTIONING BY MS FINLAYSON-DAVIS CONTINUED:** He was the Principal and who
31 was the Assistant Principal at that time?
- 32 A. Jack Drake.
- 33 Q. At some point, I'm not going to say his name correctly, Powierza.
- 34 A. Marek Powierza.

- 1 Q. He moved on to another residence?
- 2 A. Yes, he took up - moved to Weymouth Girls' Home up in Auckland from Whanganui.
- 3 Q. And what changes to the leadership roles occurred at that stage?
- 4 A. Well, Jack Drake became the Acting Principal and Duncan McDonald became the Deputy
5 Principal. And then following on from that, Mike Doolan became the principal towards the
6 end, I think it was the end of 1973.
- 7 Q. Now while you were working at Holdsworth, you were also studying psychology at Massey
8 University?
- 9 A. Yes, I was, yeah.
- 10 Q. And as a result of that study, did you implement a particular programme at Holdsworth?
- 11 A. Yes, it was like a Token Economy programme that I was doing as part of my research and
12 study at Massey, as well as working at the school.
- 13 Q. And how did that programme work in its essence?
- 14 A. It had like, a bus ticket thing, where they got credits for good behaviour and it's like a
15 reward system and as a result, because a lot of the boys had big behaviour problems, so
16 obviously being able to institute something where they got some rewards for being good
17 often, they would more often than not be behaving rather badly. So as a result, the system
18 helped some of them to be able to achieve a good standard of behaviour.
- 19 Q. And in the programme as you devised it, what would happen if they didn't behave well?
- 20 A. They got credits and they could get debits, yes, credits for good behaviour, debits for bad
21 behaviour, but tried to soften that really so it wasn't so punitive or anything, it wasn't meant
22 to be punitive, they got credit where credit's due sort of thing, yeah.
- 23 Q. At some point in time you became aware that boys were being sent to Lake Alice Child and
24 Adolescent Unit?
- 25 A. Yes, I did become aware of that.
- 26 Q. How did you understand that process to work?
- 27 A. Well, the understanding was that they were seriously disturbed young children and the
28 whole idea of sending them to Holdsworth School - sending them from Holdsworth School
29 to Lake Alice was that they should get specialist treatment there and medication to help
30 them to be able to manage their own behaviour, because they had real difficulties in
31 behaviour.
- 32 Q. I think, and I'm turning now to paragraph 16 onwards of your statement, Mr Watson, did
33 you understand that that relationship was established by the Acting Principal, Jack Drake?
- 34 A. Yes, it was.

- 1 Q. And I think you note at paragraph 17 that of all the staff members, he was the one to refer --
- 2 A. Yeah, he referred most of the boys to Lake Alice. They would be sent there for persistent
3 absconding and aggressive behaviour around the school. And I think at that time I was
4 concerned at the reasons for the referrals to Lake Alice because it seemed to me to be - I
5 believe the misbehaviour, this could be managed by the school rather than being sent to
6 Lake Alice. I didn't think it was necessary to send them to a psychiatric hospital at the time
7 and I told Jack Drake about that.
- 8 Q. What was his response to you raising that with him?
- 9 A. He never acted on my concerns and I voiced them at the time.
- 10 Q. You mentioned before there was a referral process and that some of the children you
11 thought were being sent in terms of perhaps medication?
- 12 A. Yeah, one would -- that was my assumption that they probably -- some medication did help
13 control their behaviour and Lake Alice was a psychiatric hospital and I assumed that that
14 would be the outcome that would happen.
- 15 Q. But at some stage you realised that the referrals were for, as you noted, absconding, sorry,
16 persistent misbehaviour?
- 17 A. Yeah, they focused on - Jack Drake did tend to focus on the misbehaviour of the children,
18 so maybe Lake Alice would be the place to send them.
- 19 Q. I think if we look at the bottom part of paragraph 17, you considered that that was an abuse
20 of the behavioural management system that you had introduced to the school?
- 21 A. Yes, I wanted it to be done in a humane way and handled at the school, not to be sent to
22 Lake Alice.
- 23 Q. So that wasn't part obviously of your behaviour management programme?
- 24 A. No, not at all.
- 25 Q. Do you remember, and I think you cover this at 18 and 19, how the children would get to
26 Lake Alice?
- 27 A. How they - sorry?
- 28 Q. Do you recall how the children would get to Lake Alice, how were they transported there?
- 29 A. Either taken down to Lake Alice by the car we had there, and sometimes in a van, got a van
30 later on, they were running around in a little green Hillman Hunter, I think it was, and the
31 van was used to transport them, and usually Jack Drake or Duncan McDonald would take
32 the boys down to Lake Alice.
- 33 Q. At paragraph 20 you talk about the referral forms. Did you see a form that was completed
34 when a child -

- 1 A. No, they were done by Jack Drake as the Acting Principal. And I don't know whether they
2 were written consent forms because one would normally have assumed you would have to
3 get the parents' permission, although the children were State wards, so they were the
4 responsibility of Social Welfare.
- 5 Q. I think you note in that paragraph that you had been learning about informed consent at the
6 time during your studies?
- 7 A. Yes, of course I was, yeah. And the standard ethical procedure was if a treatment - if it was
8 a child, informed consent of the parents was required before they could receive medical
9 treatment. However, the boys were State wards under the care of DSW and I believe that
10 Jack Drake and Selwyn Leeks got around this requirement because the children had been
11 removed from their parents and there was something going on there that I just thought was
12 not right.
- 13 Q. We touched briefly on your role as housemaster, but in terms of the authority within
14 Holdsworth, what position did a housemaster have?
- 15 A. Well, we were in for the day-to-day care of the children and we also involved sporting
16 activities with them, taking them swimming and all that sort of thing. We did all the
17 general things that you'd do, they went to school as well, had classrooms at the school, so
18 they had schooling and they had recreation, a lot of recreation things with them, and also at
19 times counselling by some of the other housemasters, as we had allocated a number of boys
20 to our caseload.
- 21 So our arrangement was that we would work with these children and help them
22 along, to settle them down, spend some time with them, listen to their concerns, the sort of
23 thing like a parent, yeah, like as a parent would do, sit and listen to the children and advise
24 them.
- 25 Q. Yesterday, Mr Watson, we heard evidence from a former Youth Aid Officer,
26 Mr Sutherland, and he spoke of visiting Holdsworth on a couple of occasions. He describes
27 the environment there as prison-like. Do you have any insight on how that perception -
- 28 A. I would certainly not consider it as a prison at all. We had - there was a behaviour regime
29 there, yes, but it was hardly prison-like. The only thing that Jack Drake had invented was
30 the dog-box where boys who had played up badly, they were put in one place to be kept
31 and watched and it was just white lines on the ground, painted on the ground, and I object
32 to the title as well. These were children, not dogs in a dog-box.
- 33 Q. So you raised your concerns in relation to -
- 34 A. Yes, I did, yes.

1 Q. With Mr Drake?

2 A. Yeah, I think I was seen as a bit of a stirrer, but part of that was going back to the Children
3 and Young Persons and Their Families Act, the paramountcy principle prevailed and that
4 paramountcy principle was that the best interests of the child is the paramount
5 consideration, and sometimes I don't think that was kept to and adhered to as it should have
6 been.

7 Q. Are you commenting on in respect of Holdsworth School?

8 A. Mmm, yes, because that was the legislation we were working under as well, and it needed
9 to be respected and I think some of the things that actually happened there, the procedures
10 that were used wasn't, in my view, true to what the Act actually stated very clearly.

11 Q. Did you raise your views on the Act with Mr Drake or -

12 A. Yes, I did.

13 Q. And how were they received?

14 A. He wasn't - he just saw it as I was doing a bit of stirring, but I think that's basically how he
15 treated me. I was a bit of a stirrer, but I was a bit of a stickler too for keep and doing things
16 the best possible way.

17 **CHAIR:** May I ask a question Ms Finlayson-Davis.

18 **MS FINLAYSON-DAVIS:** Yes of course.

19 **CHAIR:** You're a young man and a student of psychology and you're obviously taking your role
20 very seriously.

21 A. Absolutely.

22 Q. And within, as you saw it, the law as it was at the time. And you've said that you don't
23 believe that the principle of the paramountcy of the welfare of the child was being adhered
24 to, is that right, that's what your evidence is?

25 A. Yeah, that was my concern.

26 Q. Yes, I'm just wondering, you've talked to us about the dog-box, I'm just wondering, have
27 you got any other examples of the sorts of things that gave you concern that you raised it
28 with Mr Drake?

29 A. That was one main - major issue that I took. You do not treat a child like a dog, you don't
30 even - and to me that was totally wrong. I guess part of it, because I was attending
31 University and going there twice a week, to lectures, and because it wasn't extramural in
32 those days, and I guess I think I was seen at times as being a bit of a stirrer, yes.

33 Q. I just wondered are there other examples of practises which you felt didn't keep the children
34 to the fore?

1 A. I just can't think of any right now off-hand, but part of it was just making sure that the
2 children were treated with dignity and respect. That was my concern.

3 Q. Yes. Did you think they were being treated with dignity and respect?

4 A. Not when they were put in what they called the dog-box, no.

5 Q. So it comes back to the dog-box?

6 A. Yeah, too right it did.

7 Q. Did that happen very often?

8 A. Yes, it was, it was used as a punishment really for children who were acting out and, okay,
9 it wasn't a locked cell or anything like that like you get in a prison, or boys' homes as it was
10 in those days too, but to me it was just degrading to the child, it was.

11 Q. Thank you.

12 **QUESTIONING BY MS FINLAYSON-DAVIS CONTINUED:** You've spoken about the
13 different issues that you raised with Mr Drake. I'm interested in the position of
14 housemaster. Did you have any authority to raise concerns higher up the department?

15 A. Well, he was the Acting Principal at the time, but I didn't - yeah, so I accept that, yeah,
16 basically, I did accept that.

17 Q. You note at paragraph 22 that complaints had to be in writing and they would have to go
18 through Mr Drake as Acting Principal?

19 A. Yeah, and that's - there in lies - lay a problem because they had to go through him first as
20 Acting Principal and I had no - I did not really have a lot of faith that it would be taken
21 seriously and sent up to the Director's level in head office.

22 Q. I want to move on to a visit you made to Lake Alice and this starts at paragraph 23 of your
23 statement, Mr Watson. You talk about getting more worried about what was happening at
24 Lake Alice and so one day you visited the unit. Can you tell us about that?

25 A. Yes, because the -- they were getting -- well, the children told me that they were getting
26 electric shocks to their legs and this is in the form of punishment by Dr Leeks. It was also
27 said that they were given Paraldehyde injections. I knew what Paraldehyde was because I
28 had actually previously worked at Tokanui Hospital, getting -- earning money to go to
29 university. And the boys said they got painful injections in their bottoms which meant they
30 couldn't sit down, because Paraldehyde is a very powerful drug and it's very -- it's a very
31 painful one as well.

32 And then they also had been given ECT to their heads and their legs without the
33 normal use of ECT, it's always given, as I saw at Tokanui, a muscle relaxant first before
34 you do anything else, before there's any things of electric shocks because the body can

1 convulse. So when I heard of the electric shocks as a form of punishment was totally and
2 utterly out of order. And they said they'd been given these painful injections and I knew
3 from my experience at Tokanui Hospital that it was Paraldehyde, yeah, and because they
4 had all the pain in their bottoms when they got it.

5 Q. I think at paragraph if you say this conversation happened with the two witnesses we heard
6 from this morning?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Rangi and Tyrone?

9 A. That's exactly right. In fact, yes, I spoke to them just after their session this morning.

10 Q. And you state at that paragraph that they appeared to you to be really scared when they
11 were talking to you?

12 A. Beg your pardon?

13 Q. You say in that paragraph they appeared to be really scared?

14 A. Yes, they were, yeah, going down there and seeing the youngsters there, to me this wasn't
15 being done in the right way. And I can understand them being scared of what was going
16 on. Rangi said as much this morning too, didn't he, earlier on.

17 Q. If I can ask you, Mr Watson, to read out paragraph 25.

18 A. "I believed what the kids were telling me. I knew them well and when they were telling
19 lies. They wouldn't have made up some stories like that to tell me. It seemed to me what
20 the boys said Dr Leeks was doing to them was completely out of order. After I spoke with
21 the boys I approached Selwyn Leeks about the boys' allegations. He was defensive, denied
22 that the ECT had been given as punishment and said the boys were lying. His response was
23 along the lines of 'I know what I'm doing, I'm the psychiatrist here, you're just a
24 psychologist in training'." Which was a bit of a put down to say the least. But that was
25 that -- to me it was the height of arrogance basically of his behaviour.

26 Q. And moving on to paragraph 26 on that occasion you went back to Holdsworth?

27 A. Yeah. And I spoke to Jack Drake then about my concerns for the boys' safety at Lake
28 Alice, yes.

29 Q. And if you could continue reading that paragraph Mr Watson?

30 A. "I told him that because he was the main person sending the boys to Lake Alice he should
31 have been monitoring their well-being while they were in the hospital and he tried to stop
32 me from removing the boys from Lake Alice and told me that Dr Selwyn Leeks was the
33 only one who could make decisions to discharge patients, because my concern was they
34 would be -- in my view they were being ill treated and should have been removed. But

1 what I did, I decided no, I think I did say that. So a couple of days later I collected the boys
2 from Lake Alice myself. I was that concerned about their safety.

3 Q. Now another issue you were dealing with at Holdsworth was a complaint made to you
4 about sexual abuse suffered by the boys at Holdsworth?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And that occurred sometime shortly after the Lake Alice --

7 A. It did, yes.

8 Q. -- concerns that we've just been speaking about. And what did you do -- first of all, who
9 was being spoken about in terms of this sexual offending?

10 A. What actually happened, the poor boys said that both men would sit with them on their
11 beds and read bedtime stories. Some of these were young children and often with young
12 children you do -- they appreciated someone just before lights out that they have a nice
13 story read to them and so they could have a quiet, peaceful night. But the boys said to me
14 that they were reading stories to them and putting their hands down their pyjama pants and
15 feeling them up. And I believe the boys also complained to other Holdsworth
16 housemasters, and that was Graham Lee and Noel Bowker too, were also aware of it.

17 Q. And I think you note at paragraph 30 that you had your own concerns prior to the boys
18 talking to you about the behaviour of Mr McDonald and Mr Drake; is that correct?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. You spoke to Mr Drake and Mr McDonald about the complaint that had been made to you?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. What was their response?

23 A. They gave you no response and I told them I was going to hand the matter over to the
24 Police to be investigated because to me here were the children complaining about being
25 sexually molested, but whilst they'd been read stories, and I've contacted the Police and
26 asked them to investigate it.

27 Q. And to your knowledge, did the Police investigate it?

28 A. Yes, I think they did, I'll just try to remember back then. Because I know two other
29 housemasters told me that they had similar concerns as they had also heard the boys
30 making similar allegations against Jack Drake and Duncan McDonald. I said I intended to
31 take over as Principal and they agreed with me that that's -- and I called the Whanganui
32 Police to inform them of the sexual abuse allegations against Jack Drake and Duncan
33 McDonald. I told the Police I wanted the men removed. I wasn't at the school when the
34 Police arrived but I believe they came and escorted both men off the Holdsworth grounds.

1 I didn't have any further contact with the Police, I'm unaware of the follow-up action on the
2 Police on this complaint. They didn't -- my major concern was to get both men away from
3 the children and that was what was achieved.

4 Q. You also raised your concerns with the head office of Department of Social Welfare?

5 A. With the Director of Residences. I rang him the next day to tell him what I'd done and how
6 I acted unilaterally really. But one comment he made, he said "You don't have the
7 delegated authority to do that." I said "Well, I've done it because I'm concerned about the
8 staff abusing children."

9 Q. And did the director come down, or come up to Holdsworth and meet with you the next
10 day?

11 A. Yes, he did.

12 Q. Can you tell us about that meeting?

13 A. Well, he came over, he didn't meet me at the school, he came over to the house, school
14 house I was living in, and came over for lunch with my wife and him, because -- and he
15 was -- and I told him about the allegations about both the men as well as the complaints and
16 the mistreatment at Lake Alice, told him the whole story that had been going on and he was
17 surprised and told me he didn't think I had authority to take over the school. I said I was
18 acting in the best interests of the children and that was my paramount consideration, that
19 was what the Children and Young Persons Act required.

20 And it didn't matter to me whose toes I stepped on, after I explained this the
21 Director said -- thanked me for moving so quickly and shared my concern for the boys and
22 told me he would -- that's when he came up, when he was there, when he came up. So --
23 and I think he recorded that conversation too, he had a dictaphone on the table when we
24 were having lunch together.

25 Q. What was your expectation of what would happen with that complaint having made it to the
26 Director?

27 A. I thought it would have been -- things could have happened and it should have been sorted,
28 but Head Office people work in different ways to people on the ground, and I don't
29 remember the Director speaking about the matter again. I informed him of everything, but
30 whether he took it further, I really don't know.

31 Q. But at some point Mr McDonald was moved on from Holdsworth?

32 A. Yes, to a girls' institution in Auckland.

33 Q. And Mr Drake, do you recall what happened to him?

34 A. I'm not quite sure what happened to that, because it was at the time when I was moving

1 myself as well. McDonald was sent shortly to enrol at a girls' school, Weymouth, and
2 DSW did this knowing the allegations against him from Holdsworth. I found this
3 unacceptable as well.

4 Q. Were you spoken to again by Head Office about either of these men?

5 A. No, the Director advised me no, he would handle the matter thank you because he was the
6 Director and it was left to him to take on. I couldn't overstep somebody from Head Office,
7 but the main thing was I was still concerned about what was going on.

8 Q. At paragraph 39 you talk about the next principal to arrive, Michael Doolan?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Who we will hear from shortly.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. But your recollection is he arrived towards the end of 1973?

13 A. I think it was, yeah, towards the end of 73 and he took over as Principal and a really
14 pleasant fellow, I remember he changed the culture that existed at Holdsworth and
15 I remember speaking to him about the Lake Alice problems and the other allegations,
16 I brought him up-to-date with what had actually been going on. He said he heard I'd been
17 making waves at Holdsworth School. Well, yes, I was. I believe the concerns I raised
18 contributed to the decision not to send anymore boys to Lake Alice. I think that was a very
19 good move by Michael, yeah.

20 Q. And in 1975 you left Holdsworth and took up a position of Principal at another Department
21 of Social Welfare home, that is the Palmerston North Girls' Home; is that correct?

22 A. That's right, I became the principal there.

23 Q. Now at paragraph 41 we have asked you whether you were ever contacted in the years that
24 followed when there was the inquiries or investigations into Lake Alice?

25 A. Yeah, yes, I've said in my evidence there. I was not contacted in 1977 when allegations
26 against Selwyn Leeks were rife and the Commission of Inquiry into his treatment at Lake
27 Alice -- of a Lake Alice patient was taking place. I do remember hearing some of the news
28 coverage of the investigation. I'm surprised that I wasn't contacted because I was still a
29 DSW employee, it was a Department of Social Welfare girls' home I was then the Principal
30 off. I didn't consider coming forward because I had my handsful running the Palmerston
31 North Girls' Home and I'd already experienced more than enough controversy raising
32 concerns about Lake Alice while at Holdsworth. I thought I'd pretty done my dash. I tried
33 my best anyway.

34 Q. In the intervening years, have you been contacted at any stage about Lake Alice or your

1 concerns that you raised?

2 A. Yes, I had been, there was another statement I made, was it before this one, it might have
3 been contacted, I think I've got the dates of it somewhere, but I have some -- between now
4 and then I had been contacted again by the -- yes, I think part of the Commission Inquiry,
5 yeah.

6 Q. You haven't been spoken to by the Police --

7 A. No.

8 Q. -- in the intervening years? I think if we turn now to paragraph 46, Mr Watson.

9 A. Since 1973 I had not been spoken to by the Police or any Government officials about the
10 complaints I've outlined in this statement. I can recall these events because what happened
11 to the boys made me so angry. I only recently learned that, despite my complaints to DSW
12 about Lake Alice in 73, Dr Selwyn Leeks continued in his role giving ECT to young
13 people, including State wards, until 1977. And I was quite gob-smacked to hear that, it had
14 still been going on. I don't understand how that wasn't stopped earlier, because I'd certainly
15 tried to bring it to an end.

16 Q. Thank you Mr Watson. I have no further questions for you. But please remain there in
17 case the Commissioners do.

18 **CHAIR:** Thank you. I'm not sure if -- is Ms Joychild there?

19 **MS JOYCHILD:** I didn't have any questions for Mr Watson.

20 **CHAIR:** You don't, thank you, all right.

21 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Good afternoon Mr Watson. Mr Watson, you refer to the
22 Children Young Persons and Their Families Act and they were State wards. Were you
23 aware, were any social workers coming into Holdsworth to actually visit the young people?
24 Well they were children actually.

25 A. Yes, they didn't have many social workers visiting there because there were residential
26 social workers working there, maybe that was why, but we didn't have the local social
27 workers, say, from the DSW office in Whanganui, I can't recall anybody. I think one of the
28 Education Department psychologists visited the school, I can remember that. But no, not
29 others.

30 Q. Would it have been your expectation that social workers at least, at the very least, would
31 have come in?

32 A. Well, I would have expected that to happen, but sometimes one can expect things but they
33 don't always happen the way you would like.

34 Q. So there were a lot of things about Holdsworth that perhaps were making you anxious and

- 1 feel quite frustrated.
- 2 A. Yeah, I guess I was a very, well, I still am, a very determined person. But I think part of it
3 was, though, a real commitment to the care, the safe care of children. And when I saw
4 some of the things that were happening there, this was totally wrong, in my view, and it did
5 not follow the Act as it should and, as I said, I've lived my life doing that. I still do that
6 with my work at prisons, you know, always trying to work for the best interests of people.
7 And I think sometimes that stuff has gone by the wayside when in fact the focus should
8 have been very clearly on the best interests of the children. And that's what I was hot
9 about.
- 10 Q. So appreciate that you were still a young psychologist in training.
- 11 A. Yeah.
- 12 Q. But you were a residential social worker and a housemaster I think?
- 13 A. Yes, yes.
- 14 Q. So were there any supports in place for you? Like was there a mentor, was there someone
15 outside of your immediate superior that you could talk to?
- 16 A. Oh, yes, yes, I had a great support of people from the university, Massey University and
17 from Waikato University as well in setting up the behaviour management programme. In
18 fact I think the Commission have got a copy of the report that I did to the New Zealand
19 Psychological Society a number of years ago and it was actually the first -- I think it was
20 the first piece of research that had been done in a Social Welfare institution in setting up a
21 behaviour management programme. Yeah, it was.
- 22 Q. And were you able to share your concerns in particular around Lake Alice and the referral
23 process with your support network, with your mentors?
- 24 A. I raised them with my clinical supervisor at Massey University, but they didn't want to go
25 dabbling into DSW politics, you know, they were there as lecturers and I was a student
26 attending their lectures. There seemed to be a bit of a division, "We're university people
27 thank you and we don't want to go mixing with others."
- 28 Q. Okay, thank you. And when you picked up Tyrone and Rangī from Lake Alice, you just
29 decided -- and good on you -- bugger this, we're going to go and pick them up?
- 30 A. Yeah.
- 31 Q. Was there any pushback from --
- 32 A. No, I just did it and I took responsibility for doing it too. I'm bringing the children back
33 here, I believe they're in an unsafe place, I've made waves about all this anyway and I acted
34 on what I believed in. To me I wanted these children out of the place because it was an

1 unsafe place for them, and bringing them back to Holdsworth School was a far better option
2 than leave them in the pain and misery that we heard, have already heard today that
3 happened there to those guys, yeah.

4 Q. And I think -- I just want to -- yesterday we heard some quite clear evidence, and I know
5 Ms Finlayson's already put this to you, there was a young Constable, Youth Aid Officer and
6 he just described Holdsworth for exactly what he saw it through his own eyes, that it was
7 like a prison system and there wasn't much learning going on in there.

8 A. Well, I think that was inaccurate, in my view. We were really trying very hard there and
9 yes, there was a school there as well, and the housemasters in particular were very devoted
10 people who worked jolly hard to do their very best by the children.

11 Q. But he's entitled to his opinion.

12 A. Mmm.

13 Q. He's entitled to his opinion.

14 A. Yes, of course, that's right, depends on how long he was spending there. I mean I was there
15 for a number of years before I moved, yeah.

16 Q. Thank you, Mr Watson, no further questions.

17 **CHAIR:** Just following on from that, it was Mr Sutherland who was the Police Youth Aid Officer
18 at the time who gave evidence yesterday and he was there, he was a Youth Aid Officer in
19 1973. Do you recall him at all? He said he visited Holdsworth because he was in charge of
20 filtering what to do with children who were brought to the Police attention, trying to keep
21 them away from the formal justice system and in that capacity he said he'd visit Holdsworth
22 occasionally. Do you recall him at all?

23 A. No, I can't really recall, but I could accept that, yeah, he would have visited, Police aid
24 because part of that is a preventative work they were trying to do.

25 Q. Exactly, he said he was coming out to try and get a good relationship with the children, that
26 was part of his job.

27 A. Yeah.

28 Q. But it doesn't matter if you don't remember, so that was my first thing. I have two or three
29 questions for you if you don't mind?

30 A. No.

31 Q. The first one is, we've heard, of course, from Rangi and from Tyrone, both of whom are
32 Māori . Do you have a sense of how many Māori boys were at Holdsworth, what
33 percentage or what proportion?

34 A. I would say probably in those days it was probably about 40 -- at least 40% and, yeah, I'm

- 1 just trying to switch heads at the moment.
- 2 Q. Yes.
- 3 A. Because at prison, 60% of the people I see at prison are Māori .
- 4 Q. But a good 40% you'd say?
- 5 A. A good 40% at Holdsworth.
- 6 Q. So a significant number of children from Māori backgrounds?
- 7 A. Oh, yes.
- 8 Q. So my question in relation to that is, was there anything provided, any encouragement for
9 these boys to engage with their culture, anything of the Tikanga Māori sort?
- 10 A. Yes, Morven Simon did that. He was a wonderful man.
- 11 Q. Sorry, his name was?
- 12 A. Morven Simon, he was a kaumatua of Kaiwhaiki Marae in Whanganui, and recently died,
13 but Morven lived in Ackworth House on the other side of the property and he was the most
14 wonderful person and he worked really, really well with Māori children, very well.
- 15 Q. So did he do that on an informal basis or was it part of the programme at the school?
- 16 A. No, he was a housemaster there at one stage.
- 17 Q. He was a housemaster?
- 18 A. Yeah, Morven Simon, lovely fellow.
- 19 Q. Do you recall what sort of things he did? Did he do it for all the Māori children there or
20 just the ones in his care?
- 21 A. No, they put a big taniwha, painted it on the bottom of the swimming pool as a way of
22 keeping the children safe, this is why you have a taniwha there. But rather tragically his
23 little boy, one of his little children got through the gate one day and fell into the pool and
24 we found him, yeah, we had a tangi for him.
- 25 Q. That's very sad.
- 26 A. Yeah, so it was a --
- 27 Q. But apart from what he did, so were there language classes or kapa haka groups or anything
28 like that?
- 29 A. Yeah, I think Morven was working in with the children doing some of that work.
- 30 Q. Doing some of that, okay. Just returning to what you actually said today, you said that it
31 was Drake who was doing these referrals to Lake Alice, and you said these words
32 "something was not right". And I think in that context you were referring to the, I want to
33 call it a relationship or arrangement or communications between Drake and Dr Leeks. Do
34 you want to elaborate on what you were meaning when you said something was not right?

- 1 A. Well, to me he was the one responsible for doing the referrals.
- 2 Q. Drake?
- 3 A. Yeah, yeah, Drake, to Selwyn Leeks at Lake Alice, and when I picked up what was actually
4 going on there and how the children were being treated as punishment, that's when I saw,
5 what I really objected to and said that to me that the children were not being treated
6 humanely, and I raised that concern with him.
- 7 Q. Do you think there was an arrangement between Mr Drake and Selwyn Leeks?
- 8 A. Well, no, I don't think -- I'm not sure --
- 9 Q. Sort of a referral arrangement?
- 10 A. Oh yeah, there was a referral, yeah, he was the one responsible for making the referrals to
11 Lake Alice.
- 12 Q. Yes, yes.
- 13 A. That's when he was Acting Principal.
- 14 Q. There's been a suggestion -- and more than a suggestion -- made if you heard, I believe it
15 was Tyrone Marks' evidence this morning, that he had been sexually abused by Mr Drake
16 when he was at an earlier school and that, I don't know, did you hear Tyrone's evidence?
- 17 A. No, I wasn't here for the first part was, I was still on my way up here.
- 18 Q. Right, well his evidence was that he had been sexually abused by Mr Drake at an earlier
19 school.
- 20 A. At an earlier school?
- 21 Q. Yes.
- 22 A. I wasn't aware of that.
- 23 Q. That's his evidence, and that he believes that at least part of the reason for Mr Drake
24 referring him so often to Lake Alice was an attempt to perhaps get him to forget what had
25 been going on before. Now I don't know if you know anything about this at all, and I'm
26 going to leave it to you to decide if you can comment in any way on that allegation?
- 27 A. Well, it's a surprise to me, that's for sure. But I didn't know there was that much of a
28 connection. You've certainly enlightened me on that. But because he did the referrals to
29 Lake Alice and I'm not sure whether I could say they were in cahoots or anything, but he
30 was the person responsible for doing the referrals, but I did not know something had
31 happened with Tyrone earlier on.
- 32 Q. That's right. So I won't press you further on that, because you didn't know about it, and it's
33 really only speculation, as far as you're concerned, on --
- 34 A. I'm not surprised.

1 Q. You're not surprised?

2 A. No, not surprised. There were wheels within wheels operating there, I think and -- yeah.
3 But I can understand it, because Drake, as I said, was busy interfering with the children
4 when they were reading stories to them.

5 Q. Yes.

6 A. You know, so something else of a similar ilk has come up, and to me that's not totally a
7 surprise.

8 Q. Yes. And then in relation to, and I'm not sure, I believe it was Mr Sutherland, the Police
9 Officer, who talked about the way -- the marking system that you introduced, I forget what
10 you called it, the behavioural management.

11 A. The Token Economy.

12 Q. The Token.

13 A. Yes, it was based on some of the work that had been done in the United States.

14 Q. Mr Sutherland was concerned, I think it was him, he was concerned when he asked
15 somebody about that, about the people who got the Ds because apparently if you got some
16 Ds you were more likely to be sent off to Lake Alice.

17 A. I don't really think that was the case.

18 Q. You don't think it was the case?

19 A. Not that I can recall, no.

20 Q. He had the feeling, he understood the Token system, he knew what it was there, saw it was
21 an incentive, but he felt it might have been being manipulated in a way so that if a child
22 argued with a particular person or got off side with them they could mark them down and
23 then get them sent off to Lake Alice as sort of punishment for that.

24 A. Well, I can't recollect that happening as directly as that, no.

25 Q. I'm only telling you because here's an opportunity for us to find out?

26 A. I wasn't privy to all the information that went on.

27 Q. No, I understand that, I understand that. Mr Doolan who's coming to give evidence soon,
28 I'm just looking at his brief of evidence, he hasn't said it yet, but I thought I would put it
29 there, he said:

30 "On taking up my appointment at Holdsworth I became aware of general concerns
31 about the Lake Alice Adolescent Unit from some Holdsworth members. Mostly, as I recall,
32 about sending boys there being a waste of time as the treatment made no observable
33 improvements to their functioning and was thought to be harsh and was seen as
34 counter-productive."

- 1 A. Mmm.
- 2 Q. Could that have been you that he's talking about there?
- 3 A. No, I agree that -- could you just repeat that again?
- 4 Q. Yes, he said that he became aware of general concerns at Holdsworth about the referral of
5 boys to Lake Alice?
- 6 A. Oh, yes, I'd certainly accept that.
- 7 Q. And the way he's framed it here, and we can ask him when he comes, it seems there was
8 more than one person raising concerns about Holdsworth. Were you aware that other staff
9 members were also concerned?
- 10 A. Well, yes, I think some of the other housemasters were, about the children going to Lake
11 Alice in the first place.
- 12 Q. Yes.
- 13 A. And I certainly was opposed to it as well, and had gone down to see the children and heard
14 what they told me and I'm pretty sure that they were not just telling me a story, these things
15 were actually happening.
- 16 Q. And in fact, you weren't the lone voice, because there were other people, other staff
17 members who were also concerned, is that right?
- 18 A. Yes, there were.
- 19 Q. Did they raise it in the same way that you did?
- 20 A. I think I was probably a bit more blunt or more direct about it, because to me again, it's
21 going outside of not keeping to the spirit of the Act.
- 22 Q. Yes, yes. You've made that very plain. Thank you. Then just as a final matter. And you
23 said right at the beginning of your evidence that these were very vulnerable children in
24 need of care.
- 25 A. Yeah.
- 26 Q. Care and protection, that some of them were seriously disturbed.
- 27 A. Yes.
- 28 Q. Standing back, and I appreciate you were part of it at that time and doing your best, but
29 standing back, do you think that the children in the care at Holdsworth at that time were
30 indeed getting care and protection that they deserved?
- 31 A. I think most of the time it would be the case, it was positive. But then there were other
32 things happening there with the kids being sent to Lake Alice and that was Jack Drake's
33 organising, which I objected. When I went down there and found out what was happening,
34 that's when I got really angry about it.

1 Q. So maybe on the surface it was looking all okay, but there were other things going on?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. That were not --

4 A. Well, at Lake Alice, yes, definitely.

5 Q. And the sexual interference?

6 A. And sexual abuse of them too by Drake and McDonald, yeah.

7 Q. I think that's it from me as far as my questions. Anything arising from that?

8 **QUESTIONING BY MS JOYCHILD:** Mr Watson, I'm just interested in what your perceptions
9 were for why these boys were being sent there, how were they chosen from your
10 observation to go to Lake Alice?

11 A. Well, part of that was by the judgment of Jack Drake at the time, that they were, you know,
12 playing up, misbehaving, and I assumed if you were going to send a child to a psychiatric
13 unit, an adolescent unit it was meant to be, some of them were barely adolescents
14 themselves, that it was actually meant to be a positive treatment thing, not -- it was never --
15 when I went down there and found out it was being used as a punishment thing was
16 totally and utterly wrong.

17 Q. So you thought it was people who, in Mr Drake's mind, were misbehaving?

18 A. Yeah, well --

19 Q. Boys?

20 A. He sort of selected the most acting out of children, you know, and thought oh well, he
21 would decide to send them to Lake Alice for treatment, but they ended up electric shock
22 punishment, that's what I --

23 **Q.** From your observations, were they the most acting out children?

24 A. Some of them, yes, some of them were. A lot of youngsters they did act out a lot, that was
25 part of the reason why they were at Holdsworth School in the first place. But -- and
26 sometimes they were difficult to manage. But this happens in all families, bringing up my
27 own children the same thing, you know, of course the kids will act out and carry on. But
28 this was an extreme case, these were extreme situations.

29 Q. Thank you.

30 **CHAIR:** Thank you. Mr Watson, thank you very much for coming. Was there anything else?

31 **MS FINLAYSON-DAVIS:** No, sorry.

32 **CHAIR:** Thank you very much for coming. I appreciate it's been a long time, but I think it's
33 important that we've had the view not just of the children's experiences at the time but of
34 somebody who was trying to care for them well, at that time, and so to that extent your

1 evidence has been extremely useful, so thank you very much for taking the time and no
2 doubt the stress of coming along to do this.

3 A. To me it was most important to do.

4 Q. We're very grateful to you, thank you so much.

5 A. Thank you.

6 Q. We'll take an adjournment before the next witness?

7 **MS FINLAYSON-DAVIS:** Yes, thank you.

8 **Adjournment from 3.17 pm to 3.42 pm**

9 **CHAIR:** Good afternoon Ms Maltby.

10 **MS MALTBY:** Good afternoon. The next witness this afternoon is Michael Patrick Doolan.

11 **MICHAEL PATRICK DOOLAN**

12 **CHAIR:** Thank you. Good afternoon Mr Doolan, thank you for waiting patiently, you're the last
13 customer of the day. Can I just ask you to take the affirmation please.

14 A. Certainly.

15 Q. Do you solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that the evidence you give to the
16 Commission today will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

17 A. I do.

18 Q. Thank you very much. I'll just leave with you Ms Maltby.

19 **QUESTIONING BY MS MALTBY:** To confirm, your name is Michael Patrick Doolan?

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. What is your profession?

22 A. Well, I'm a social worker by profession, but I'm currently retired, I'm a registered social
23 worker, non-practising.

24 Q. Have you provided a written statement to the Royal Commission dated 27 May 2021?

25 A. Yes, I have.

26 Q. And you have that in front of you?

27 A. I do.

28 Q. Commissioners, I'm going to ask Mr Doolan to read or speak to parts of his statement and
29 take other parties as read.

30 **CHAIR:** Yes, thank you.

31 **QUESTIONING BY MS MALTBY CONTINUED:** Mr Doolan, turning to paragraphs 4 and 5,
32 could you please summarise your professional background and qualifications.

33 A. Certainly. I am a qualified social worker and my practices embrace field practice in both
34 Child Welfare services and in Māori and Island Affairs Services, in my early days, and also