

**ABUSE IN CARE ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY  
CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL CARE 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)  
Dr Andrew Erueti  
Ali'imua Sandra Alofivae

**Counsel:** Ms Anne Toohey, Mr Simon Mount QC, Ms Kerry Beaton,  
Mr Kingi Snelgar, Mr Simon Waalkens and Ms Julia Spelman  
for the Royal Commission  
Ms Rachael Schmidt-McCleave and Ms Julia White for the  
Crown  
Ms Katie Lane for a survivor  
Mr Stone and Ms Watene for survivors

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

**Date:** 3-11 May 2021

---

**TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

---

- 1 at kura at Chisnallwood as little tama all the way through to these residences.
- 2 A. Āe.
- 3 Q. No excuse, no excuse for that and important for us to hear this for, as you say, for our  
4 recommendations to the Government, but also for the public at large to know about what  
5 happened, because a lot of New Zealanders would not know about this, or have turned a  
6 blind eye. So these powerful words from you and from other wāhine Māori who have been  
7 through these homes with you, so essential for us and I know it was hard for you today.
- 8 A. Yeah.
- 9 Q. And on behalf of us all, we felt it and we're with you and we just want to thank you so  
10 much for coming and speaking with us. Kia ora.
- 11 A. Kia ora.
- 12 Q. Ariana too for your tautoko, and Kath, kia ora kōrua, kia koutou.
- 13 A. Kia ora.
- 14 **CHAIR:** Kia maia, kia kaha, kia manawanui. He waiata koutou ma?

15 [Waiata]

16 **Adjournment from 1.07 pm to 2.16 pm**

17 **NETA BERNADETTE KEREPEPI**

- 18 **CHAIR:** Tēnā koutou katoa. Kia ora, tēnā koe. Neta, can I call you Neta?
- 19 A. Yes.
- 20 Q. Just before we start our proceedings I'm going to ask you if you'll take the affirmation, is  
21 that all right for you?
- 22 A. Sure.
- 23 Q. Neta, do you solemnly, sincerely, truly declare and affirm that the evidence that you'll give  
24 today will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?
- 25 A. I do.
- 26 Q. Tēnei te mihi ki a koe. Kia ora Mr Snelgar.
- 27 **MR SNELGAR:** Tēnā koe. Tēnā tātou, tēnā koe Neta. Kua tae mai nei mua te aroaro o ngā  
28 Kōmihana. He mea tuatahi me mihi ana ki a koe me ngā karanga maha kua tae mai, i tō  
29 taha ki te tiaki, hei akiaki me te āwhina i a koe i runga i ngā taumahatanga o tēnei kōrero.  
30 No reira, ka mihi ki a koe, huri noa ki to kōtiro e noho pou ana ki to taha hei tiaki hei  
31 manaaki. E te whanaunga tēnei te mihi nui ki a koe.
- 32 A. Tēnā koe.
- 33 Q. Tēnā koe Neta. Can I just start by asking were you born in 1961?
- 34 A. Āe, I was.

1 **Q.** And your full name is Neta Bernadette Kerepeti?

2 **A.** Yes, also known as Neta Bernadette Gilbert, Kerepeti was anglicised when my father was a  
3 young child and some of the whānau took Gilbert and others continued to use Kerepeti.

4 **Q.** Neta, as part of your preparation today, we've talked about this before, that you were going  
5 to rely on some of those values to help you with this kōrero. Do you want to talk about that  
6 at all?

7 **A.** I do, but I'd also just like to quickly do a mihi --

8 **Q.** Of course.

9 **A.** -- if that's okay?

10 **Q.** Yes.

11 **A.** Tēnā tātou katoa. Ko Whakairiora te maunga, ko Ngunguru te awa, ko Māmari te waka, ko  
12 Kerepeti te tīpuna, ko Neta Kerepeti taku ingoa. Some of the values that Kingi and I are  
13 referring to include what is pono, what is tika and all of that encompassed by aroha and  
14 those values are something that I've grasped on to in engaging in this process. And also  
15 just as part of my mihi I want to -- I'm sure I'll get another opportunity, but I'll take one  
16 now, to mihi to the Commissioners, to those of you here today and others that I've met in a  
17 private hui early on, to the change champions and I'm talking about not blood kin  
18 necessarily, but the brothers and sisters who have already engaged in this process.

19 Thank you for your strength, your courage, your commitment, so that we may all  
20 learn what happened in the past, we don't repeat now or in the future. I want to  
21 acknowledge all of you gathered here today. I know that for some of you it might be in  
22 paid employment, but I don't doubt for a moment that you feel very strongly and  
23 passionately about your mahi. Thank you to Kingi and Moana and others of the  
24 Commission team for walking alongside me and others like me, and thank you to the  
25 well-being team who've taken every care to make sure that my needs whilst here, and  
26 whilst only short, are being met. Kia ora ra.

27 **Q.** Kia ora.

28 **CHAIR:** Thank you.

29 **QUESTIONING BY MR SNELGAR CONTINUED:** As we said before, my job is just to help  
30 navigate your kōrero, this is your chance to talk about your experiences and also your  
31 recommendations. And as we go along, if there are things that I miss that you want to talk  
32 about, kei a koe, but bear in mind that the Commissioners have a copy of your statement, so  
33 please don't feel like if we don't talk about something that they have your full kōrero.

34 **A.** Kia ora.

- 1 **Q.** I wonder if we could start, unless there's anything else you wanted to talk about, was your  
2 whānau and your whakapapa?
- 3 **A.** Yeah, my whakapapa connects me to hapū and iwi from both Whāngarei and Panguru in  
4 the Hokianga. And I grew up with my father's people in a little coastal village called  
5 Ngunguru which is about 20 minutes out of Whāngarei. So my people there are the hapū of  
6 Te Waiariki and Ngāti Korora and Ngāti Taka and our iwi Te Rarawa, Ngā Puhī and Ngāti  
7 Wai. And Ngunguru is a very significant place for me, it's the place that I refer to as home,  
8 even though I currently live on the Kapiti Coast in Te Whanganui-a-Tara.
- 9 **Q.** You're one of ten tamariki?
- 10 **A.** I am, Kingi, my mother had ten children to her two hoa rangatira. My four older siblings to  
11 their father and then my five older siblings, I'm obviously the youngest of ten to our father  
12 who is Kerepeti. And from time to time we would connect the ten of us through visits to  
13 Panguru in the Hokianga and rarely, but there was the odd occasion where those -- my  
14 brothers and sisters would visit with us in -- out at Ngunguru.
- 15 **Q.** Your mum passed away when you were six years old?
- 16 **A.** Āe, yes, she was 47 when she passed, or about to turn 47, so I was six years old when she  
17 died.
- 18 **Q.** You've described your mum as a tohunga rongoā and a hunter and gatherer?
- 19 **A.** She was, and while I have some memory of her, some of those memories are validated by  
20 stories shared through my aunties and uncles who I understand knew her well and held her  
21 in high regard. So as a tohunga rongoā or healer, one is with knowledge of Māori  
22 medicine, she was often called upon to gather native fauna and flora and make rongoā  
23 Māori and help others in their need for healing various ailments. And as a hunter gatherer,  
24 a memory I do have of my mother is waking to the smell of frying flounder or snapper,  
25 because she had been awake from 4 am and gone fishing and come home with kai to feed  
26 my siblings and I, and other whānau who were staying with us.
- 27 **Q.** Sounds delicious. Te Reo Māori and Te Ao Māori I guess were a big part of your  
28 upbringing would you say?
- 29 **A.** Very much so. Ngunguru was and remains a safe place, a haven, a home, and my parents  
30 and aunties and uncles all spoke Te Reo Māori. When my mother died, that changed for  
31 my father. He had -- he and my mother had built a family home for us away from  
32 Ngunguru, the 15-odd miles into Whāngarei, and he moved us into Whāngarei, I think for  
33 work, access to paid work, and unfortunately it was soon after we moved there that my  
34 mother passed and my father infrequently had little to no contact with other adults unless he

1 went back out to Ngunguru. And so I think he was often frustrated by speaking to me in Te  
2 Reo Māori and not getting a response in Te Reo, and eventually he stopped doing that and  
3 so I grew up understanding Te Reo but not speaking it. But it was definitely a large part of  
4 my early life.

5 **Q.** I want to turn to a topic about your father. You say your father was a great many things,  
6 you said that he was an alcoholic and an abuser?

7 **A.** Yeah, he was a hard man, he had enlisted, but he had never travelled anywhere whilst in the  
8 Army. He had flat feet, so he couldn't. But he was very regimented in the way he  
9 conducted himself and, that aside, while he learned Army process or -- very well, he also  
10 learned how to drink well and he learned the behaviour of an abuser. And in fact it's one of  
11 my earliest memories of childhood abuse was at the hands of my father. And but, you  
12 know, I was a young child and I loved my father and I love him still. And it's taken some  
13 years, but I learned to forgive him for his abusive behaviour, but it certainly hasn't been  
14 forgotten.

15 **Q.** I know there's the incident you talk about at paragraph 18 of your statement, is that  
16 something you want to talk about or do you want to --

17 **A.** I guess for the benefit of those present who don't know or have a copy of my witness  
18 statement, so that I can help you understand what I know to be right from wrong and good  
19 from bad, I'm sharing a memory here, it's still very vivid, and that's of my older sister  
20 standing on the front porch of the house our father built for us in Whāngarei that  
21 I mentioned earlier, and beside her is my father and the sister between my older sister and I,  
22 we're standing some way out towards the roadside, and it could be 3 am, it could be 9 pm,  
23 but it was dark and cold, I remember that. And my sister is holding me and hugging me  
24 and I'm crying and I'm looking at my sister on the front porch and I'm looking and hearing  
25 my father making demands on her, and she's crying and looking back at me and I start to  
26 plead with her to do as my father's demanding of her. And what he's demanding is that she  
27 lay down with him, otherwise he won't let my sister and I, that are standing out on the  
28 footpath near the road, back inside the house.

29 So I knew then as a very young child what was happening was wrong, was bad,  
30 was not good, was kino, but I'm pleading with her and she looks at me and hangs her head  
31 and turns and walks back inside with my father. And when the sister who's holding me and  
32 trying to comfort me and trying to give me some warmth from her own body, we're in  
33 pyjamas, shorts and a short top, when I believe she thinks the way is clear she takes us back  
34 inside the house and into our bedroom and on the way to our bedroom we have to pass the

1 bathroom where I can hear my father abusing my -- our older sister. And my sister puts me  
2 in the bed against the wall and she tucks the sheet around me and she gets in behind me.

3 **Q.** Tēnā koe Neta, thank you for sharing. I don't want to ask anymore questions about your  
4 father unless you want to talk about anything else on that topic?

5 **A.** Only that that's -- I've already mentioned it, but it's an early memory of, you know, that  
6 informs me about good and bad and right from wrong. And I'm not altogether sure that  
7 that's the point at which life began to change for me, in fact I think it was slightly earlier.  
8 But other than to add to that, that my earliest memory of being sexually abused by my  
9 father was somewhere between 7 and 9, 8 and 10, by which stage my two older sisters, as  
10 12, 13, 14 year olds, had already decided they'd had enough and they left home.

11 One sister returned some months later pregnant at 13 and my father and I took  
12 some responsibility for helping her to raise her son, my nephew. I guess that's a very sad  
13 state of affairs. What's important for me to share and you to hear is by this stage our family  
14 had come to the attention of the Department of Social Welfare, and while it may have been  
15 largely around the care of my nephew, nonetheless, our family had come to their notice.

16 **Q.** What was happening at home, did that have an impact on you at school?

17 **A.** It did. I went to a couple of schools, primary schools. I was enrolled at Tikipunga Primary  
18 School in Whāngarei. And from time to time I also attended Ngunguru School. My father  
19 would now and again want to go back to his homestead where his brother and sister-in-law,  
20 my aunty and uncle, still live with their whānau. And just to shed a bit more light on that,  
21 the homestead was a two-bedroom, four-roomed dwelling that my grandfather, my father's  
22 father, my father, the brother that lived there and another brother, they built, they were  
23 carpenters and boat builders. And so my father and mother and my aunty and uncle, my  
24 parents and their six children, my aunty and uncle and their four children all lived in that  
25 one whare. And I only have happy memories of that place and that time. And the aunty  
26 and uncle I speak of became like second parents to me and my sisters and brothers.

27 So this homestead was where my father used to like to take us from time to time  
28 from our house in Whāngarei and, you know, it's not uncommon today to go away, or a  
29 family to go away or go on holiday, or take some time out over a long weekend and Friday  
30 to Sunday or Friday to Monday. My father would take us out to Ngunguru for the weekend  
31 and we'd stay there for anything from two weeks to three months at a time. So I would  
32 often go to Ngunguru Primary School with my cousins.

33 I mentioned being enrolled at Tikipunga Primary School, but attending school out  
34 at Ngunguru. It was never a surprise, or there was never any judgment by old Mr Ernie

1 Illingsworth who was the principal and head teacher at Ngunguru Primary School, he knew  
2 our family, whānau and others of our extended whānau that lived out at Ngunguru. And he  
3 came to expect that if I turned up that we were obviously visiting for a time. But in the  
4 meantime, the teaching staff at Tikipunga Primary were left wondering where I was and  
5 probably grew concerned about my absenteeism.

6 **Q.** That concern and the attention of Social Welfare and eventually the Police, did that  
7 continue up until you were in intermediate school?

8 **A.** It did. So I went to intermediate at Whāngarei and my sisters, as I've mentioned, had  
9 already left home. So I was left behind and what my sisters had experienced and endured at  
10 the hands of our father, he began to direct that behaviour towards me. So at intermediate I  
11 was starting to really struggle with what was happening at home and there were numerous  
12 occasions where I'd be spoken to by senior staff at intermediate, or we'd from time to time  
13 get a visit at our home by a social worker. Her name was Ms Gilbertson and she was the  
14 same social worker who visited our family some years before when my nephew was born to  
15 my then 13 year old sister. So we weren't strangers. But, yeah, I was definitely coming to  
16 the attention of the authorities at school and certainly the Police and the Department of  
17 Social Welfare.

18 **Q.** Were they for things like you didn't want to be at school? I think there's a note, there's a  
19 note on your file about drifting in and out of class, and eventually I just want to talk about  
20 an incident with a Police Officer. Was there occasionally a Youth Aid officer, a  
21 Mr Stoddard who would pick you up and take you home?

22 **A.** Yes, his name was Jim Stoddard and he lived down the bottom of the Tikipunga Hill, our  
23 family home was at the top of that hill and a K also further on. I've described him as a  
24 good man and I believe he was. And I say that because he stayed in his role. He used to  
25 come across me at the -- what we used to refer to as the entertainment centre. I can't  
26 remember its business name, but it was like a pool hall come games centre come game  
27 arcade for young teenagers, adolescents, and I'd be there during a school day instead of at  
28 school. So Constable Jim Stoddard would, from time to time, pick me up and take me  
29 home from there. Usually give me a good telling off and maybe explain to my father that  
30 I should have been in school and hadn't been.

31 **Q.** Was there another occasion where a different Police Officer had picked you up?

32 **A.** There was another occasion. And, you know, for the life of me I can't remember his name,  
33 but I can see his face. And he had a super friendly face and he was quite -- he came across  
34 as quite warm and friendly. He was a sergeant in the Whāngarei -- with the Whāngarei

1 Police and he picked me up from the entertainment centre on this particular occasion and  
2 said he would take me home, but actually he took me to the Whāngarei Falls and parked his  
3 car, and back then, the Whāngarei Falls didn't have a carpark to speak of, it certainly didn't  
4 look like it does now. But he parked his car and put his hand, reached over and -- I'm  
5 sitting in the front, and put his hand on my leg and he said that, you know, he was going to  
6 do things to me that if I told anyone else there's no way I would be believed, because he  
7 was a Police Officer and I was already, according to him, fast gaining a reputation as a  
8 delinquent, wayward, disobedient waste of space.

9 I have a distinct memory of that time and it's -- it's the feeling of bracken stabbing  
10 me in the back. And if you know bracken, it's like laying down against mature gorse. So,  
11 you know, sometimes I can still feel the imprint on my back. So that sergeant I later met at  
12 my sister's tangi. This is the sister who was on the front porch and who sacrificed herself  
13 that night so that her baby sisters could come inside. When she passed away she was  
14 working for Presbyterian Support Services at the time as a counsellor. And the team from  
15 Whāngarei Presbyterian Support Services came to pay their respects and I was there  
16 whānau pani as the grieving family alongside my brother-in-law, her husband, and other  
17 whānau. And as people filed past I remember seeing this face and immediately knew that it  
18 was this policeman. And when he got to me, when he got to me he kind of looked at me as  
19 though he recognised me but he couldn't quite pin down who I was. And he said "  
20 GRO-B sister?" I said yes. He said " GRO-B ?" And I said no.

21 But what I wanted to do was call him out and ask him to leave and to tell him how  
22 dare he, how dare he come to my sister's tangi. But out of respect for my brother-in-law  
23 and my nieces and nephew, and for my sister who lay there, I didn't say anything. I also  
24 think that I might have struggled to say something anyway. But I really did want to say  
25 something.

26 Since then, I also tried to look up and, you know, even more recently to search for  
27 that policeman, including, you know, when you, today, not then so much, but when you go  
28 on the internet and search an organisation and certainly one like Presbyterian Support  
29 North, they'll have a little blurb about us, our staff, our governance, that sort of thing.  
30 I wasn't able to find him, but, you know, it disturbed me then at my sister's tangi and it  
31 continues to sort of concern me today. If he was an abuser whilst a policeman, my mind  
32 turned to the families and whānau and individuals that might have been clients of his at  
33 Presbyterian Support and any adverse effects that he or his behaviour might have had on  
34 them. Even when you give people the benefit of the doubt that change is always possible,



1 he hadn't yet been held accountable what he did to me, yeah.

2 **Q.** We've been going for about 45 minutes now. Did you want to have a short break, are you  
3 okay to carry on for a bit longer?

4 **A.** I'm actually okay to carry on, thank you.

5 **Q.** Ka pai. I wanted to next talk to you about you entering Dundas Road Family Home. The  
6 records show that you were -- in 1974 you came before the Children's Court for taking a  
7 bicycle?

8 **A.** [Nods].

9 **Q.** And that you were placed under supervision. But eventually were you then placed by the  
10 Department of Social Welfare in a family home at Dundas Road?

11 **A.** I was. I was probably one of a half a dozen children at Dundas Road at the time, all of us  
12 were Māori except for one girl. The couple that were our house parents were Pākehā and  
13 had children of their own, including two adult sons and a college-aged daughter. She lived  
14 at the home in rooms allocated for the home parents and their family. And the sons visited  
15 from time to time but were, I believe, living and working in the far north.

16 There was quite a -- some of the things that I remember about that experience, the  
17 Māori kids got treated quite differently to our Pākehā friend. And it might not seem a big  
18 deal to anyone, but it certainly was a big deal to me and to others. We would have, you  
19 know, three meals a day, we were fed and watered and encouraged to keep our personal  
20 hygiene in check and participate in household chores. Our, I'll call her our foster mother,  
21 was a heavy smoker, so back in that time it wasn't discouraged and she certainly smoked in  
22 just about every room in the house, and our foster father was a drinker, he certainly would  
23 have more than one drink at the end of the working day. But she was at home with us all  
24 the time, and he, in the late afternoon after work, and would be gone in the morning, but we  
25 would have -- so some of the treatment that was different for the Māori kids compared to  
26 our Pākehā friends, that she'd be allowed to have Horlicks and Milo and made with milk,  
27 hot milk. And we would have -- we would be allowed to have cocoa made with hot water.

28 Doesn't sound huge, but it was the thinking and the deliberate intention that we  
29 weren't worthy to share in a drink of Horlicks or Milo. And cocoa made with hot water is  
30 horrible. Beyond that, our foster father would have outbursts, especially when he had been  
31 drinking or maybe it was he'd had a hard day at work. It wasn't uncommon for him to shout  
32 or throw something across the room in front of those of us, the children that he was charged  
33 with responsibility for caring for.

34 But also they had their two sons that I mentioned earlier, their oldest son was an

1 abuser and when he'd come home at the weekend he would try it on with any of the girls in  
 2 the home. And our Pākehā friend that I talked about, the only young Pākehā in the home,  
 3 he was seeing her quite regularly. On one occasion I remember going downstairs where the  
 4 laundry was and him grabbing at me, and I also remember pushing him away and having a  
 5 bit of an argument about him leaving me alone. And really he just turned his attention to  
 6 the young Pākehā girl. She was in love with him, so we were 12, 13, 12 or 13, and we were  
 7 a captive audience. And his behaviour wasn't monitored or checked when he visited and  
 8 ours was daily to ensure we did the chores that we were responsible for, to ensure we kept  
 9 our personal hygiene in check.

10 Another difference was that this young Pākehā girl was allowed to have a room to  
 11 herself and the rest of us had to share rooms. That wasn't uncommon.

12 **Q.** After some time were you then moved to another family home in Onerahi?

13 **A.** I was. So the family home at Dundas Road had foster parents who fought between  
 14 themselves, who didn't keep their sons in check, particularly the oldest one who was having  
 15 his way, sexually abusing one young girl in the home, attempting to abuse me and beyond  
 16 that I'm not sure. We were being treated quite differently in terms of privileges or access  
 17 to, you know, the same kai. And leading up to Onerahi and the home there, the foster  
 18 parents at Dundas Road would from time to time be relieved with, you know, so that they  
 19 could take some respite from their fostering responsibilities, and there was another couple  
 20 that came and stayed and looked after us. And the foster father, or the relieving foster  
 21 father also began to abuse the young Pākehā girl that lived there.

22 So the move to Onerahi was a welcome change. A Māori woman and a Pākehā  
 23 man. They were a Christian family and they were lovely. But it wasn't my home.

24 **Q.** There was another family, a Cuban or Jamaican couple, you said that they were good  
 25 people but culturally miles apart?

26 **A.** Yeah, I took off from both family homes, absconded, and I was placed in a private foster  
 27 home with the GRO-B family and they were really lovely people. But we were  
 28 culturally in two different worlds. They had come from Jamaica and Cuba and I was from  
 29 Tikipunga and Ngunguru. And I think they -- I struggled to settle and I think they struggled  
 30 to care for me, and I ran away from there.

31 **Q.** Did Social Welfare ever ask you where you wanted to be?

32 **A.** No. But I know that I asked why couldn't I go home. And, you know, to me the approach  
 33 by the then Department of Social Welfare and the social workers that I had some, or that  
 34 had some involvement with me, would often say "You know why you can't go home."

1 Well, I didn't actually. What I do know is that I wanted to be at home with my father, in  
2 spite of the abuser that he was, than to be in State care in a family or private foster home  
3 where I was alienated from anything that resembled whānau life at Ngunguru, yeah.

4 **Q.** One, just moving on, one incident at Dundas Road you ended up being taken to hospital for  
5 treatment. You came across a doctor there?

6 **A.** I did, I developed an abscess on my left inner thigh. And I didn't know what it was, it was  
7 quite a large lump and my leg was red from just above my knee right up to the top of my  
8 thigh, and it just kept growing. And the social worker arranged for me to see a doctor at  
9 Whāngarei Base Hospital. And the doctor that I saw, you know, I don't recall any  
10 introductions, usually the adults were speaking for me. But I was seen by that doctor on  
11 my own and I was asked to remove my underwear, my clothes and while the doctor stood  
12 behind me and I was asked to bend over and reach down and touch my toes and then put  
13 my hands up behind and grab my buttocks and to pull them apart. But my abscess was on  
14 my inner left thigh.

15 There were no women or nurses present and the treatment prescribed at that point  
16 was to attend a heated pool to see if that would help the abscess go down. But of course it  
17 didn't, so in time I was admitted to Whāngarei Hospital and spent time on the ward and I  
18 had to go into theatre and have the abscess lanced and went on a treatment of antibiotics,  
19 but the memory of that experience with that doctor is as vivid as though it were just  
20 yesterday.

21 **Q.** Were you about 12 years old when that happened?

22 **A.** I believe so.

23 **Q.** You later were placed in Bollard Girls after being made a ward of the State in September  
24 1975, is that right?

25 **A.** Yes.

26 **Q.** When you were going to Bollard, did anyone tell you what was happening?

27 **A.** No.

28 **CHAIR:** Mr Snelgar, before we all move with you to Bollard, I'm just wondering, we have been  
29 going a while, maybe we should take an adjournment, a break now, would you like to do  
30 that?

31 **A.** Yes please.

32 **Q.** Yes, I think it's time, you need a break.

33 **A.** Thank you.

34 **Q.** Let's take 15 minutes now. You can have a refreshment and just get yourself together,

1 because we're going on to a pretty heavy part of your evidence, aren't we?

2 A. Yes please.

3 Q. Okay, so let's do that.

4 A. Thank you.

5 **Adjournment from 3.19 pm to 3.46 pm**

6 **CHAIR:** Yes Mr Snelgar.

7 **QUESTIONING BY MR SNELGAR CONTINUED:** Thank you. Neta, before the break we  
8 were talking about your placement in Bollard. When you first entered Bollard, were you  
9 made to shower naked and then see a doctor?

10 A. Yes, I was.

11 Q. That doctor was a male doctor?

12 A. He was.

13 Q. And there were no females or no other people present?

14 A. Not when I was examined by the doctor, no. I did have what I came to learn were referred  
15 to as house mother, a house mother took me to see the doctor and then came and collected  
16 me after, but no-one else was present during my examination.

17 Q. Can you tell us what happened during the examination?

18 A. Can I just go back a bit please?

19 Q. Of course.

20 A. There was a whole court process around my being made a ward of the State and neither my  
21 father, who was in court that day, nor I really understood what was happening. There was  
22 no advocate present for my father and certainly none for me. Although it might be fair for  
23 one to assume that a social worker might have been there for me and the whānau, that  
24 wasn't the case, despite social workers being present.

25 So it was a -- felt very officious and I saw my father and heard from the court that  
26 he was unable to maintain proper care of me, and so the responsibility for that care was  
27 being removed and I saw my father, his head drop and him clearly upset. And at the end of  
28 that process I was led away and he left the courtroom without me. And I was taken to the  
29 Whāngarei office of the then Department of Social Welfare.

30 At the department offices I was left -- ushered into a room with Police and a social  
31 worker and I was left in that room for some time before they then came and said they were  
32 taking me to Auckland and to Bollard Girls' Home in Avondale and so on arrival that's  
33 what happened. I was asked to remove my clothes, to shower and to -- and I was instructed  
34 to climb up on to a bed, there was no cover sheet or something to protect my dignity. I was

1 made to put my feet into stirrups and to splay my legs apart, and I'm mindful of how similar  
2 my own story is to the story shared this morning by Piwi. And so I was examined quite  
3 roughly by the doctor who I and other girls at Bollard came to refer to as Dr Death.

4 When I felt I was able to ask what was happening to me, it was explained that I  
5 was being examined to check for VD, for any venereal disease. And I didn't even know  
6 what that was. After that examination I was collected and taken to secure and again, like  
7 Piwi's own story, secure was a block of half a dozen cells thereabouts, and they  
8 contained -- they each contained a bed like a half wall on the other side of which was a  
9 toilet and that was it. There was a heavy door, it was kept locked and there was a small  
10 barred window. And I was 13.

11 **Q.** You were in that secure unit for about a week or you were told you'd be there for about a  
12 week?

13 **A.** I was told I'd be there about a week, but that was dependent on my behaviour. And I don't  
14 know if anyone here remembers the 80s movie Arachnophobia, the spiders in that movie  
15 are New Zealand spider called Avondale Spider. My cell was filled with Avondale spiders.  
16 So while they're not toxic they're pretty huge, and I remember being quite afraid, not  
17 wanting to call out because I didn't want to be in secure. But in saying that, I wasn't sure  
18 where else there was for me to be, because I hadn't been told what the rest of the facility  
19 comprised. All I was familiar with at that point in time was secure.

20 So I'm laying in the bed and there are spiders in each corner of the cell. It's hard to  
21 sleep, it's hard to find some degree of comfort because the last person that I believe  
22 I mattered to was my father and it had been now some few days since I had last seen him.  
23 So, yeah, Bollard was, and certainly secure was the closest thing I've come to being in jail.

24 **Q.** After that admission process and the time in secure you eventually were moved to the  
25 wings, but you didn't know about these wings before, is that right?

26 **A.** No, I didn't. I didn't know, I still really hadn't had it explained to me what Bollard Avenue  
27 Girls' Home was. I mean I'm not now and I wasn't then thick, so I was trying, in my young  
28 adolescent mind, to put pieces together and to try and build a picture and create some  
29 narrative around that of where I was and why I was there.

30 But I found out when I was taken from secure into the home proper that this was  
31 somewhere I was going to remain until someone decided differently. I didn't know for how  
32 long. I still didn't really know why I was there. I remember hearing about my father not  
33 having full and proper care and control over me, but -- and you mentioned the incident  
34 about the bicycle, but, you know, I was struggling.

1 **Q.** And I think we've heard before from other mōrehu as well, that most of the girls there were  
2 Māori, I think you say at least three quarters?

3 **A.** Yeah, absolutely, the majority were Māori. I'm struggling to recall any non-Māori, but I do  
4 remember some Pasifika cousins there.

5 **Q.** And the staff, were they mainly Pākehā?

6 **A.** The majority of the staff were Pākehā. The exception being the cooks in the kitchen.

7 **Q.** I want to talk about one particular staff member, the principal, Aidan McLean. Was he  
8 someone who would get or hand pick certain girls to come and clean his house?

9 **A.** Yes.

10 **Q.** And were you chosen by him to clean his house?

11 **A.** Yes, but there was no process, you know, there was nothing explained to me about how one  
12 got selected. Mr McLean was free to choose who he wished to have come to his home.  
13 What I understood from others that had been chosen by him and done that work before me  
14 was that it was a privilege. And if he liked you and you were good, he'd select you. And  
15 his home was on the site of the Bollard Avenue complex.

16 **Q.** Do you want to tell the Commission what happened when you went to his home?

17 **A.** Mr McLean raped me while I was cleaning his home. And in the months after that  
18 incident, I woke in the early hours of the morning feeling like I had a crook tummy and  
19 feeling wet, wet and warm between my legs and I put my hand down between my thighs  
20 and, you know, in what light there was coming into my room I could see that there was  
21 something on my fingers. I was bleeding and I remember feeling a little bit scared and I  
22 was scared because I didn't -- I wasn't sure whether to feel embarrassed or scared because  
23 I might get in trouble for soiling my bedding, but I remember getting up and stripping my  
24 bed and wanting to get to the laundry, and I had been assigned work in the laundry, so  
25 I knew how it worked. And I scooted through my dormitory and around to the laundry and  
26 I started to clean my sheets.

27 I also, when I went back to my room, went to see a friend that I'd made in there,  
28 her name was GRO-B, and GRO-B was hearing-impaired, but we were  
29 great friends, we became great friends in GRO-B there. And I told her what was  
30 happening and the morning was moving GRO-B on and by now there'd been a  
31 change in staff and the house mother from 8 GRO-B am or whatever time  
32 they started, and GRO-B had come on duty, and GRO-B I -- her name was  
33 Ms Brown. We spoke to Ms Brown about what was happening for me. I was struggling to  
34 stay upright because I was in quite significant pain and still bleeding quite heavily. We told

1 her what was happening and she told me to run a bath and to hop in the bath, it was  
 2 probably just my period. So [REDACTED] came with me and we ran a bath  
 3 and I hopped in the bath and globules of blood and tissue appeared in the bath and were  
 4 floating around me really, and [REDACTED] got quite concerned and so was I.

5 We got me cleaned up as best we could [REDACTED] and then we again  
 6 went to the house mother and spoke to Ms Brown [REDACTED] and I asked if I could  
 7 see the doctor. And I said I believed that I'm miscarrying, and she said "No, you can't see  
 8 the doctor because they're not due to come here for a few days. You'll have to wait."  
 9 I remember being issued with some [REDACTED] sanitary napkins and the next  
 10 thing I know [REDACTED] going off her nut at the house mother and starts trying to  
 11 communicate her dismay at me being [REDACTED] dismissed so easily, where a  
 12 window ended up being smashed and [REDACTED] was removed from the main  
 13 house and taken down to secure.

14 **Q.** I want to show you a document, Neta, which is document ending 011.

15 **CHAIR:** Just before we do that, is there a problem with a name?

16 **MR SNELGAR:** Yes, sorry, just with the name of that person, we unfortunately can't refer to her.

17 **CHAIR:** Your friend's name.

18 A. Oh sorry, okay.

19 **QUESTIONING BY MR SNELGAR CONTINUED:** Kei te pai. This is document ending 011.

20 If I could call up paragraph 2. This is a letter from the acting principal dated 29 January  
 21 1976 to the Department of Social Welfare. Does it say there, Neta, I'll just read it out,  
 22 "I mentioned then that Neta was having problems with her menstruation and it is the  
 23 opinion of our doctor that she probably had a miscarriage whilst here." Can you see that  
 24 written there?

25 A. I can.

26 **Q.** It goes on to talk a bit about treatment and counselling. I just wanted to highlight that on  
 27 your file that confirmed what you've been talking about?

28 A. Do you know, Commissioners, that's the first and only time I've seen that validated, so  
 29 thank you.

30 **Q.** Perhaps we can move on from that document. I want to just highlight that a while later did  
 31 Mr McLean leave and was he replaced by someone else at Bollard?

32 A. He did leave and the man who had been Deputy Principal took over and he was a great  
 33 man. He was warm, friendly, and even then I might not have used these words, but he was  
 34 professional. He was a principal of an all girls school and he behaved as such.

- 1 **Q.** I just want to highlight that you were at Bollard on and off because you left or absconded  
2 there a few times, but you were there until you were about 14, is that right?
- 3 **A.** That's correct.
- 4 **Q.** I know there's a lot of other detail in your statement and just focusing on Bollard, before we  
5 move on to recommendations, is there anything else about Bollard that you want to  
6 highlight? Remembering that the Commissioners do have your statement, so please don't  
7 feel like, if you don't say it, that it won't be heard.
- 8 **A.** I've probably touched on some of the main things that I want to share here. But all I'll add  
9 is that it wasn't a place and there was no system that was tailored to girls like Neta that had  
10 come from a place where whānau were valued, a place where Te Reo Māori was in daily  
11 use, there was no-one that looked like Neta responsible for Neta's care. The only people  
12 who look like Neta were the other girls at the home. There was nothing about Bollard or  
13 about its structure or the system built around that that resembled anything that was close to  
14 me or my culture.
- 15 **Q.** Tēnā koe Neta, that's a very good lead in to our next kaupapa kōrero which is a mixture of  
16 your insights and some of your recommendations for the future. Because I know that you  
17 are a very accomplished wāhine toa for your community. I wondered if, as part of the  
18 recommendations, did you now want to refer to the photos or would you like to do that a  
19 little bit later?
- 20 **A.** Do that a little bit later.
- 21 **Q.** Kei te pai. The first topic I thought, and kei a koe te tikanga, was talking about in terms of  
22 your experiences with counselling and particularly your time with Miriama Kahu.  
23 I wondered if you could share a little bit about that?
- 24 **A.** It's been a long journey, you know, as the 6 year old that -- and even before, that grew up  
25 out at Ngunguru surrounded by whānau, running bare feet through our paddocks and  
26 helping with mara kai and helping shell pipi and gather kina and waking up to the smell of  
27 fresh snapper or fresh flounder cooking and living in a home that was full of love. And to  
28 turning 6 and losing my mum and all of those things that I've shared a little about today.
- 29 And later in that journey, you know, I encountered people whose own personal  
30 experiences, they had -- there were similarities in our stories, and so we would share  
31 information. People I befriended or, you know, we developed some kind of relationship,  
32 whether that was a social environment or however. We shared information about resources  
33 in our community, how we can get support and help for the things that we'd shared that  
34 happened to us as young children and young teens.



1           And, you know, I learned about a lump sum payment from ACC and I remember  
2 being -- initially being motivated because at the end of a process, and I still wasn't sure  
3 what that process was yet, you got 10 grand and I thought well, I could use 10 grand. But  
4 when I started that process actually money became the last thing I was interested in. It was  
5 starting a process where some of the professionals that I met began to help me peel back  
6 some of the layers that had built up over the years. Part of the ACC process was that, and  
7 beyond, was that I had to, if I wanted, was to see someone who was ACC accredited if  
8 I wanted counselling or therapy or see a psychotherapist. And, you know, at that time there  
9 were very few, if any, ACC accredited Māori practitioners. Māori practitioners existed but  
10 they weren't necessarily registered or accredited with ACC. So my choice was limited.  
11 I did see people and some were good and some not so good.

12           And I'm married now, I have a family, I moved to the Kaikoura coast and the  
13 nearest town to me is Kaikoura. And I drive the half hour in and out and I meet a woman  
14 and then I meet her whānau and then she welcomes me on to her marae and she's a  
15 practitioner, not ACC accredited, not registered with any professional body, doesn't have a  
16 degree, but she was someone who was passionate about whānau and someone who  
17 was -- had been working and continued to work as part of the Matua Whāngai initiative,  
18 which the Government at that time stopped funding. This woman, her name is Miriama  
19 Kahu and she's no longer with us. But she was, as is her family, her whānau, wonderful  
20 human beings. And committed to Matua Whāngai, committed to Whānau Ora, committed  
21 to Māori, committed to the well-being of Māori people and the community at large.

22           And Miriama was able to take me places and to help move me forward from a  
23 place where I'd become stuck despite seeing other practitioners, those that I was able to see  
24 and able to be supported to see because they were ACC accredited. But I got stuck and  
25 that's, in my view, because they weren't Māori and they weren't able to address with me the  
26 impact of my early childhood abuse and the experiences in between those times and right  
27 up to the point where I was now a young mother and wife.

28           So Miriama was able to take me places and help me move forward. And I'm  
29 forever grateful to Miriama and the work that she and her husband did and their family and  
30 whānau did, and which her whānau continue to do in service to their community.

31 **Q.** Kia ora.

32 **A.** I guess there's a point to be made from my perspective, it's that when the Crown is thinking  
33 about ways to support redress and address the wrongs of the past and ensure that we don't  
34 repeat them now or in the future, one of the things that should be taken into consideration is

1 that people have a choice and that it doesn't necessarily look like a degree on the wall or a  
 2 certificate of registration. Because there were people with those things that saw me but  
 3 after they saw me I was left to languish for some time into my early adulthood before  
 4 I found Miriama or she found me.

5 **Q.** These forward thinking things I think we certainly hear you about the cultural  
 6 appropriateness, and you speak as someone who's not only a survivor or mōrehu but  
 7 someone who's worked in the Social Welfare system, is that right?

8 **A.** Yes, I worked for CYFS for a couple of years after I studied at Vic and got a post-grad  
 9 diploma in social work and spent some time in the CYFS, then CYFS Porirua office. And  
 10 that was a tough place to work.

11 **Q.** Based on your experiences, not only as a mōrehu but as someone who's worked in the  
 12 system, do you have any recommendations, comments that you'd want to make about the  
 13 care of our tamariki and systemic change?

14 **A.** I think, Kingi, if I just go back to the court process, but actually even before then. I wonder  
 15 if it's possible to share with the hearing, with the Commissioners, some photographs that  
 16 I provided?

17 **CHAIR:** Please do, yes.

18 **A.** I just want to talk to those while I'm sharing.

19 **MR SNELGAR:** Ka pai.

20 **CHAIR:** I take it they're already arranged and ready to go.

21 **QUESTIONING BY MR SNELGAR CONTINUED:** Just let us know if there's an order or  
 22 particular photo, but we'll bring them up.

23 **A.** This is GRO-B , GRO-B is one of my mokopuna, one of my 15 mokopuna, I  
 24 think GRO-B Piwi was showing off with her 30 something.

25 GRO-B is 12 here and she's dressed up and ready for her first intermediate school social.  
 26 You can see she looks happy and radiant and that's how Neta should have looked as a  
 27 12 year old. But I was going through a court process and about to be removed from my  
 28 whānau. Neta should have looked like GRO-B .

29 So on the court process, there was no-one there for my father or for me, there was  
 30 no explanation about what would take place at the courthouse, there was no one that spoke  
 31 to either of us after the hearing, after I was made a ward of the State, didn't understand what  
 32 that meant, and nor did my father.

33 **CHAIR:** Neta, I'm glad you've raised this again, I missed the opportunity earlier when you were  
 34 talking about the court process. I've had a look at the papers around here. The social

1 worker made an application to place you in care and associated with that application was a  
2 report on you which set out the reasons, in their view, why you should be in care. What I  
3 want to know is, do you remember if you were ever shown that report, particularly before  
4 you went to court or at the court, do you ever remember reading it?

5 A. No.

6 Q. So on that basis, that supports what you're saying, that you didn't know really why you  
7 were in court and what the purpose of being placed into care was in the eyes of Social  
8 Welfare, is that right?

9 A. Commissioner Judge Shaw, I just remember being afraid.

10 Q. Yes.

11 A. I thought I was in big trouble.

12 Q. Yes.

13 A. So no, I didn't know what I was in for, you know, what I had to look forward to, and it  
14 wasn't explained to me then and actually it still hasn't been, but of course I'm an adult now,  
15 nearly 60 so I understand, but I never saw a report about me or had one referred to, even if  
16 I wasn't able to see it, have someone talk to such a report, explaining to me what was  
17 happening.

18 Q. So from a legal point of view, and I know this to me sounds very unjust, that you were  
19 there without assistance, without knowledge, without being told the case against you and  
20 your father. Would that be right?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. Thank you, thank you for that.

23 A. Can we move the photo along, thank you. So here we have GRO-B on the right, you've  
24 seen the photograph just before of GRO-B and her first cousin, another of my  
25 mokopuna, GRO-B on the left. GRO-B was the same age as me when I went  
26 into -- when I was made a ward of the State. GRO-B on the left is 15 turning 16. So  
27 by the time, somewhere in between, I had been raped by a policeman, I had been raped by a  
28 principal of a girls' home, and I had miscarried. And by the time GRO-B who's on the  
29 left with the hat on, turns 16 at the end of this month, I will have had my first child.  
30 I looked nothing like GRO-B or GRO-B do in that photo. But I should have.  
31 I should have. We can go to the next one.

32 On the left is GRO-B and on the right is GRO-B. GRO-B has  
33 just turned 6 GRO-B and she's holding up her certificates really proudly. They go  
34 to Te Kura Māori of Porirua in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. They're both immersed in their Reo

1 Māori and they are flourishing. on the right is the same age there as I was when  
2 my mother died. on the right is the same age that I was and I had already come  
3 to [GRO-B] the notice of the then Department of Social Welfare. They knew about  
4 me, they knew about my father and my siblings, in particular my sister who, as a 13 year  
5 old, had a child. Thank you.

6 There is on the left and on the right. I said they're  
7 flourishing. They [GRO-B] do waka ama [GRO-B] and they're active in kapahaka  
8 and they're proud of themselves and we're proud of them too as a whānau. And that's  
9 exactly how Neta should have been able to live and look like as a 6 year old. As a 6 year  
10 old whose name was already known by the Department of Social Welfare and whose -- and  
11 the Department whose social workers were already visiting our whānau home. Thank you.

12 These are all mokopuna, [GRO-B] on the left, [GRO-B] the white tunic at  
13 the front, [GRO-B], her sister with Hibiscus in her hair, and [GRO-B] on the right.  
14 And I'd been that age of each of them at some point in time. And at their age in that image  
15 there, there was a file on me held by the Department of Social Welfare and it began to grow  
16 and get bigger and expand.

17 And their approach to me and my well-being was punitive. I was already wrong  
18 before ever being considered whether I was right. I was already damaged before asking  
19 any questions about how had that damage occurred. There was no interest in what had  
20 happened, what had transpired to this young person that you've heard Kingi ask me  
21 questions about in the way that I was described as belligerent and a whole host of other  
22 adjectives.

23 I know it might have been helpful and avoided years of abuse and trauma, for me  
24 anyway, if someone had asked the question where is this behaviour coming from? What's  
25 happened with this young girl? What's happening with this young girl that we see sitting or  
26 standing before us? It might have been helpful to have had an advocate stand alongside  
27 me, separate to someone informing my father, one about what was happening to his family,  
28 to his child, and to him, and what were the implications for him downstream. It might have  
29 been useful had someone just asked me.

30 I know there's a long way to go when the system is shown to be flawed. You  
31 know we talk about a system in isolation from the people who are part of that system. But  
32 actually a system is constructed by people. And it is people who keeps the system  
33 functioning. We've got some work to do all of us.

34 Part of the system, in my view, needs to acknowledge the rangatiratanga of its

1 first -- of its nation's first people. This is not intended to be disrespectful of this process,  
2 but, you know, while this base may have been purposively built, it still looks like a  
3 courtroom, it still looks like something that is representative of colonisation. Because it's  
4 important to show some respect, the movement in and out of the Commissioners that  
5 requires me to stand and then sit when they've entered and been seated, some of my  
6 kaumatua would know how to navigate and manage the same due respect to the rangatira  
7 that sit at this bench, whether that is through mihi whakatau, or some other appropriate  
8 way. But this process is not reflective of Neta's culture.

9 **QUESTIONING BY MR SNELGAR CONTINUED:** Kia ora, I was going to say, did you want  
10 the photo to remain up?

11 A. No, you can take them down, thank you.

12 Q. Thank you.

13 A. Thank you for letting me share those.

14 **CHAIR:** Thank you for sharing them. They're very beautiful girls.

15 A. Thank you. On that they're happy, well-adjusted, sassy, mischief, get themselves in and out  
16 of trouble. They're articulate, eloquent, artistic, creative, wonderful young people I have  
17 the privilege to call my mokopuna. So this process, I'm grateful for the opportunity to sit  
18 with you and share a part of my story, in particular my story of my experience in State care  
19 and the abuse that I endured at the hands of particular people.

20 But if there's some takeaways from this experience, try as we might to make it  
21 better, we have to continue to try harder. My kaumatua would have offered an alternative,  
22 may even be able to offer other mōrehu an alternative arrangement and space in which to  
23 share their experiences. Am I talking about a marae? Maybe, but not necessarily. Did it  
24 have to resemble a courtroom? Do you know coming in here, while it's certainly taken into  
25 consideration the safety and the care towards people like me, it also triggers some  
26 memories that are not so pleasant, that don't make me feel safe at all.

27 I'm just asking the question, I guess, is there an alternative? Usually there is  
28 another way that can be found. We talk about and we hear often said or referred to as  
29 what's culturally appropriate, culturally appropriate services, available for Māori and  
30 others, fit for purpose. Does a qualification accreditation make you a safe practitioner, the  
31 best person to work with a young person? I've already said no. I had a principal who  
32 thought it was his right to take me over to his home and make me feel like I was the one  
33 that was privileged while he raped me, I got pregnant and then miscarried in his facility  
34 where he was in charge. He had a qualification as a principal. He would have also had a

1 professional accreditation.

2 So when we're thinking about other options or a strategy for redress, I hope we're  
3 talking about co-production, something that is done with the people, for the people who  
4 most need things to change. We can't afford to see children in isolation from their whānau,  
5 their significant others. And we also need to be prepared to sometimes not have the  
6 answers and to get out of the way of those who do. The popular way isn't always the right  
7 way.

8 **QUESTIONING BY MR SNELGAR CONTINUED:** I don't want to interrupt you as a mana  
9 wāhine, whaea, but I just wondered, I'm mindful of the time, if you had any final  
10 comments, and I, as I said before, I don't want you to feel as if you're not heard. Haere  
11 tonu, I just wanted to draw your attention.

12 A. This is a real opportunity for us all. We can avoid developing policy and process in  
13 isolation from the people for whom those policies and processes are intended to respond,  
14 starting at a place where we acknowledge we don't have all the answers and being open to  
15 hearing from others. It's not a scientific exercise, it's just about being real.

16 I wanted to say that, you know, services in our community, a lot of community  
17 organisations do some amazing work, but it's a very competitive environment. And if you  
18 tick all the right boxes, and you speak loudly enough, you get heard over those that  
19 continue to soldier away and try and make a difference, they create a space for the voices of  
20 whānau to come through and be heard. They might not tick the boxes, but they do the  
21 work.

22 We operate in a little bit like, I think I've talked about in my sharing, we tend to  
23 operate on a low trust relationship. We have to start trusting people who know their people  
24 best. You know, when Dame Tariana Turia talked about Whānau Ora along with Tā  
25 Mason and the working party early on, they talk about whānau know themselves better than  
26 anybody else ever will. We have to start trusting whānau, because if whānau know what  
27 the issues are, they might also be able to share what the solutions to those issues are. We  
28 hold on tightly, whether it's about protecting our job, our reputation; try letting go, and see  
29 what wisdom and what mana steps forward from the places in communities and the people  
30 within whānau that can help effect change, positive change.

31 I just want to share a couple of things before I finish if that's okay?

32 **CHAIR:** Of course.

33 A. Assata Shakur, she's in her 70s or 80s now, she was a member of the Black Liberation  
34 Army and she says "Nobody in history has gotten their freedom by appealing to the moral

1 sense of the people oppressing them." And more closely, more close to home, Rukuwai  
 2 Tipene-Allen is a whānaunga of mine from the north and she works in Māori media. It's a  
 3 bit of a message to my sisters and brothers in this process, to the other mōrehu who have  
 4 shared their stories and those who are here too.

5 We are more, more than a statistic, more than a tick box activity, more than what  
 6 is seen and heard in the headlines or a news story, we are Māori, we are mokopuna, we are  
 7 the mokopuna our tīpuna dreamed of, and we are the tīpuna our mokopuna should be able  
 8 to look up to. We were created out of intent, we are more, we are Māori. We are the  
 9 embodiment of tino rangatiratanga, we are the pou in the ground that says we did not cede  
 10 our mana motuhake, tēnā tatou katoa.

11 **CHAIR:** Kia ora whaea.

12 **MR SNELGAR:** He kupu ano ki a tāpiri ki tēnā me o rangatiratanga kua whārikitia i mua te  
 13 aroaro o tēnei Kōmihana no reira e te rangatira, te whānaunga tēnā koe ano. Tēnei au tetahi  
 14 o mokopuna e mihi ana ki a koe mo tō kaha ki te tū rangatira. Nō reira, tēnā koe a ka huri  
 15 au ki ngā Kōmihana. I'll hand it over to our Commissioners, thank you.

16 **CHAIR:** I'm going to ask our sister here, Sandra Alofivae to thank you.

17 **COMMISSIONER ALOFIVAE:** Neta, I le ava ma le fa'aaloalo lava, fa'afetai fa'afetai fa'afetai  
 18 lava. Malo le loto finau, malo le loto toa, malo le saunoa ma le malosi ma le malalama. Ia  
 19 pa'u mai le manuia mai le lagi ia oe, ma lau aiga, ma lau fanau, ma fanau a lau fanau, ia o'o  
 20 i le fa'avavau. Neta, when I heard your kōrero and the richness and the honesty and the  
 21 challenges of the same, my first language is actually Samoan, raised in the home in the  
 22 language and I had the benefit and the privilege of actually being able to maintain it all my  
 23 life because I was raised by my grandmother who flatly refused to learn English. So we  
 24 learned to speak Samoan in the home and Palagi English in the schools, but our whole  
 25 world view is actually in the Samoan context.

26 The enduring strength that you have, Neta, in bringing your kōrero, your kupu to us  
 27 here today, it was a privilege for the Commission to be able to receive it. We hear you.  
 28 We hear you when you say are there no other spaces, are there no other alternatives?  
 29 I want to assure you that we looked at those and we're looking at those and we will  
 30 continue to operate in alternative spaces. Actually we do. This is just the very public face.  
 31 And we're so grateful when wāhine toa like you and our men, our tāne that come forward,  
 32 we know it's not easy.

33 But but for the richness and the authenticity of your kōrero, our nation would not  
 34 know, they would not know what actually happened. You were more than a statistic in this

1 room. You might be another one of our mōrehu, our survivors that gave their testimony,  
2 but the value of your story added to all of the others provides a richness that this  
3 Commission would not have to turn into a taonga to gift back to our Government about  
4 what is it that honestly really needs to change. So thank you for that, thank you for  
5 standing tall, thank you to your daughter who's here with you today, thank you for being  
6 one of the major pous in mum's life.

7 Thank you too for the photos that you shared with us today. You know, a lot of  
8 people want to protect their whānau, but we're so grateful when you bring your whole self  
9 into the room. And the richness of those photos and the beautiful smiles, just the joy, you  
10 know, the joy of being a 6 year old, the 8 year old, the 9 year old, the 12 year old, the  
11 15 year old, the range of ages in your grandchildren, the joy that was so missing in your  
12 own life. Thank you for drawing that picture for us and for putting that in context so that  
13 the rest of Aotearoa understands what it was that really went on in your life.

14 So as we move forward I just want to assure you again, on behalf of the Inquiry, just  
15 of the value and the richness that your testimony brings. It's not lost on us, the courage, the  
16 real courage that it takes. Because it's not just you, it's actually your whānau, your daughter  
17 who's sitting beside you, it's all your 15 grandchildren and all of your other children, it's not  
18 lost on us.

19 So we really want to aroha back to you and thank you for starting with your values,  
20 tika, pono and aroha. They're the same values that underpin our work. So it's beautiful,  
21 almost feels like a wholeness that we can hold your fragility in this room and trust that  
22 actually by the end of the day that both of us, you and your whānau, us here at the  
23 Commission and everyone else here, can leave in a better space. Fa'afetai, fa'afetai lava,  
24 manuia.

25 **CHAIR:** He waiata.

26 **MR SNELGAR:** We have a waiata, Neta, for you which I think is apt in light of your kōrero, Ma  
27 Wai Ra.

28 **[Waiata Ma Wai Ra]**

29 **Hearing closes with karakia mutunga by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei**

30 **Hearing adjourns at 5.01 pm to Friday, 7 May 2021 at 10 am**

31  
32  
33  
34