

Witness Name: Michael Fusi Lialiga

Statement No.: WITN0692001

Exhibits: N/A

Dated: 15 July 2021

ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

WITNESS STATEMENT OF MICHAEL FUSI LIALIGA

I, Michael Fusi Lialiga, will say as follows: -

Introduction

1. My full name is Michael Fusi Lialiga. I was born in New Zealand and raised in Samoa. I hold the Matai title of Vaivaimalemalo from the village of Saleimoa.
2. In 2018 I completed my Ph.D. in Peace and Conflict Studies through the Otago Peace and Conflict Studies Centre at the University of Otago.
3. My research examined aspects of fa'a Samoa (Samoa culture) and its relationship to domestic violence in Samoa. I received the Exceptional Thesis Award from the Humanities Division of the University of Otago for my Ph.D.
4. I currently lecture at Te Tumu School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies, University of Otago. I teach courses on Peace and Conflict in the Pacific and Indigenous Leadership in the Pacific.
5. My research interests include indigenous conflict resolution practices in the Pacific, peace and conflict in the Pacific, transnational crime in the Pacific,

conflict and crisis in the Pacific, domestic and family violence, mediation, mediation practices in the Pacific, understanding social issues (substance abuse, alcoholism, suicide, crime rates amongst Pacific communities) from a Peace and Conflict Studies perspective.

6. In 2017 I became an accredited mediator through the Resolution Institute after receiving the Resolution Institute Mediation Scholarship.
7. I am the Samoan Consultant for Freedom House, New York, USA. Freedom House is a nonpartisan organization which produces research and reports on a number of core thematic issues related to democracy, political rights and civil liberties.
8. I am an Investigator for Asia Pacific Institute for Gender Based Violence (API-GBV), Oakland, CA, USA. API-GBV is a national resource centre on domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking, and other forms of gender-based violence in Asian/Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities.
9. I am the Research Advisor for a project on Wellbeing amongst the Samoan Diaspora in Dunedin. The Wellbeing project is by the Pacific Trust Otago: An independent community provider of health, education, and social services to Pacific peoples.

Public Hearing - 'Tulou – Our Pacific Voices'

10. I have been asked by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care (the Inquiry) to participate as part of the public hearing on Pacific people's experience of abuse in care, 'Tulou – Our Pacific Voices' ("the Hearing").
11. I have been asked specifically to provide my views as part of the Talanoa Panel discussion on 'A Pacific Lens on Redress' and have been asked to provide my views on the following topics and questions:

Redress from a Pacific perspective

- a. What should the purpose or objectives of a redress scheme be?

Traditional dispute resolution systems

- b. What are some of the defining elements of traditional Pacific reconciliation processes such as ifoga, fakalelei, isorosoro and ho'oponopono?
- c. Can culturally specific reconciliation processes be successfully adapted for use in Aotearoa New Zealand?
- d. What might a redress process that is underpinned by Pacific values and practices look like?
- e. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of a Pan-Pacific model of redress?

Pacific Health Models

- f. Can Pacific health and wellbeing models such as the Fonofale, Kakala and Tivaevae models be used to conceptualise holistic redress approaches for Pacific peoples?

Types of Redress

- g. Possibilities currently include but are not limited to:
 - i. financial payments (what do you think any payment should aim to do)
 - ii. rehabilitation (e.g. through counselling, education and employment, assisting survivors to build and maintain healthy relationships etc.)
 - iii. acknowledgment of abuse
 - iv. apology.
- h. What other elements are crucial to achieve meaningful redress from a Pacific survivor perspective?

Redress for family/redress for intergenerational trauma

- i. Should redress be available for family of survivors, and if so, what type?
- j. If a survivor is deceased, should their family members be able to make redress claims?
- k. Should a redress scheme provide collective redress? What might this look like?

Accessibility

- l. What barriers, culturally related or otherwise, do Pacific survivors face to making claims for redress?
 - m. What are Pacific peoples' needs when accessing redress provider services and making claims?
12. I believe that my cultural and academic background and experience qualify me to participate as an expert witness on the Talanoa Panel discussion.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated: 15 July 2021

Annexure A

Consent to use my statement

I, **Michael Fusi Ligaliga**, confirm that by submitting my signed witness statement to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care, I consent to its use in the following ways:

- reference and/or inclusion in any interim and/or final report;
- disclosure to those granted leave to appear, designated as core participants and where instructed, their legal representatives via the Inquiry's database or by any other means as directed by the Inquiry;
- presentation as evidence before the Inquiry, including at a public hearing;
- informing further investigation by the Inquiry;
- publication on the Inquiry website.

I also confirm that I have been advised of the option to seek anonymity and that if granted my identity may nevertheless be disclosed to a person or organisation, including any instructed legal representatives, who is the subject of criticism in my witness statement in order that they are afforded a fair opportunity to respond to the criticism.

Please tick one of the two following boxes:

if you are seeking anonymity

or

if you are happy for your identity to be known

GRO-C

Signature: _____

Date: 15 July 2015