

Witness Name: Te Aroha Knox

Statement No: WITN0543001

Dated: 16/08/2021

ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

WITNESS STATEMENT OF TE AROHA KNOX

Ko wai ahau

Ko Tainui te waka

Ko Taupiri te maunga

Ko Waikato te awa

1. My name is Te Aroha Knox.
2. I am the proud mother of my two sons, GRO-B and GRO-B have seven beloved moko.
3. Ko William rāua ko Jane Falwasser ōku mātua. My parents are William and Jane Falwasser. I te taha o tōku pāpā, nō Waikato Tainui ahau. On my father's side I am Waikato-Tainui. I te taha o tōku māmā, nō Ngāpuhi Nui Tonu ahau. On my mother's side, I am Ngāpuhi. My Mum is from the Hokianga on the West Coast.
4. I am one of 6 children. There are 5 girls and one boy in my whānau. I am the third eldest. I was born on 1 January 1965.
5. My name Te Aroha comes from my grandmother on my mother's side. I was named after my grandmother. When I was in my mother's puku, my dad got drunk and he decided to beat my mum. My grandmother Te Aroha, was the one

who picked my mum up off the ground and said “that baby, you name that baby after me”. So that’s how I got my name.

6. As a child I used to be called ‘Lovey’, which I liked while I was growing up. I now try to keep my name exactly as it is, because for me this is about holding onto my mana, especially with what I went through in care. Once I took ownership of my own name, I was able to change my way of thinking. I realised that my wairua had been with me the whole time - I just didn’t realise it at the time. I released the pain I had associated with the name Lovey.

Ōku Mātua

7. I would like to start with my parents. I think it is important that I speak about my Mum and Dad because I can see what their bigger picture was about, I can understand their cycle of abuse, and the factors that lead to me being in state care. I believe that my parents’ own childhood experiences led to a cycle of violence, which meant that they beat us as kids.
8. My dad grew up with his first cousins as a whāngai pēpi. When my grandmother was still carrying my dad, she was approached by a first cousin in the whānau who wanted to whāngai my dad. Unfortunately, my dad was abused in his whāngai whānau. I believe that his experience of being abused as a child led to him becoming an alcoholic as an adult and to him eventually becoming abusive himself.
9. My mum did not have a good upbringing either. I know that as a child, my mum was raped by an uncle.
10. My parents married each other very soon after they met. They had a ‘shotgun wedding,’ because my Mum got pregnant with my older sister. At the time, they did not know that they both had a history of being abused. They had both experienced childhood abuse before they came together, and my dad was dealing with this trauma through his consumption of alcohol.

My childhood until 10 years old, 1965 – 1979

11. I lived with my grandmother for three months while my parents tried to figure each other out but then my parents asked for me back. My grandparents were my base, and were the ones who showed me unconditional love.
12. Before I went into care, we were brought up on the south side of Auckland.
13. When I was growing up with Mum and Dad, they would always take me back to my marae in Waikato and in Ngāpuhi. They would always take me back for kaupapa like tangihanga, it didn't matter who it was, we would always go. I loved being immersed in tikanga – that is where I thrived. I have found this to be true in my adult life, and I go to the marae as often as I can for different kaupapa.
14. I also had some knowledge of tikanga Māori when I was younger. Mum and Dad taught me the basics of survival and showed me how to live off the land. My Dad was very spiritual, he took us kids into the ngahere, into the bush in Rotorua, I would have been 3 years old the first time I went into the ngahere with him. We would look for rongoā in the ngahere. I respected my dad for his knowledge of rongoā. My mum was the same, she would live off the land – we would pick the berries off the karaka tree and boil them to get rid of the poison. We would always do karakia before and after gathering. We knew how to get what we needed to survive off the land. This was my parents' light – they shared this knowledge with us kids.
15. However, both of my parents were violent towards us. During my childhood, my dad was physically violent towards me, my siblings, and our Mum. I felt that Dad would see us as pawns, he would beat us a lot. My Mum was also physically violent towards me and my siblings, she would get the belt out, put our heads on the table, and whack us.
16. I witnessed the physical abuse that my mum suffered from my dad. Dad was a hard worker, he worked on the railways and timber mills. He did not have the opportunity to pursue an education and a meaningful career, so there was nothing else out there for him but labouring work. In those days there was a work hard play hard culture and playing hard often meant you came home and hit the wife. That was my dad's idea of playing hard.

17. In 1975, when I was 10 years old, my mum was put in Tokanui Hospital because of domestic violence from my dad. The hospital filled her up on valium because she had been so damaged.
18. My dad went to Rangipō prison that year because of the physical violence that he inflicted on me, my siblings, and our mum. He was in prison for 8 to 9 months, we lived with our Mum for that period of time.
19. My mum's brother and his whānau looked after us while my parents were away, they lived in Mangakino. My aunty who I stayed with is now a social worker and she works for Oranga Tamariki.
20. When my dad was released from prison, we were all living in a halfway house on Lincoln Street, in Auckland. During this time, I remember one occasion where I was approached by a young Pākehā girl. This girl led me to a Catholic church and played the piano for me. She then led me to a two-story house that was located on the church property and told me to "sit on the priest's lap." I ran out of there as fast as I could. Looking back now I know that this was very wrong. I wanted to share this experience because I feel that I was often surrounded by adults who betrayed me in my childhood.
21. Our parents continued to go through marital issues, and they separated. My Mum didn't have any support from my dad. Dad moved out, but he would still come over drunk and we would run away with my Mum to the park. We wouldn't come back until the next day and that was how we ended up getting put into social welfare.
22. In our childhood we were exposed to the darker parts of our parents, watching them deal with their trauma thorough violence. Eventually, all three of us older siblings were put into care, but my three younger sisters stayed in the care of my Mum.

My experiences in State care

23. I was in four different homes from the age of 10 to 16 and none of them were a good experience. It has been significant for me to have open dialogue and korero about what happened to me during my time in state care in different homes. It has taken a lot of courage to come forward and talk about what happened to me from then to now. It has also taken me a long time to get to a

point where I can speak - I'm speaking my truth now for all those girls that never had the opportunity to do so.

Family home – Papatoetoe, Auckland

24. I was first placed into state care in 1975, I was around the age of 10. All three of us older siblings were put into a family home in Auckland. We were put into care because of the physical abuse that we were suffering from our dad. My older sister, GRO-B was placed in Weymouth Girls' School, I was placed into a family home with my older brother, and my three youngest sisters stayed in my mum's care.
25. The family home was at Kenderdine Road, Papatoetoe in Auckland. It was a ten-bedroom family home run by an English couple who were both in their early 60's. There were many children already residing in the home. Even though I say children, I remember that I was constantly surrounded by older children; 16 to 18-year-old boys, they were men really.
26. I got into fights there. As soon as somebody said anything about my brother, I was like, "Yeah, you want a hiding?" and we would have a fight because my brother was so precious to me. My brother is a year older than me, but I would protect him because he was so precious to me. Only he and I knew the pain, the secret, that came with us.
27. I was raped by one of the 18-year-old boys at the home. I know that his first name is GRO-B but I cannot remember his last name. He took me into the toilet, shut the door, locked it and then proceeded to rape me. It was a traumatic experience for me. He had his hands around my throat, and I screamed. I remember thinking "What's going on? What's happening to me right now?"
28. I was 10 years old; I was too young to understand what had happened to me. I had no understanding of what I could do, and I didn't know who I could talk to.
29. My brother was sharing a room with my rapist, GRO-B-1 and another boy. I understand that after raping me, GRO-B-1 told his roommate about what he did to me. The roommate was a 16-year-old boy, I don't remember his name.
30. The next night, the 16-year-old boy came into my room. He was trying to rape me, but he was caught by my brother who came into the room, saw the 16-year-

old boy and asked him what he was doing there, so the 16-year-old left. For the next few days, I was being stalked by the 16-year-old, he would return to my room each night.

31. I was completely unsafe in that family home, and I knew that I needed to escape. I told my brother, "It's time for us to run away." When he asked me why, I told him that GRO-B-1 had raped me, and that his roommate, the 16-year-old-boy, was trying to come to my room to do the same thing. We ran away the next day. It was me, my brother, and my brother's friend. We were homeless, and we slept in the park. We had some money. We were eventually caught by the police. After my brother and I were picked up by the police, we were moved to different homes. My brother was placed into Wesleydale and I was sent to Allendale Girls Home.

Allendale Girls Home, Auckland

32. In 1979, I was 13 and I was placed into care at Allendale Girls Home in Auckland. I was always getting into trouble at Allendale Girls Home. I would have fights with the other girls at the home. I was holding onto a lot of pain, and I felt that nobody around me could understand the things that I had gone through at the Family home. I was so badly behaved at Allendale. I was only there for a short time. I believe that they sent me away because of my bad behaviour.

Bollard Girls Home, Avondale, Auckland

33. I also spent a short time in Bollard Girls Home in Avondale. I had a lot of fights there with the other girls. As a newbie they would bully you if you didn't comply, you would end up having fights with people because of this. I would end up getting angry because of the fighting but also because of what had just happened to me being raped by that boy in the family home. I was there for a short time I think before I went to Fareham House.

Fareham House, Wairarapa

34. When I was about 14, I was sent to Fareham House in Wellington. I was separated from my siblings. My brother was sent to Hokio School and my eldest sister was placed into Weymouth in Auckland. My three younger siblings were still living with my mother in Auckland.

35. When I arrived at Fareham House I just cried. There were about 24 girls staying there at that time. I remember that I was assessed on entry. I was asked questions about where I had come from, my parents and my medical history. I was never asked any questions about my well-being and whether anything bad had happened to me in the past. At the time, I did not understand I had to say something about the fact that I had been raped, and I continued to carry that trauma by myself. Nobody asked me how they could help me.
36. Most of the girls were Māori and most of the staff were Pākehā. There were about 5 or 6 male staff, and the rest were female. I remember there being two female staff members who were sisters, they were Māori Samoan and there was a Māori man.
37. I remember that the Māori Samoan sisters at Fareham House brought kapa haka into our programme. We used to love kapa haka, it united us girls and it was all about aroha. After those staff members left, there was never anything outside of what they had organised for us.
38. Fareham House had a school which I enjoyed going to. I did find school difficult because I had some trouble reading and writing. I didn't know at the time, but I was dyslexic. This made school difficult for me at times. I had one teacher who taught photography and he was awesome; he would teach us how to take black and white photos – this became a hobby of mine which I really enjoyed.
39. I was at Fareham House for about two years, and my time there was awful, it was the worst time of my life. I felt completely alone. I played up majorly where I was fighting with other girls residing in the home, as well as the staff. I remember when I would fight with the Pākehā girls they would say all sorts of things to me like “What’s the matter with you? Don't play up.”
40. I ran away from the house every two to three months. The staff at Fareham House had no idea why I was running away, and they did not take the time to find out why. I remember feeling as if everyone saw me as a sook, I felt that everybody would look at me and think “here we go again, she’s getting herself into trouble.” I felt completely misunderstood.
41. During the times that I ran away, I would end up being a street kid in Wellington. I had met up with a couple of friends in Wellington and we continued running

away to Christchurch. People do not know what that is like, being a street kid. There is nothing out there for street kids, only Mongrel Mob or Black Power. They end up looking after you and becoming your family. They are the only ones that know the pain that you have come from.

42. When I was caught and forced to go back to Fareham House, the staff would put me in the secure lock-up. It was just a little room with a square window that you couldn't smash on, you could only sit in the corner. You had no clothes, no mattress, and no pillow. That was hard for me, it was another form of abuse to lock me in there on my own. The other girls would come by and look at me and laugh through the window because I got caught. All I did was cry.
43. The first time I was put in lock-up I was in there for the night, the second time I was there for two nights, and for every other time I ran away, I would get an extra night. The staff were trying to teach me a lesson – "you don't do that again" they would say to me – but I just kept running away.
44. I was once put into secure for a week for running away. On my third or fourth time running away I decided I wouldn't do it again because I knew they were going to treat me like shit. I knew they would put me back into secure.
45. I felt that all of us Māori girls were targeted because we were always being put into lock up. The staff at Fareham House saw us Māori girls as instigators of any trouble. The staff members saw that I had a temper, and they would address this with violence. The abuse that we suffered from the staff was physical, they didn't muck around. I would be physically abused every time I got into a fight with any of the other girls. One of the male staff members would throw me on the floor and jump on me. At one point I suffered a broken rib, I remember I couldn't breathe.
46. I was a real fighter, and the way it played out for me was that I was having fights with the main staff as a way of releasing my pain. I didn't care who it was, even if they were bigger than me, I would take them down. It was a takedown; it was survival for two years.
47. All this violence would play into a vicious cycle where I was abused by staff, which caused me to run away, and then I'd return to Fareham House only to be abused again.

48. Nobody wanted to listen to me. No one ever did a one-on-one with me, nobody asked me why I was running away. I never had the opportunity to talk my truth to anyone about why I was doing what I was doing, and why I was running away; about having been raped. Looking back, I think to myself that it makes sense how I was because my temper was my survival mechanism. I knew it was the anger and pain from being raped that caused me to fight, but no one asked me why I was so angry. There was no support for me at all. It had become a crippling secret; something I didn't want to talk about anymore. There were a lot of things happening around me and things happening in my head, and I wasn't given any tools to help me. Nobody asked me questions, so I kept behaving the way I always had. You just become a statistic.
49. Over time I came to see myself as a 'snotty-nosed Māori girl'. That's how lowly I thought of myself. I know I am not the only one who formed this type of self-resentment. I had a sisterhood of other wāhine Māori with me at Fareham House who were all going through similar things. One of my best friends at Fareham House ended up in mental health, the other passed away. I also remember a girl named GRO-B-2 she was bipolar, and anorexic and she couldn't cope. The abuse impacted everyone.
50. I was so pleased when my time there was over. It was a bloody nightmare, a nightmare I don't want to remember. I wouldn't wish that experience on any teenager.

Family Home, Paeroa

51. After Fareham House, I wanted to go back to my mother, but the social workers said I wasn't allowed to do this because my mum wasn't ready to have me back. Instead, I was placed into a different ten-bedroom family home in Paeroa. I managed to stick it out in the Paeroa family home for a year, but that was more than enough.
52. The same thing happened to me in the Paeroa home when one of the young boys who was also in the family home raped me. He would have been a year younger than me. I kept asking myself, what the hell is going on. I didn't give my abuser the permission to do what he did to me. I felt like I had something on my

forehead saying, "Please abuse me?" I found myself in a different home, in a different year, with a different guy, who was doing the same thing to me.

53. The staff at the Paeroa family home had no idea this was going on, so I didn't have any follow-up after that either. There were no rules or check-ins at the family homes. There was a real lack of communication. It was hard enough for me as a kid because I was an observer, I didn't say much. I felt that there was nobody around me who wanted to protect me in any case.
54. After the second rape, and going through a second wave of trauma, I started smoking cannabis, drinking alcohol, and sniffing ADOS glue to get away from my feelings. I was thinking oh this is really cool even though I knew it wasn't. Cannabis was the only way I could try and make sense of what was going on in my life then, it helped ground me.
55. I was attending Paeroa College by this time and my behaviour really started to change. I was always getting into fights with the boys there, and at lunch time I would sneak off to go and smoke or have a drink. I was getting into so many fights because I was still vulnerable from what had happened to me. I was just damaged. I didn't care if I was going to get taken out or taken down anymore.
56. I had no counselling from anyone while I was going through this period. The only help I got was from the school counsellor at Paeroa College after I had asked him if I could go back to stay with my mum. The school counsellor was concerned that I was getting into fights with all the males at school. He asked me why I was doing this, and I told him that I was fighting with a male outside of school. He wanted to know why I was fighting with someone outside of school, but I never told him. At this stage I was not open to talking to men, because of what had happened to me at the hands of men. The school counsellor told my social worker about the fights I was getting into with the males at school.
57. In 1976, I told my social worker then that I wanted to go back to Auckland to live with my mum, and he let me. I believe he allowed me to move because I was fighting a lot and it was getting out of hand. I had become very, very violent. My records say that I was sent back to my home in Auckland because my social worker knew that I wasn't being cared for at the Paeroa family home.

Leaving care and returning to my parents' home

58. When I went back to Auckland, I found out my dad was raping my younger sister. He was a violent bastard. I was very upset by this, but I knew I was never going to tell my mum this was happening because I was carrying all my trauma from my time in State care.
59. I was going to Ngā Tapuwāe school but I left school at 16 years old, I went to work to pay for my alcohol and cannabis. I was trying to stay under the radar from everything.

Impacts of my time in State care

Losing my voice and dealing with the trauma of abuse

60. I've suffered a lot of trauma from my time in State care. I have always suffered from PTSD.
61. Looking back, I can see that I was silenced by my abuse and not having the opportunity to talk my truth back when I was young. Nobody ever asked me why I was running away or acting out. Nobody ever wanted to have a one-on-one discussion and ask me what was going on and hear what I had to say.
62. The result was that my abuse became the secret and I never told anyone, and I didn't deal with my trauma.
63. Violence was never the answer. I believe the violence I experienced perpetuated my abuse, because it prevented my ability to heal.

Education and loss of potential

64. What could have made a difference for me was if I had the opportunity to get educated. If I had some vocational guidance, if people asked me what my lived experience was like, about what I wanted to do and who I wanted to be, then things could have been different for me. I didn't get any of that. I just left school. I loved science while I was at school in Paeroa College and Ngā Tapuwāe. But no one took the time to ask me about what I was interested in.

Adulthood, relationships and having children

65. The abuse I suffered has had an impact on my relationships with my children. I was 19 when I had my first child. I had my youngest son five years later. My relationships with my sons' dads were very violent.
66. My children were the second time I had felt unconditional love; the first time was from my maternal grandparents, who were my base.
67. I was going through a bad relationship with my second son's father so I left my family in Auckland to get away from that. I moved with my two sons to Christchurch.
68. In Christchurch, my eldest son was getting into trouble, that's when I asked my brother and my brother's wife for help in raising my oldest son, so that he could thrive in an immersive tikanga Māori environment. I was also looking for help at this time in my life, I was trying to access counsellors, so I could look after my boy. My son was 13 when he went to my brother and his wife. They looked after him until he was 15. My brother's wife is from Ngāti Hine and her family really know how to look after their whānau.
69. It was hard being separated from my son but at least I knew my son was going to be with whānau. I didn't want him to go into care, our family has already been through that. My brother and his wife knew that going through care would only cause damage to him and our whānau, like it did to me. It was our way of trying to put an end to the cycle of trauma.
70. My children knew that I was self-medicating on cannabis because it was a way for me to cope with my post-traumatic stress.
71. While I was still living in Christchurch, I got into a relationship with an abusive, alcoholic man and it was a reflection of my Mum and Dad's relationship. Why did I have to relive that in my own life? Even though I was an adult by this age, I still had behaviours and triggers. I didn't really want to marry him, but his mother was traditional and said that if I loved him, I had to marry him so I did. I didn't have good self-worth and I was unhappy and crying the whole way through our marriage.

72. But he had already been abused from a man too so there was a reason he was physically and sexually violent. I stayed with him for a year before I said that was enough. I had to flip my script, so I moved back to Auckland. It was a massive journey with a lot of pain – forced pain, all of it.
73. Violence is horrible. I've had three different relationships that show how damaged I am. In a short time, I went from being innocent, to being abused, to being an abuser and becoming a beast. That is what happens when you are hurt.
74. To this day, I still find it very difficult to be around men, due to what happened to me in care. My relationships failed, because I was so traumatised. I couldn't figure out what was wrong with me. I said to myself never again and I've been single for the last eight years.
75. I know we are not the only family that have gone through this ordeal, but one of the outcomes is that I am not connected to my Mum's side in Ngāpuhi. We need to be supported to reconnect with our whakapapa.
76. Despite everything that happened to us, I am still very close with all my siblings. My older sister rings me every day from Australia and my brother rings me every second day too. They've both have their own story of being in care. They know I'm doing this through the Royal Commission, I tell them what I'm doing and they're really supportive of me, but they're not registered themselves. I'm not sure what they think of all of this. My sister is already writing our story as a family; she is the brains of the family.

Taha Māori: My healing journey

77. I have put a lot of work into my own healing. Today I have seven mokopuna of my own. I see their beauty and innocence, and that reminds me of how I was before all the abuse happened to me; before the age of 10.
78. I consider my mission in life is to shine my light for others. My eldest son knows what my mission in life is now and he doesn't stand in my way. My son always tells me "You stand in your mana, Māmā".
79. I have been through mental health courses and received certificates to help deal with, and address, my experiences.

80. Today, I use cannabinoids (CBD) as a medicine to help me cope with life. I got access to CBD through the Accident Compensation scheme, and I use it to balance myself. I think that access to CBD shouldn't be as hard as it is today, and we shouldn't be labelled as a 'druggies' when we use it.
81. As I have mentioned in my introduction, my parents' light was introducing me to our rongoā and our tikanga when I was younger. Rongoā are a critical part of my healing process. We never had any of this while I was in care and looking back, it would have helped.
82. A key turning point for me was when I connected with Manurewa marae and learned about te whare tapa whā model. Through te whare tapa whā I learned to address the hinengaro, whānau, wairua and tinana dimensions. That model helped me understand and acknowledge who I was and dive deep; to get to the core of who I really am, and this understanding has given me strength in myself. If I didn't learn about that model, I wouldn't be talking to the Commission today. I'd still be that person under a rock hiding from the world.
83. When I discovered this model, I realised that I had carried the answers within me all this time. My parents had given me a grounding to heal, and I had to find a way to make this right for me. While there, I realised I was a healer of some kind, but before I could heal others, I needed to heal myself.
84. At Manurewa marae I met nannies that helped me to see that I am a wahine of mana. I've had about 20 counsellors in my lifetime, and they didn't listen to me. It was only the nannies at Manurewa marae who were able to help me address what had happened to me. The nannies there knew what was going on with me and what I had suffered.
85. I did all the courses I could at Manurewa marae. I did mirimiri, te whare tapa whā, spiritual wairua connection and grounding. I was able to work with hot stones during message therapy.
86. Being in that space helped me to form a spiritual korowai that protected me on my journey, so when it was finally time for me to move on from Manurewa marae, I left my korowai there where it belonged, and I brought my newfound healing gifts with me. This was a transition space for me, it was coming out into the real world. I had the tools that I needed to talk about my journey, to purge the pono

and to take charge of my healing journey. I left that korowai behind for people like myself – people who needed it more than me.

87. I also completed courses at Mahitahi Trust in Auckland. Doing a national certificate with them helped me to understand that we have a spiritual connection that is all about the wairua. I felt grounded in knowing that knowledge is power.
88. I want to be involved with mental health services in providing wrap around services with our people. When I have completed my work in Nelson, I want to go home up north to Ngāpuhi and help our people with the Treaty negotiations.
89. I'm an action person and I am a doer. I do the work for myself, and I hold space for others. I don't want to be held back anymore.

Seeking redress: The first time

90. When I was 23 years old, I made a complaint to ACC about being raped as a child in the foster home I was placed in. I know this claim was supported by my social worker at the time.
91. I went to the HELP foundation for counselling and spoke to a woman, but I did not find it helpful. There was no other support offered to me. I was not asked whether I wanted to make a complaint to the Police about what happened.

Seeking redress: Ministry of Social Development

92. Years later, when I was living in Auckland, I did a year of counselling and studying mental health through Mahitahi Trust in South Auckland. While doing this I realised my wairua was messed up and that my time in care really had an impact on me.
93. I got in touch with the Ministry of Social Development, and I demanded that I meet with them. When I met with MSD, they never asked me if I'd like to bring any support people, they didn't follow any tikanga, nothing. It was just a meeting with two Pākehā women. They only saw me twice; the first time was in Mangere at the income support office and the second one was in Manurewa because it was closer to where I was living.

94. When I met with them, I just stood up in front of the two ladies and gave them my pepeha and I told them straight up what happened to me. We had two meetings and then it was over.
95. I received a letter of apology in the mail and a payment of \$15,000.
96. The Department never explained to me anything about the redress process, they never explained to me how they reached the figure they had. I remember asking them if I needed a lawyer because I know when dealing with government departments you need professional help, you need a lawyer, but they told me I wouldn't need a lawyer for this.
97. I have seen in my file the notes of the Ministry about my case. It says in the notes that the Ministry accepted I was sexually abused by two boys at Kenerdine Home when I was 12 years old. MSD said the family home was going through a difficult time, supervision of the children was inadequate, and the investigating social worker had no doubt that I had been abused.
98. MSD also accepted I was sexually abused by another boy at Paeroa family home when I was 14 years old. MSD said that the notes show my behaviour deteriorated at that time, that I became so unsettled I was removed from the house, and that my social worker had no contact with me for 12 months while I was there so I had no one I could talk to about what was happening. They also noted that one of the boys went on to be arrested for another sexual crime.
99. I didn't think much of the letter of apology and payment that I got. All I thought was "is that all", is that all I get. The money was nothing and so was the apology. It was hard to believe that's all they could give me after what I had been through.
100. I didn't feel any better getting the settlement, it didn't make me feel like anything was resolved. I'm still repeating the trauma from my past and I can still see the same things that happened to me happen to others. I can see things for what they are now, and it makes me think how I can help others.

Kaupapa Māori approaches as a way forward

101. To this day, the system has failed and will continue to fail unless action is taken. The statistics show the harsh realities of what is happening to Māori in this country.

102. In my experiences I have found that there is a real need to ask questions to get to the underlying issue. Children need to be asked; “Did you get sexually abused?”. When I was in care, I needed someone to ask me – “Have you been abused” in a way where I felt comfortable enough to answer them.
103. This is still true today, we have many tamariki in care who don’t have a voice, and who are not empowered to speak out about abuse. The Government must give a hand – not a handout, just a hand to say they care. We need someone who will hold out their hand and be able to say, “I’m here for you, I need you to trust me to walk through it, all of it”.
104. Māori are being held back and kept in trauma because there are no wrap around services. I believe there is a real need for the adoption of Kaupapa Māori approaches within our care system. I support iwi and hapū having more involvement in health services for their people, and I want to be involved in helping to provide these services to help our people. We need by Māori for Māori solutions. I know there are iwi like Tainui and marae like Manurewa who already offer services for that work. We need these services in every town and every city and you should be able to access it wherever you are in the country.
105. It takes a village to raise a child, and whānau need to be involved in helping to raise children.
106. We need a 50-year plan where we achieve our visions for our people. It’s about realising what our hapū and iwi can do for our own people because we’ve been held back. We don’t want any children going into CFYS because they will all be going back to their whānau, hapū and iwi. We will be living and working off our whenua. There will be no homelessness because we all have homes.

My hopes for this Commission

107. In some ways it has been beautiful to tell my story to the Commission. I always knew it was going to be, because it’s a part of the journey that I am on. It’s all part of my recovery.
108. With my lived experience I want to help others and stop them from turning to behaviours that damage them more, like self-medicating through drugs and alcohol and turning to violence.

109. I hope that the Commission gets it right.
110. We have been turning a blind eye to the underlying issue and we have never thoroughly looked at the abuse and trauma in our country. The system has failed, and it is going to keep failing until we do something about it. That is why I talk about actions today.
111. We need to look at the missing pieces of the puzzle and put it together again. The commission needs to talk to everyone in depth and understand what happened to everyone around the country. You need to do exactly what you are doing now, but you need to action things that the people are saying, and they need to see the outcome of it. Kaupapa Māori, by Māori, for Māori. More women need to talk, and the Commission needs to focus on mana wahine.
112. We will find out the outcomes of this inquiry and what those really look like. For my part, I am here for the long run, not for the sprint. As long as it takes, I will keep doing the work, and I will keep saying it with love.

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:

16-08-2021

Annex B

Consent to use my statement

I, *Te Aroha Knox* 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, as applicable:

- 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

Signed

Date..... *15-12-2021*