

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
TULOOU – 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'imua 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
141r Bader Drive
Māngere
AUCKLAND

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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1 the whakamā, the shame and the guilt that you have carried all this time for what happened
2 to your mum and dad and to your younger brother. We recognise too that as part of your
3 healing, what you seek and your whānau seek is an apology directly, kanohi ki te kanohi to
4 those most affected, the whānau who were affected, including yourself, on behalf of your
5 mum and dad. I was pleased to hear that you had the courage to reach out and ask for some
6 support and get some counselling to help you to address all this mamae that you've carried
7 for such a long time. So on behalf of the Inquiry, ka nui te mihi ki a koe i te rangatira,
8 kia ora.

9 A. Thank you very much.

10 **CHAIR:** A final acknowledgement to the whānau, to your family who have come and bravely
11 spoken and supported your son, your father, your grandfather. Thank you for coming.

12 **[Tongan song]**. Shall we take a break before the next witness or do you want to continue?

13 **MR POHIVA:** I was going to seek to continue. The --

14 **CHAIR:** That's entirely up to you.

15 **MR POHIVA:** I ask if we can go straight into the next witness.

16 **CHAIR:** Certainly.

17 **MR POHIVA:** Mr CE is also by video pre-recorded interview, ma'am, and he is giving his
18 evidence anonymously. So I'd ask that he -- that video be played immediately.

19 **CHAIR:** Certainly.

20 **MR POHIVA:** Apologies, ma'am. So just by way of background, Mr CE spends his time in
21 Weymouth Boys' Home, Hokio Beach School and Ōwairaka Boys' Home where he
22 experienced all forms of abuse. Mr CE's first language was Samoan before he entered into
23 State care, and following State care, he could no longer speak Samoan, so he shares his
24 experience anonymously for us today. I anticipate that we will play the video and perhaps
25 stop at about 3.30 for our afternoon adjournment.

26 **CHAIR:** Very well. Thank you, Mr Pohiva.

27 **MR CE**

28 **[Video played]**

29 **Q.** "We are here today at the Royal Commission offices in Newmarket to talk about your
30 experience of being in care. We have in front of you a signed statement that you have
31 decided to refer to as part of your evidence today. Before we start, do you solemnly,
32 sincerely and truly declare that the evidence you will give today is the truth, the whole
33 truth, and nothing but the truth?"

1 A. Yes.

2 **Q. Thank you. Mr CE, today you are providing your evidence anonymously. Can you**
3 **explain why you're giving your evidence in this way?**

4 A. I wanted to keep my identity safe to keep my children safe as well. I didn't want people
5 recognising me and having them know who I am and who my children are, and therefore
6 placing them in possible danger.

7 **Q. In your statement, you provide a summary of your experience in care and explain why**
8 **you've come to the Commission. Can you please read paragraphs 3 and 4 of the**
9 **statement?**

10 A. Yeah. "My statement relates to the abuse I received when I was under State care in
11 residential homes and how this has impacted me. I basically lost my culture and my
12 language during my time in care. Before going into State care, I was able to speak Samoan
13 fluently. It was my first and only language for so long. I could hold a conversation and
14 understand things. After being in care, I couldn't speak the language and I had forgotten a
15 lot of fa'asamoa and how to do things the Samoan way.

16 I have been carrying this for many years. I wish to share my experience because I've come across
17 people who have had similar struggles to me and I have tried my best to help them. I hope
18 that in sharing my experience, I am able to help others too."

19 **Q. Do you remember when you came to New Zealand?**

20 A. It was in 1981.

21 **Q. How old were you at the time?**

22 A. Between 7 and 8.

23 **Q. Who did you come to New Zealand with and why?**

24 A. I came with my mum and dad and other siblings and we were brought here in the hopes of
25 getting a better education and a better lifestyle.

26 **Q. When you arrived in New Zealand, how would you describe your level of**
27 **understanding of the Samoan culture and language?**

28 A. When I arrived here, I could understand the Samoan language and I could understand how
29 things were done in the Samoan way.

1 **Q. What's an example of the sort of things that you remember that could be done in the**
2 **Samoan way?**

3 A. So we say our prayers in Samoan before dinner, before going to bed. We used to go to
4 church a lot on Sundays where the language was spoken and my father would make us read
5 the Bible, the Samoan Bible on a daily basis. My parents were very religious, our family
6 were with the church in Samoa and we continued with the church here in New Zealand.
7 Not long after we got here, I began to move away from church. This was mainly because I
8 was running with the wrong crowd of friends and wanted to hang with them instead. My
9 parents were very strict, we were raised in an environment where violence was okay. My
10 dad did the disciplining and if you did something wrong, you got a hiding for it. One time
11 I remember getting a hiding because I couldn't read the Bible in Samoan properly. The
12 hidings from dad led me to resent religion.

13 **Q. You also mention in your statement your difficulties adjusting to New Zealand life**
14 **while at school. What were these difficulties?**

15 A. So I found it hard to fit in with the routine at school because of the language barrier, which
16 made my learning quite difficult as I couldn't understand what was going on in the
17 classrooms. And a lot of the kids there also made fun of me and the fact that I couldn't
18 speak English or understand what was going on.

19 **Q. With this frustration, what did you do?**

20 A. I started acting out. I started talking back to the teacher, talking back to other students,
21 I started wagging classes and just generally doing my own thing, because I didn't know
22 what was going on around me. At home, I was getting hidings from my dad for being
23 expelled from school and for the bad school reports. During all this time, I was still being
24 disciplined by my dad as though we were still in the Islands. In the Islands, you got hidings
25 for everything. The hidings didn't have a positive effect on me. At the time, I was
26 remorseful for whatever I had done wrong, but after a while, I began to do things just to
27 spite them and go further than the last time. If anything, it made me worse because
28 I wanted to get back at him by playing up some more. My father was quite high in the
29 church and so he needed people at the church to see him in a certain way. He couldn't be in
30 the church preaching about what you should and shouldn't do when his children were out
31 doing those things. Now that I'm older and I have kids, I can see what my dad was trying
32 to do. I think it was his way to try and get me to behave at school and to get a good

1 education.

2 **Q. You then came to the attention of the Police. What sort of things were you doing that**
3 **led to the Police being involved with you?**

4 A. I was truanting from school, I was stealing, I was committing crimes with other kids like
5 stealing vehicles and just generally not caring.

6 **Q. Talk me through what the Police thought was the best way to deal with your**
7 **behaviour?**

8 A. So the Police got quite sick of having to deal with me all the time, that they thought it was a
9 good idea to pressure my parents into sending me back to the Islands as they thought it
10 would benefit me to go back there and be disciplined by my own people.

11 **Q. Do you know if the Police were saying the same thing to others?**

12 A. I know that with Island kids, that was their go to, they would often put pressure on other
13 parents to send their children back to the Islands.

14 **Q. In 1986, you were admitted to Weymouth Boys' Home. Tell me about your**
15 **interactions with social workers that led to your placement at Weymouth.**

16 A. So the first time I met the social workers, I was coming home from school and they were in
17 my house, they were talking with my parents. They told my parents they were there to take
18 me shopping because I needed clothing and shoes and things like that and so my parents
19 thought this was a good idea and they took me shopping. We went and bought clothes and
20 shoes, but instead of taking me back home, they took me straight to Weymouth Boys'
21 Home.

22 **Q. Were you ever told that you would be taken to Weymouth?**

23 A. No, I was told I was going shopping and then back home.

24 **Q. So now you're at Weymouth Boys' Home, how old were you at this time?**

25 A. I think I may have been between 11 and 12.

26 **Q. How would you describe the staff culture at Weymouth Boys' Home?**

27 A. The staff were quite strict.

28 **Q. Was there a culture of violence by staff at Weymouth Boys' Home?**

1 A. I'm going to say there was, but it wasn't done in the open, it wasn't directed, it was set up
2 through things like rugby games and basketball games and physical sports where they
3 would take the physicality side of things way too far with kids that were only 11 and 12 at
4 the time.

5 **Q. What would happen if you spoke out of line to one of the staff members?**

6 A. So you'd be put in a timeout room, they called it, which is basically a padded room, and
7 they put you in there for timeout, and they leave you in there for as long as they felt.

8 **Q. Did the staff ever hit any of the students there -sorry, the kids there?**

9 A. I never saw any. I know it took place because the home is quite huge, so if you were to be
10 hit, you wouldn't be hit in front of the other kids, you'd be taken somewhere else.

11 **Q. You mention also in your statement the privilege system that existed at Weymouth.
12 What is the system and how did it work?**

13 A. So the system works on reward based on behaviour, and if you behaved well during the
14 week, you got extra privileges, those were your rewards. You got to stay up a little later,
15 you got to have extra desserts, you get more activities during activity time.

16 **Q. How did the staff use this privilege system at Weymouth?**

17 A. They used it like a guilt trip, basically. For those that got the privileges, they were praised,
18 and for those that didn't get the privileges, you were reminded that those are the privileges
19 you weren't going to be getting that week because of whatever took place for you that
20 week, or you misbehaved or talked back or something.

21 **Q. In your statement, you mentioned that you ran away from Weymouth. What
22 happened when you were returned back to Weymouth Boys?**

23 A. So I got caught and taken back, I was put in a padded room. I was left there for what
24 seemed like quite a long time.

25 **Q. It says here in your statement that you were there for a few hours. Is that your
26 recollection?**

27 A. Possibly longer.

28 **Q. And how did you find it in that room?**

1 A. It was very quiet, it was very eerie. You could hear the silence.

2 **Q. What happened to the privileges of others after you had been caught running away?**

3 A. So the others lost their privileges, they didn't get the rewards that they had been working
4 for. So if they were due a reward tomorrow for being good all week, they weren't going to
5 get that reward because I had run away. So they were quite frustrated, those kids, because
6 they'd lost their rewards. There was a lot of bullying there. The kids would use the
7 privilege system to bully other kids. So, for example, if you had just received the reward or
8 a privilege, the other kids would bully you for it, whether it be a game or a dessert or
9 something like that, and they did that quite a bit. I'm not sure how long I was at Weymouth
10 for, but it must have been approximately seven months. It felt as though I was there for a
11 long time. Being in Weymouth gave you a warped sense of time, there was a massive wall
12 around the complex and from the inside, you couldn't see outside. You couldn't get an idea
13 of what was going on and no one told you the time. When I was there, they mainly focused
14 on what I can now see as the Māori culture. So they sung a lot of songs in Māori, they
15 performed a lot of kapa haka activities in Māori and I would hear Māori being spoken from
16 certain staff members from time to time.

17 **Q. Around February 1987, you were transferred to Hokio Beach School. How old were**
18 **you at the time?**

19 A. Between 12 and 13.

20 **Q. Hokio was in Levin and you were travelling from Auckland. Tell me how you felt as**
21 **you were travelling on the bus to Hokio?**

22 A. Auckland was all I'd really known, so the further on out we got, it just felt like I was getting
23 further and further away from home, seeing the countryside. It was really confusing. It
24 was scary too, not knowing where you were heading.

25 **Q. There was an incident on the bus ride to Hokio. What happened?**

26 A. Yeah, so there were a few kids playing up on the bus and so the staff members stopped the
27 bus and quickly dealt to these kids to get them back in line again, so we could carry on to
28 where we were going.

29 **Q. So just to confirm again, so when you say "dealt to them", what did you mean by**
30 **that?**

1 A. They smacked them around a bit.

2 **Q. What did the staff say after doing that to you all?**

3 A. I believe he said that's what you can expect to get if you play up and when you get to where
4 we're going.

5 **Q. What were your first impressions of the Hokio building facilities when you arrived?**

6 A. The buildings were huge. It was like a big camp site, big huge buildings everywhere.
7 There were lots more kids there than at Weymouth. It was anywhere between 50 up to 70
8 boys there at Hokio. There were no fences there because it was in the middle of nowhere.
9 We were told by staff members that because it was surrounded by forest, we could get lost
10 and die if we tried to run away. I once ran away from Hokio and into the forest, I was
11 caught by staff members who beat me up and took me back to Hokio.

12 **Q. When you arrived at Hokio, who showed you around the school?**

13 A. So there are kids there that the staff members got to show us around, I take it they were kids
14 that had been there longer and knew the ropes there, the routine there, and so they took us
15 around the buildings and showed us where to find everything.

16 **Q. So these were like the trusted kids?**

17 A. Like the trusted kids, yeah, yeah.

18 **Q. Was there a culture of violence at Hokio?**

19 A. Yeah, so the violence there was a lot worse than at Weymouth. That's both between the
20 kids and staff members. The violence at Hokio was far worse than it was at Weymouth. It
21 was such a huge place with lots of boys, so you had to learn the ropes really quick. I think
22 there were over 70 boys at Hokio. The boys all had groups and fought a lot between each
23 other. The staff members at Hokio would request for boys to be beat up by other boys.
24 Hokio had huge sand dunes on the coastal side of it. The other side was surrounded by
25 thick forest. A lot of the violence and sickening behaviour took place over the sand dunes
26 because you were out of sight from the staff there. Some of the boys gave me a few hidings
27 behind the sand dunes."

28 **MR POHIVA:** Madam Chair, it's just reached 3.30 and I wonder if that's the time to take the
29 adjournment?

1 **CHAIR:** I think so, perfect timing, thank you. We'll take 15 minutes.

2 **Adjournment from 3.30 pm to 3.50 pm**

3 **CHAIR:** Yes, Mr Pohiva.

4 **MR POHIVA:** Thank you, ma'am. We will now just continue on with the video. I have asked
5 for it to just be rewound just slightly so that we can carry on from where we left off.

6 **CHAIR:** That's fine, thank you.

7 **[Video played]**

8 A. "... place over the sand dunes because you were out of sight from the staff there. Some of
9 the boys gave me a few hidings behind the sand dunes. I was sexually abused while I was
10 there from another boy. This was the first time I had experienced this. Everybody knew
11 that the physical and sexual abuse was happening behind the sand dunes. I think the staff
12 there knew the things were happening but just turned a blind eye to it.

13 **Q. In your statement, you also explained what happened when you did complain to staff
14 about abuse. What happened?**

15 A. So I received a hiding at one time where I thought it serious enough to talk to a staff
16 member. The staff member, after hearing my complaint, decided that he'd organise for
17 another guy that was there to come and sort of be a 'go-between', between me and the kids
18 that gave me a hiding. And so, after explaining my story to him, he took me over to where
19 the boys were that were involved and when we got there, he said to them, "So this is the
20 guy who narked you'se off", and sort of left me there to get another hiding.

21 **Q. So after that experience, what was your views about complaining about this abuse?**

22 A. I didn't dare complain after that, because I knew that was ultimately the end result.

23 **Q. Since arriving from Samoa, had you smoked cigarettes before arriving at Hokio?**

24 A. No.

25 **Q. How were cigarettes treated at Hokio?**

26 A. They were like a currency, like privilege. The kids there would do anything to have a
27 cigarette, including giving up their dinner or dessert or things that they had in their rooms.

28 **Q. And did you use cigarettes as currency yourself?**

1 A. I did the longer I was there.

2 **Q. Did you end up smoking?**

3 A. I did, yes, I ended up smoking.

4 **Q. Are you still smoking today?**

5 A. Yes, I am, I'm still smoking.

6 **Q. While at Hokio, you ran away. What happened to you when you were brought back?**

7 A. So I was brought back, I was put in another room where they dealt with a lot of sort of
8 physical punishment as a way of wearing you down. So you were brought out to do PT,
9 which is physical training, every 3 to 4 hours for as long as they thought you needed it, so
10 you could be in there for up to a week if they thought it was required.

11 **Q. In your statement, you describe this room. Can you read paragraphs 49 to 52 of your**
12 **statement.**

13 A. "When I got back, they locked me in the 'Small Room'. This room was where they put you
14 as a punishment. The room had a door with a small viewing window and a very small and
15 was very small. You couldn't lie down in this room and if I sat cross legged on the floor,
16 both of my knees would touch the walls. The walls were padded all around.

17 I was in the room for two or three days. Those rooms are horrible. When it is padded like that,
18 that silence you experience in the room was so much stronger. It forces you to do nothing
19 but go inside your own head. You hear a ringing sound in your head and it just grows and
20 grows. It's like the ringing sound you get when you get whacked in your ear and you hear
21 this horrible ringing sound.

22 It was painful in that room. I spent a lot of time in there just feeling angry. Although I was still
23 angry, I would tell the staff I wasn't angry just to get out. I was only allowed to come out
24 of the room for a few meals and 'physical punishment'. This is where you do exercise like
25 running around the compound. They let you out to do this physical punishment every 3 to
26 4 hours.

27 I only ran away once because the hiding I received and being locked in the 'Small Room' made me
28 fearful of what would happen if I ran away again."

29 **Q. While you were locked in the small room, who were you thinking about during that**

1 **time?**

2 A. Family. I thought a lot about my family.

3 **Q. You were at Hokio Beach School for about a year. What education did you receive**
4 **while you were there?**

5 A. It was the same setup as Weymouth. They focused a lot on Māori traditions and music,
6 songs. They had wood carving, bone carving, and they did a lot of kapa haka activities as
7 well down there in their gym.

8 **Q. What, if anything, was taught there that was relative to your own culture?**

9 A. Nothing. There was no focus on whether or not you were Samoan or Tongan or Niuean,
10 there was none of that. The sole focus there was traditional Māori culture.

11 **Q. How did it make you feel?**

12 A. Strange, very strange, because I'm not Māori but it was just the way things were done there
13 so I went along with it.

14 **Q. From Hokio, you then spent a short period of time at Ōwairaka Boys' Home. At the**
15 **time, what did you think was the reason for you being transferred to Ōwairaka?**

16 A. When I heard I was being transferred to Ōwairaka, I immediately thought that I was going
17 there to be closer to home and that I could eventually go home, but that wasn't the case.

18 **Q. What type of room were you put in when you arrived at Ōwairaka?**

19 A. It was quite a small room, there was only a bed in there, a table in the corner with some
20 drawing materials. Nothing much else in there apart from that.

21 **Q. How long were you in that room every day?**

22 A. Most of the day. Apart from coming out for lunch and dinner and things like that, you were
23 pretty much locked in your room.

24 **Q. How much interactions did you have with the other boys at Ōwairaka?**

25 A. Not much. Just the kids that were in my wing, which wasn't that many, but there were
26 more boys there than just the kids that were in my wing, but we never saw any of those kids
27 or spoke to them. We all sort of came out for lunch and dinner and things like that at
28 different times. So if our wing went, it was just our wing in the dining room, no other kids

1 there until we were done, then we're back in our room and then other kids get their turn.

2 **Q. Do you remember how long you were at Ōwairaka?**

3 A. Not very long. It could have possibly have just been months, a few months, yeah.

4 **Q. You were then transferred to The Glade, which at the time was based in Newmarket.**
5 **What was your first overall impressions of The Glade when you arrived?**

6 A. I thought it was nothing like any of the other boys' homes I'd been in. Just the way the
7 building was set up, it was a big huge house that had about maybe 12 to 13 rooms and so it
8 wasn't like the other boys' homes I had experienced earlier.

9 **Q. What were the other boys like?**

10 A. The boys there were different too. So they weren't so much there for the reason why I was
11 there. Most of them were there for sort of not doing well in school, not listening to their
12 parents and some parents even put them in there for like timeout type thing.

13 **Q. You experienced abuse while you were at The Glade and you refer to a form of**
14 **punishment known as the Michael White. Are you able to explain that and whether it**
15 **happened to you?**

16 A. Yes, so that form of punishment, the Michael White, did happen to me. That's when they
17 get you to sit cross legged on the floor and a staff member sitting on a chair behind you
18 would then reach around you and grab both your arms and pull them across your chest like
19 you were in a straitjacket and they would hold you there for as long as possible, sometimes
20 even to the point where you fell asleep because the pain after a while just got worse and
21 worse in your arms and your shoulders, the back of your neck. So, yeah, it got that bad that
22 you would eventually become unconscious.

23 **Q. Who carried out the Michael White?**

24 A. So the GRO-B was the person who carried it out. He would often have another staff
25 member with him in the room when this was taking place.

26 **Q. How often did it happen?**

27 A. A lot, it happened quite a lot. There were kids, mainly possibly between four and five kids
28 a day would be going into this room and coming out drained.

1 **Q. At The Glade, there was a reward system where you could earn rewards through**
2 **behaviour. Can you explain to me further about the rewards system?**

3 A. Yeah, so because the kids there came from different backgrounds, they based the rewards
4 on their own unique behaviour. They would be allowed to go home on day trips, they were
5 allowed to stay up late. I don't quite know what they called it, but they had a different level
6 of privileges that you could achieve, first one being one, and then you could get right up to
7 five different privileges. You know, the longer you keep that good behaviour going, the
8 more they add on one more routine for you, one more privilege for you, if you know what
9 I mean, so you ended up with five different privileges. For one week, you could get extra
10 dessert, the next day you could stay up later, the day after that you could go and spend the
11 afternoon with one of your friends from school that you go to. So you had all those
12 privileges.

13 **Q. During the time at The Glade, you were taken on a day trip also. Take me through**
14 **what happened during this particular day trip that you referred to in your statement.**

15 A. Yeah. So we were told, when we got in the van, that we were going to a specific place and
16 we ended up, we ended up going somewhere else, which turned out to be my mum and
17 dad's house. So that was quite a surprise.

18 **Q. How did that make you feel?**

19 A. I got really excited, I thought I'm finally going to go home and see my family.

20 **Q. Had you seen them before?**

21 A. No, no, I hadn't seen them for years, it felt like years. So when I went back home for the
22 first time after so many years, it was awkward, I kind of felt out of place. I didn't
23 understand why they were talking in Samoan and doing things in Samoan so, yeah, I really
24 felt out of place because I hadn't been able to see that sort of culture in years.

25 **Q. How else did it make you feel?**

26 A. Out of place, like I didn't belong. Like I'd done something wrong for not knowing how to
27 speak Samoan or understanding what they were talking about. And a little bit remorseful
28 too.

29 **Q. Why remorseful?**

- 1 A. For not, -I guess not hanging on to the culture.
- 2 **Q. Why weren't you able to hang on to the culture?**
- 3 A. There were times when I thought it was my fault, you know, I'd put myself in these
4 situations where I ended up far away from my culture, so I was, yeah, a little bit sad that I
5 had ended up like that, yeah.
- 6 **Q. At some point, Mr CE, you returned home. How old were you when you finally
7 returned home?**
- 8 A. Between 14 and 15.
- 9 **Q. How long were you away from your family before you returned home?**
- 10 A. About four years, three to four years.
- 11 **Q. How did it feel for you once you were back home?**
- 12 A. It was strange, it was like coming back to a different environment. Because I had been
13 away for so long, I had forgotten a lot of how things were done at home. So it felt
14 awkward.
- 15 **Q. What did your parents expect from you once you had returned?**
- 16 A. They expected me to fall back in line with the way things were run at home. Start going to
17 church again, behaving, -I ended up doing the opposite. I ended up getting into more
18 trouble, hanging out with some worse kids and just carrying on committing crimes.
- 19 **Q. You met a girl after you'd returned home. Tell me a bit about her.**
- 20 A. So I met this girl in high school and we sort of hit it off together, we found that we had a --
21 some of our beliefs were in common and so, shortly after, we started a relationship. Which
22 felt good for me at the time because it was the first time I'd ever felt loved and needed and
23 my opinions were valued and that sort of thing. So I found that I had to commit crimes,
24 more crimes in order to get money which would then allow me to buy her gifts and take her
25 out to the movies and things like that.
- 26 **Q. How would you contrast that to what you described in terms of the relationship with
27 your parents?**
- 28 A. She valued my opinions, my outlook on life. She respected the fact that I had gone away

1 from home for so many years and experienced a lot of trauma and stuff and still chose to
2 stick around. So that was very important to me at the time.

3 **Q. Did you get that from your parents at the time?**

4 A. No, well, I hadn't seen them for so many years, they put me in these- this home to begin
5 with and then I spent years away from them so, no, I didn't get that from them.

6 **Q. You mentioned before the crimes that you were committing. You eventually came to
7 the attention of the authorities again at the age of almost 16 years of age. Explain to
8 me what happened.**

9 A. I was hanging out with a group of kids that were into stealing vehicles and committing
10 burglaries and so we all came to the attention of the Police.

11 **Q. Did you spend any time in any of the facilities?**

12 A. Yeah, as a result of coming to the Police attention, I was sentenced to corrective training for
13 the crimes that I had committed and been caught for.

14 **Q. How long were you in corrective training?**

15 A. I believe it might have just been three months.

16 **Q. What was your experience, what was it like being in corrective training?**

17 A. It was a military style set up where they had ex-military officers running that wing, so it
18 was quite strict. Out of bed in the mornings, breakfast by a certain time, beds have to be
19 made, they had drills there so they marched you around the place, so yeah, it was very
20 strict.

21 **Q. Was there abuse and violence at corrective training?**

22 A. Yeah, so there was a lot more violence there than previous boys' homes where you'd either
23 get dealt to out in the yard or because your cell is open for a certain amount of time during
24 the day, other kids were allowed to come in there and deal to you as well, if you needed it.

25 **Q. When you say "dealt to", can you clarify that?**

26 A. Hiding, so they would come into your cell and give you a hiding, maybe for what you've
27 got in your cell or something you may have said that offended them.

28 **Q. After CT, you returned home. What happened after you returned home?**

1 A. It was much the same at home, the focus was still on the other kids. I think by this stage
2 my parents may have given up any hope of rehabilitating me back into the cultural way of
3 doing things, and so I was just left to my own devices basically to do what I wanted to do.
4 I think they'd spent so many years when I was younger trying to help carve out a life for me
5 that was positive, and when that didn't work out, I think they may have found it too hard to
6 sort of carry on with, so they just let me do what I wanted to do.

7 **Q. In your adult life, have you been into any other Corrections facilities since?**

8 A. Yeah, so I've been to what was then known as Mt Eden Prison, and also when it's now
9 known as Serco Prison.

10 **Q. Overall, how long were you in care at these boys' homes?**

11 A. About three to four years.

12 **Q. During this time, what contact did you have with your family?**

13 A. I had no contact.

14 **Q. Your state records say that while you're in care, at some points you were able to
15 return home to your parents, say for holidays. What is your view on this?**

16 A. I find this to be untrue because I didn't go back home at any stage during the times I was in
17 these homes. I was just transferred from one home to another.

18 **Q. Just to be clear, Mr CE, you're saying that for the time that you were admitted to
19 Weymouth to the time that you had left The Glade, you had no contact with your
20 family apart from that day trip?**

21 A. Yeah, I had no contact.

22 **Q. When you didn't have any contact with your family, how did this make you feel?**

23 A. Frustrated. I became angry after a while and resentful towards them, that maybe they put
24 me in there just to get rid of a problem they couldn't handle.

25 **Q. Have you tried to tell your father about your experience in care?**

26 A. No. I have sat down with him a couple of times and tried to enquire about why I was sent
27 away, but that didn't go too well, so I stopped asking.

28 **Q. How did he respond when you tried to explain to him these things?**

- 1 A. He would often dismiss it as those were the decisions that I made and those were the
2 consequences that I had to experience as a result of my decisions. I believe they sent me
3 away, believing that they had, that was the only choice that they had available to them at
4 the time in terms of helping me with my behavioural problems.
- 5 **Q. Do you think that if they had extra support, they may have had other options?**
- 6 A. I believe so, yeah. I believe if there was extra support in terms of supporting parents who
7 have difficult children back in the day, they may have sought out those extra supports.
- 8 **Q. How has your relationship been with your other siblings?**
- 9 A. My other siblings and I don't talk to each other anymore, and I believe that's a result of
10 them being very judgmental towards me.
- 11 **Q. Are these related to your reasons for being anonymous?**
- 12 A. Yes, they are.
- 13 **Q. In what way?**
- 14 A. That they could possibly find out that it was me, and if they did, it would cause a lot of
15 strain on the family, because they're quite proud Samoans and it could possibly really stress
16 my dad out because of the shame that comes with it.
- 17 **Q. So you mentioned shame. For those that don't understand the Samoan culture, are
18 you able to explain or elaborate further on the importance of that to the culture?**
- 19 A. Well, I can only speak for my dad and the way he brought us up. I know that he is a very
20 proud man in terms of his Samoan heritage and he tried to instill that in us and always
21 reminding us not to bring shame to the family name and he's quite high up and respected in
22 his lifetime, so I think it would bring him a lot of shame if people found out that one of his
23 children were, -had gone through all these places and brought shame upon the family name.
24 That's my understanding.
- 25 **Q. In your statement, you mentioned your struggles with trust and its effect on your
26 immediate family. Can you explain what these are?**
- 27 A. So my time in care really affected my relationship with my parents. It had been so long
28 since I'd seen them. When I was in Weymouth, Hokio and Ōwairaka, I don't remember my
29 parents coming to see me. Because of the abuse I suffered while I was in care, I find it very

1 difficult to trust people. I can't hold a job for very long and I find it very difficult to take
2 orders from others. This has also affected my relationship with my children.

3 **Q. At one point, your children were taken from your care. How did these trust issues**
4 **contribute to that happening?**

5 A. I was in a very dysfunctional relationship with my children's mother. That carried on for
6 some years where eventually we came to the attention of CYFS. They made a decision to
7 remove the kids based on Police callouts, so they were concerned enough to have the
8 children removed until such a time as we could sort our lives out and prove to them that the
9 kids would be safe to return home.

10 **Q. What personal struggles have you gone through as you've gone through this process?**

11 A. The personal struggles in my own life, I'm still trying to get over things that had happened
12 to me when I was taken from my own family, things I still haven't dealt with yet, and those
13 things are still there.

14 **Q. You mentioned earlier that you didn't hear much of the language, or there was no**
15 **emphasis on your culture while in the homes. What are your views around that now**
16 **that you think back?**

17 A. In the homes, I didn't hear much of the language. I was not around many Samoans, I wasn't
18 given a chance to continue learning about my culture, there was nothing which helped me
19 preserve and maintain my language. In my time in care, I lost a lot of my culture. Before
20 going to Weymouth, I was able to speak Samoan fluently. It was my first and only
21 language for so long, I could hold a conversation and understand things.

22 **Q. After being in care, what is the level of your understanding of your language and your**
23 **culture?**

24 A. It's very, very limited, my understanding. I still can't hold conversations in Samoan. I
25 understand bits and pieces of it when people ask me things, but I can't reply to them in
26 Samoan. It's part of my identity, it's who I am, it's who my parents brought me up to be,
27 Samoan, so it's frustrating when you once knew how to speak Samoan and do things the
28 Samoan way and now you can't.

29 **Q. How do you feel when someone asks you something in Samoan, what goes through**
30 **your mind when you're thinking about how to respond to that person?**

1 A. I -yeah, so if they ask me if I'm Samoan, I'll say yes. They would then go into a fullout
2 inquiry as to where you are from in Samoa and what village are you from and who is your
3 mum and dad and that would be very frustrating, because I don't know. I feel as though
4 I should. I feel it's important to know who you are, but when you're in care, they don't care
5 who you are. Everyone is looked at in the same way. There were cultural things that were
6 there for Māori kids like bone carving, so you just had to go with whatever was going on
7 and I stopped caring about who I was because I was stuck in a system that didn't care and
8 so I stopped caring too.

9 **Q. In your statement, you say that, "I don't know who I am and I am a product of what I**
10 **have been through in care." Can you expand on that further for me, please?**

11 A. Yeah, so a lot of my identity as to who I was before I went into the State care, I knew who I
12 was, but that all got taken away when I went through these places, because they didn't
13 really care what culture you were back then, you just fell into a system that you had to
14 comply with, and that didn't have anything to do with your culture, it was more to do with
15 you being there for punishment. So they don't focus so much on you being a specific
16 culture, you just go with what was already happening in there.

17 **Q. How has this impact on your culture affected the way that you pass on your culture to**
18 **your children?**

19 A. I can't pass on anything other than who I am right now, I can't pass on any culture or
20 anything because I've lost all that.

21 **Q. Would you have liked to pass that on to your children?**

22 A. Yeah, yeah.

23 **Q. As we're preparing your statement, I showed you documents from your Government**
24 **files. These included reports. Explain to me how you felt when you looked at these**
25 **documents?**

26 A. I was quite upset, I felt that the documents were incorrect, they weren't describing me.

27 **Q. What were some of the incorrect things from these documents?**

28 A. So I was labelled as a half Māori, half Pacific Islander in there, which I'm not, I'm full
29 Samoan. That was quite upsetting, that all the time I was in these homes, that's the way
30 people saw me. Looking back now, it's quite disappointing because it shows a massive gap

1 between staff and the kids in there. They aren't sharing the information with you and apart
2 from when you get in and when you're expected to get out, that's it. They don't share
3 anything else with you, no medical history, no Social Welfare's report, no Police report,
4 nothing. The fact they saw me as part Māori told me that they couldn't care less about what
5 culture I really was and it may have been easier for them to just type it up that way, I don't
6 know, yeah.

7 **Q. So what I take from that is that you're upset that the information about you was**
8 **incorrect?**

9 A. Yes, yeah.

10 **Q. Rather than having a particular dislike to being labelled a Māori or part Māori?**

11 A. No, I have lots of Māori friends, I have nothing against Māoris. I just am not one and
12 therefore it's incorrect to label me as half Māori.

13 **Q. Throughout your time in care, what education was provided to you throughout?**

14 A. Very little. So apart from the bone carving, wood carving, the traditional Māori songs that
15 we got to sing, along with the kapa haka activities, there was only ever one teacher who
16 taught, and that was in The Glade. They brought in an outside teacher in to teach things
17 like maths and English and reading and things like that.

18 **Q. Have you disclosed your abuse in care to anyone else?**

19 A. Apart from the girl that's on this statement that I met when I was 15, and the mother of my
20 children, nobody else. I can't explain a lot of the things I've done since being in care. To
21 me, my time in care has defined my life for so many years, now it's time for me to get this
22 story out and maybe find out why I am the way I am today. Through my own experiences,
23 I've found that these boys' homes are basically the last resort. Therefore, they really don't
24 need to exist because there's a lot of things that you can do between now and when they
25 may need to go into these last resorts in order to stop them from getting there.

26 **Q. So what should happen to these homes?**

27 A. They should be closed. They should all be closed down.

28 **Q. Theoretically, if these homes continue, what do you think should be done about staff**
29 **at these homes?**

1 A. I think they need to go through a better vetting process because the staff members I met
2 down there were quite violent and volatile and abusive. I think, moving forward, if these
3 places are to stay open, they definitely need to make that number one on their priority list,
4 what staff members are allowed to go into these places to look after vulnerable kids.

5 **Q. In terms of social workers, how often did you see your social worker throughout all**
6 **the boys' home placements that you had?**

7 A. Yeah, I didn't. The only time I ever saw my social worker was when I first went to
8 Weymouth and then I never saw her again after that. My understanding is she was
9 involved throughout all the time I was in these homes, but she only ever sent reports to
10 these homes, sort of advising that I be moved to a different location, a different boys' home.
11 So I didn't get to see her other than the first time I ever met her and she took me shopping.

12 **Q. How did you feel about seeing all these reports that were written about you?**

13 A. They were horrible. There was nothing in there about the progress I'd made while I was in
14 there, in these homes, whether they be good or bad. There was no sort of a progress report,
15 there was no communication at all between myself and my social worker, and so I felt quite
16 upset that these reports were sent off to the next place that I was due to be transferred to,
17 without anybody sitting me down and talking to me and asking me how things were going.

18 **Q. Do you think these reports were correct?**

19 A. I don't, actually. Looking at them, I find that they they were sort of just moving me around
20 from place to place.

21 **Q. How did that make you feel?**

22 A. Angry. I was quite angry, disappointed. I was a bit sad that somebody who was put in
23 charge of looking after me couldn't even come see me in all these years that I was away and
24 instead just wrote reports and kept sending me through the system.

25 **Q. What accountability do you think these social workers had towards you and others**
26 **like you?**

27 A. Very little. I wish they had had more but they had very little. I think it was just a lot easier
28 to sit in an office and write stuff up rather than make the trip to come and see you and, you
29 know, find out how you're doing and, you know, sort of finding out firsthand. Instead, they
30 relied on reports to make their overall decisions, which is sad because it's somebody's life.

1 They're moving this person around without even talking to them.

2 **Q. What more do you think the social workers could have done to be more accountable?**

3 A. Communication, stayed in touch, maybe visited once or twice. But, yeah, definitely
4 communication, just to, "Hey, we haven't forgotten about you, we're still here, we're
5 working on getting things right for you", that sort of thing, you know. There was none of
6 that, just kept sending you from place to place.

7 **Q. Now that you've had a -what is a bad experience through your interaction with your
8 social worker, do you think your social worker should be held accountable?**

9 A. I do, to a certain degree I do. I definitely do, because I don't think she fulfilled her job
10 description.

11 **Q. Can you explain more about the patterns of behaviour that you've learned while you
12 were in care, and how that's continued after the time that you were in care?**

13 A. I've learned not to talk about certain emotions and feelings, definitely not share them with
14 anybody. I've learned to not care about certain things that I probably should. I've learned
15 to put up walls, things I'm still doing today.

16 **Q. And because you've reacted in that way, what has happened as a result?**

17 A. I think I've become withdrawn. A bit upset with the system and the way that I've ended up.
18 A bit disappointed, yeah.

19 **Q. How has this affected your children and the journey that you had to follow with your
20 children?**

21 A. Since getting them back, I try not to let them see that side of me. I think now that I have
22 them back, that the focus is more on them and their wellbeing. What that looks like, I'm
23 not sure. But we can only just do our best day by day.

24 **Q. In your statement, you refer to study and research on how to pick up things early that
25 are causing what you describe as troubled children. Can you explain further on this
26 approach?**

27 A. I think it's important that they pick up on certain issues early, because it goes a long way
28 towards preventing them from ending up in homes and prisons and things like that. I think
29 that, -for me, I think it comes from trust. If someone I trusted had approached me and said,

1 "Hey, what's going on, let's sit down and talk about it", if I trusted that person, I would be
2 more than willing to open up to them and say, "Look, I'm going through this and this and
3 this, can you help me? Or if you don't, can you find me someone who can help me?" So
4 it's important to pick up on that stuff early, because if that person could have helped me,
5 I wouldn't have gone into these homes, I truly believe that.

6 **Q. What do you think the Government should do to the generation of kids like you who**
7 **had been through what you had been through?**

8 A. Well, I just feel as though we've been ignored all these years. They should probably come
9 to the table now and try and help fix some of the problems they either helped to create or
10 ignored and knew that it was going on all those years ago. Because now they've got a
11 whole generation of older people that are still struggling to get by in life because of what
12 they've been through.

13 **Q. Would an apology help?**

14 A. That would certainly go a long way, but they'd need to do a lot more than apologise, they'd
15 have to show it through their actions by focusing more on shutting down these homes and
16 getting the kids of today the help they need so they don't end up like us.

17 **Q. That concludes my questions, Mr CE. Is there anything else that you would like to**
18 **say today?**

19 A. I'd just like to say that I've taken part in this programme to get my story out there and to try
20 and hopefully help save somebody else later on down the track maybe, and if there's other
21 people out there that haven't, for one reason or another, come forth to tell their story, it's
22 safe to do so. It's a good idea, it's for a good cause.

23 **Q. Thank you again, Mr CE. Fa'afetai. Faafetai mo le loto toa. Faafetai foi mo lou loto**
24 **malosi. Thank you."**

25 **MR POHIVA:** Commissioners, that is the evidence for Mr CE. For the benefit of everyone, he
26 has provided a statement that will be available publicly that will capture a lot more of his
27 story.

28 **CHAIR:** Commissioner Steenson will publicly thank him in case he's watching, and any members
29 of his family who knows him. We'll just take a quick moment to do that.

30 **COMMISSIONER STEENSON:** Ngā mihi nui ki a koe, e whakawhetai ana te Kōmihana ki te

1 kaha o Mr CE ki te kōrero o te kaupapa nui i tēnei ra, whakamihi ki a koe.

2 Mr CE, I don't know if you're listening as I understand that providing your evidence has taken a lot
3 of courage and that you may not have wanted to hear it back. I had the privilege of meeting
4 you in a private session, which I recall as being very tough, but you did it. Amongst the
5 various and significant abuse that you experienced, I remember being particularly moved,
6 and I have again today, by how you speak of the loss of your culture, which is obviously an
7 important part of your identity. Removing one's language and culture is an issue that's
8 close to many of us, and I thank you again for highlighting this as a kind of abuse and the
9 impacts that it has had on you, the awkwardness and difficulties that you had in belonging
10 when you went home, and the path that it sent you on and the intergenerational impacts and
11 fallout with your whānau. So for your kōrero, that is so important to be told and heard, I'm
12 grateful to you on behalf of my fellow Commissioners for your bravery and speaking to us
13 today about your experience of abuse. Tēnā koe.

14 **CHAIR:** Thank you. I believe we have one more witness.

15 **MR POHIVA:** We do have one more witness. I am seeking now just a brief adjournment just to
16 reset. The final witness is by prerecord as well, but he is also here. The video is expected
17 to take 38 minutes, so it's a shorter video, so I hope it's okay with the Commissioners if we
18 finish a little late today?

19 **CHAIR:** No, that's perfectly fine. It's important if he's here that we must honour him by hearing
20 him, of course, so we'll come back as soon as you're ready.

21 **MR POHIVA:** Thank you.

22 **Adjournment from 4.46 pm to 4.50 pm**

23 **CHAIR:** Yes, thank you, Mr Pohiva.

24 **MR POHIVA:** Good afternoon, Commissioners. Our final witness for today is Mr Ngatokorima
25 Mauauri, who is here with us today. Mr Mauauri is a talented Cook Islander and Māori,
26 he's also linked to Samoa through his stepfather. He was born when his mother was 14
27 years old, and his biological father wasn't around when he was growing up, exposed to
28 violence, gangs, which he calls "clubs" in his evidence today. In his time away, he
29 developed a love for music and he chose to give music back to his community and he has
30 become more creative in the music area. So he's here with us today. He will be giving
31 evidence by way of prerecorded interview and he talks about his foster care, Whakapakari,

1 Dingwall Trust, and also his time in Weymouth Boys' Home.

2 He has provided a full statement that will be available for everyone, just for the
3 benefit of everyone that is here. His evidence today is a video that --has a particular point
4 of difference because there are transition titles and then it goes to him explaining or
5 responding to that particular topic, and you'll see that through the video.

6 Following his evidence today, Commissioners, he does not have a preference as to
7 whether or not questions are given to him. He has been advised that if there are no
8 questions, then there will be certainly remarks from yourselves. So if there are no further
9 questions, he is able to take the affirmation before --

10 **CHAIR:** Yes, I was just going to ask, is the affirmation on the video or shall I give it to him now?

11 **MR POHIVA:** It's not on the video.

12 **NGATOKORIMA ALLAN MAUAURI**

13 **CHAIR:** Okay. Ngatokorima, could you just listen and answer the question. Do you solemnly,
14 sincerely, truly declare and affirm that the evidence you give today will be the truth, the
15 whole truth and nothing but the truth?

16 A. I do.

17 **Q.** Thank you, now we'll watch your video.

18 **MR POHIVA:** Thank you, ma'am.

19 **[Video played]**

20 A. "Identity." One of a kind. I'm one of a kind. I'm a little bit of the world, everything. My
21 grandfather was American, my grandmother was half Pākehā, half Māori, my mum, --that's
22 my dad's parents. My mother's parents, full Cook Islanders, one is from a royalty line from
23 one island, and one's from the savage island. We love to drink homebrew, fight and have a
24 good time. Now on dad's side, I was raised fluent in the knowledge of Tikanga Māori. On
25 my other side, exactly the same thing.

26 "Early life, mum." She was 14. She had me at the age of 14. She just started high
27 school and my grandfather believed she deserved to have a life because that was his only
28 daughter, and he believed that because that was his only daughter, she had his bloodline
29 flowing through her veins, and when I was born, he took me, he named me right on the
30 spot, drunk on some homebrew, and my mum was left to live her life free, free of
31 obligations of being a mother, a young teenage mother.

32 "Cook Islands grandparents." So my mum's parents, my Cook Island grandparents
33 of mine, they raised me, but they only raised me during the school period. On school
34 holidays, Christmas holidays, every holiday, my dad's parents would pick me up and take