

Witness Name: GRO-A Mr EI

Statement No.: WITN0778001

Dated: 20/2/2021

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**ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE****WITNESS STATEMENT OF** GRO-A Mr EI

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I, GRO-A Mr EI, will say as follows:

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. My full name is GRO-A Mr EI. I was born in 1951 in GRO-A near New Plymouth. I was born into a dysfunctional family and, by the age of 12 or 13, I had been placed into foster care because my behaviour was deteriorating.
- 1.2. There were some complicated problems happening with my family. I had four brothers and a half-sister. My parents separated. I could not settle and I became restless. I started doing a few little crimes, like breaking into houses. In 1963, me and another boy put a jigger (a small railroad car) onto a railway line.
- 1.3. I have a copy of my social welfare file, which is how I know exactly how I ended up in care. After the incident with the jigger on the railway, the police got involved. The Children's Court found that I was "not under proper control". I was committed to the care of the Child Welfare Officer in Palmerston North for three years. I can sort of understand why this happened, but I think my behaviour was probably a cry for help.
- 1.4. I was placed in a group foster home in Taradale in July 1963, before going to Hokio Beach School in Levin (**Hokio**) for a short period of time. In August 1963, I was admitted to Levin Hospital and Training School (known as **Kimberley**). I stayed at Kimberley until July 1964, when I was placed in a terrible foster home in Feilding.
- 1.5. I was finally able to move to a better foster home in August 1966. Unfortunately, this did not last. By July 1967, I was admitted to Lower Hutt Boys' Home (known as **Epuni**), where I stayed for a few months before finally being allowed to stay with my mother in Dannevirke. When I was 17 or 18, I moved in with my half-sister. I was discharged from Child Welfare care in January 1970.

## 2. ABUSE

### TARADALE GROUP HOME

- 2.1. I was first placed into a group home in Taradale where I was repeatedly assaulted by my foster mother, Mrs. GRO-B-1. Mrs. GRO-B-1 was not appropriate as a caregiver. She was not concerned about anyone as an individual. She was just concerned about the income she was getting.
- 2.2. The Taradale home was a large place. There were several other children staying there. I have seen on my file that one of the Child Welfare Officer letters on my file states that I was "an inmate in our Family Home". I was verbally and physically abused while in Taradale.
- 2.3. Life with Mrs. GRO-B-1 was quite hard. I was only 12 or 13 when I went there. I felt homesick and I never settled in. Because of the abuse, I was wetting the bed. I ran away several times. Every time I was caught, I would be brought back and locked in my room. When Mrs. GRO-B-1 locked me in my room, she got one of the boys to nail the doors and windows shut.
- 2.4. One time, after Mrs. GRO-B-1 let me out of my room, she would not give me my shoes for me to wear to go to school. I eventually found my shoes myself. As I bent down to pick them up, Mrs. GRO-B-1 hit me with a broom so hard across my back that it broke the broom.
- 2.5. Another time, Mrs. GRO-B-1 took me and another boy on a trip to Waipawa. Partway there, I needed to go to the toilet. We had stopped the car, so I went over and told Mrs. GRO-B-1 this. She growled at me and told me to just get back into the car. We drove for another five or six minutes, but I was really busting. I told Mrs. GRO-B-1 that I really needed to go to the toilet. She growled at me again and told me to wait.
- 2.6. We stopped at the train station and I knew there was a bathroom there, so I jumped out and went to the toilet. When I came back to the car, Mrs. GRO-B-1 was so angry at me. I told her that if I did not go then, I would have wet myself! She did not care.
- 2.7. When we got home after this trip, everything seemed okay. However, after dinner, Mrs. GRO-B-1 said that I was not allowed to have dessert because I had gone to the bathroom at the train station. I thought this was so unfair. That evening, I ran away again. This was the last time I tried to run away, because once I was caught I was taken to Hokio Beach School in Levin.

## **HOKIO BEACH SCHOOL**

- 2.8. I was admitted to Hokio Beach in July 1963. I was frequently physically assaulted by other students, which led to escape attempts and some criminal behaviour (lighting fires, stealing cars etc). On one occasion, I took to a person with a broom handle and fists. I ran away from Hokio Beach several times. I was often assaulted by the other boys when I was caught and taken back.
- 2.9. After I got my files, I discovered that I was supposed to have set fire to a bach and to have stolen a car at age 13. I do not think that these things happened.
- 2.10. I wanted to get out of Hokio Beach, so I kept on running away. About the third time I ran away, I got into a bach at about 10.30 at night. I was woken up by the owner who had come up from Wellington. I was in a sleepy state. The place was dark. The owner said to me that I was very lucky that I did not pick up this jar because it contained rat poison. He said that I was very lucky that I did not mistake it for food, like porridge or something. This jar had no labelling on it.
- 2.11. The owner let me keep sleeping at the bach, and said he would take me home in the morning. Later that night, I decided that I was going to make a run for it again. I got up and fiddled around, looking for a bit of food. I must have picked up this jar by accident and took this rat poison. It was unbeknown to me, that I had actually taken the stuff. The owner got up and discovered that I had actually taken it. He took me to Levin Hospital where they pumped out my stomach.
- 2.12. I was picked up from the hospital and taken back out to Hokio Beach. The manager of Hokio Beach, plus the staff at the hospital, all decided that they would put me into Kimberley Hospital. My file says that I was admitted to Kimberley under section 5 of the Mental Health Amendment Act 1961, which covers the "admission of mentally infirm persons".

## **KIMBERLEY**

- 2.13. In August 1963, I was placed in Kimberley. To sum it up, Kimberley was a hell hole. It will always remain a hell-hole in my mind. All it was, was a place for abuse. It was a place for sexual abuse. I had no contact with my family while I was at Kimberley. No one ever celebrated birthdays in these institutions. I never had a birthday at Kimberley, or at Hokio Beach or Epuni.
- 2.14. When I first got to Kimberley, I remember thinking "Why the f am I in a place like this?". I had nothing against the other children at Kimberley, but I was shocked because I did not have a mental or physical disability. I could not understand why I was there. A lot of these kids could not express themselves, feed themselves, or go to the toilet on their own.
- 2.15. I remember there was a boy who I think was in Villa 3. He would often soil himself. If the staff didn't get to him in time, he would start eating his faeces. I just could not believe I was in a place like this. We slept in dorm rooms with nothing to separate us from the bed next to

us. As I went to sleep, I remember looking over at the child next to me and thinking, "Am I safe here?"

- 2.16. I was in Villa H. I had a separate room off a passage with a door to the outside. Originally, I had been put in a dormitory but I knew how to do things for myself and I could follow a routine, so they gave me my own room. I had a sort of "head boy" role and I watched over the other children. I spent a lot of my time cleaning up, doing dirty work, changing dirty beds, etc.
- 2.17. After the villa, I was moved to Guys House, which was more of a standalone unit. I think that was because I did not actually have any disability or special needs. Although, there were plenty of others like me at Kimberley. I was not the only one who did not seem to actually have a disability.

***Inadequate staffing and resident neglect***

- 2.18. These kids were placed in a hospital situation where they should have been treated with respect and given the care they needed. A lot of these kids were not given the care they needed. Kids would sit on the floor rocking back and forth. There were never enough staff to look after the children, and the staff were not experienced.
- 2.19. Usually, there would probably be around two staff members to 30 children. Ninety percent of the time, the staff could not handle what was happening. The staff numbers were so limited that often a form of punishment was to get residents to do the tasks that they were supposed to do, like cleaning the toilets. Therefore, someone like me who could follow instructions and knew what they were doing, would have to do their jobs. I would regularly clean up messes and change residents' beds.
- 2.20. At Kimberley, I do not remember ever seeing a psychiatrist or a social worker. I do not know why I was put in Kimberley. I suppose it was probably that they thought I attempted suicide. I do not remember having any mental health checks at Kimberley.
- 2.21. Boys and girls were not allowed to associate with each other. Girls had their own villas and boys had their own. You stayed in your villa all the time, it was where you slept, and it was where you had breakfast, lunch and tea.
- 2.22. Unless you were fortunate enough to go to the school, you could not talk to the girls even if you walked past them. From memory, there were only about 10 of us at the school, out of the whole institution. The school was a waste of time for me. I've never had a formal education. Even then, I still already knew what the teachers were teaching the kids. It was things like, one plus one is two.
- 2.23. There were also work courses on site. I would go to a work class where we would make up boxes for things like stockings and handkerchiefs. We would make wire coat hangers and coloured blocks.



### ***Medical neglect and abuse***

- 2.24. I was given medication at Kimberley but I would put it under my tongue then spit it out. The staff were not trained. They had no business giving medication out to children when they knew nothing about the medication that they were giving out. I had no idea what medication I was being given. Heavens only knows if a doctor had actually prescribed the medication to me.
- 2.25. I know that kids at Kimberley had their teeth pulled out without any injections. The dentist would pull their teeth out and tell the other staff, "Don't worry about it, they don't feel pain". Of course we feel pain. Everybody feels pain. It does not matter if you are IHC or what, everybody feels pain. It makes me so angry to think about this.

### ***Physical abuse***

- 2.26. If kids misbehaved, the staff would hit them on the head with a set of keys or smacked across the backside. Apart from that, they were generally just left to their own devices. For those who would walk, they would roam around the confines of the institution.
- 2.27. People talk about the "Kimberley cringe". I saw this all the time at Kimberley. Kids would cower and cover their faces and heads when staff members came near them. What else would you expect? If you were always left to sit on the floor and staff would always come along and hit you on the head with keys, what would you do? You would try to protect yourself. You could not fight back.

### ***Pervasive sexual abuse***

#### *How it started*

- 2.28. Shortly after I arrived at Kimberley, I injured my ankle and I was sleeping in a room on my own. Late at night, I was woken up by a nurse, or somebody that looked like a nurse, and I was told that they were going to take me over to a room to redo my bandages.
- 2.29. Once I got to the room, she took the bandages off and she leant over me and her breasts were touching my body. She said, "You naughty boy, you shouldn't be doing that. That's naughty." I thought to myself, I'm not doing anything, and I took no notice of it.
- 2.30. After a few minutes, I went into another room. There were several boys and girls in this other room that were partly dressed. We sat in this room for about an hour, looking at each other. Then, we were taken back to our villas. I presume the girls went back to their villa.
- 2.31. Two nights later, the same thing happened. I was woken up by the same woman and taken over to this other room. When we arrived, there were girls and boys there around my age. There were also several adult men and women. There was a girl laying on a bed with no clothes on. The bed looked like an old fashioned hospital bed. It was on wheels. Her legs were spread apart, with her feet up on things that looked like crutches or braces. They looked like restraints.

- 2.32. One of the men got up and had sexual intercourse with her, while we watched. Two other girls were sexually interfered with. They were sexually touched by hand by the adults, while me and this other boy were made to watch. This happened for about an hour. After, I was made to go and wipe down the girls' private parts and the adults left.
- 2.33. I ran away the following night. I managed to get into the Levin township. I was picked up, taken back to my villa at Kimberley. I was not punished, no one asked me why I ran away. Nothing happened.
- 2.34. Three nights later, I was woken up again around midnight but I am not too sure of the time. We went over to the same place again. I remember there were two Māori girls there. They were in the same position on these beds, with their legs spread apart so they could not close them. This man came in and he turned around and said, "My two girls". Again, sexual intercourse took place.
- 2.35. I would come to realise that this man always referred to these two Māori girls as "my girls", and it was always the same man who interfered with these girls. I remember he had started getting grey hair and he had a few wrinkles on his face. I'm not too sure exactly how old he was.
- 2.36. Again, we were made to clean up the girls. The other boys and I were walked back to the villa. It was probably one or two o'clock in the morning. As we were walking, one of the staff members turned around and said to me, "Next time, it will be your turn to do this". I was only 13 years of age.
- 2.37. The following night, the same thing, we went back over there. There was a girl there who was about 10 years old. She was laying on the bed and she had something put into her private parts and forced open. She started crying and screaming. One of the men said to this girl that she should stop screaming, and that he would put his private part into her soon anyway. One of the nurses stood there laughing and said something like, "We'll sort her out". This man turned around and made a comment along the lines of, "Well this is what I'm paying you for".
- 2.38. This time, the other boys and I were forced to have sexual intercourse with one of these girls. It was against my will. This continued to happen. I continued to run away.

*Ongoing abuse*

- 2.39. This continued on an ongoing basis for the duration of my time at Kimberley. My records show that I left Kimberley after about 10 months, but I was not formally discharged for almost a year and a half. From my recollection and from subsequent school photos I have seen, I think I was at Kimberley for about a year and a half.
- 2.40. The abuse went on and on, for two or three nights a week. It never stopped – there were gaps of weeks only. Every time, the same person would come and get me from my room. It could have been at any hour. I never knew exactly when they were going to come. None of us had clocks or watches anyway.

- 2.41. Kimberley was a huge place. It would take about 10 minutes to walk from Villa H or Guy's House, where I slept, to the building where I was sexually abused. This building was next to a large open space that was used as a carpark. I remember there were trees nearby. The building and the carpark were both close to the main road, while Villa H and Guy's House were much further back. This building was right by the main entrance, far away from where all of the residents slept. I think all of the "guests" would park up by the trees near the building.
- 2.42. I do not quite know what sort of building that place was. All of the rooms in the building sort of looked like interview or meeting rooms. It almost felt like a doctor's surgery. There were lots of office type rooms coming off the hallway. I only ever got to see the hallways and the room that I was taken into.
- 2.43. Sometimes, the nurse would sexually assault me. I would be made to sexually interfere with the other children. I would also be made to watch other children sexually touching each other. We were made to have sex with the girls and play with the private parts of the female staff.
- 2.44. The men would come in and do whatever they wanted to do. The men often used these instruments that they put inside the girls who were strapped onto the bed. The instruments seemed to force their private parts open. It seemed to really hurt them. I did not know what these instruments were at the time, but looking back now I think the instruments were some sort of experimental sex toy.
- 2.45. I was made to do horrible things, sometimes to girls as young as 10 or 11. I could not talk to the other children, I never got the chance. If we did not do what we were told, we would be punished. One way they punished me was to put string around my private parts and tie the string to a chair. I received this punishment on two occasions.
- 2.46. Outside of these events, I think there was a lot of grooming going on at Kimberley. For example, sometimes during the day we would be in a classroom. The staff would make us sit with girls on one side of the room and boys on the other. They got us to play a game of Simon Says. The girls would have skirts or dresses on. The girls would sit along a wall and they would have their knees up, so you could see straight down and see what they were wearing.
- 2.47. The staff would say "Simon says do this, Simon says put your legs up, Simon says open your legs". In my opinion, it was all based around grooming. I did not know it was grooming when I was a 13 year old boy. I discovered all this thing as I became older and got out of that place.
- 2.48. In the school at Kimberley, there was a particular girl that this teacher used to always pick on. The teacher would always tell her she was naughty. He would make her bend over to give her the cane. Then, he would flick her dress up with his cane, so he could see her underclothing. He would give her a smack on the backside and say, "Don't do that again". Several times when I was in class, this girl had turned up and she was very, very

withdrawn. She wouldn't speak, she wouldn't say anything, but I could pick up that something had happened to her. I presume the teacher was having sex with her.

- 2.49. When I was in the work classes making these boxes, the supervisor watching us would come round and rub her breasts up against me. She would say things like, "You naughty boy, you naughty boy. You're gonna get yours later on".

*Identity of children and adults*

- 2.50. Normally, there were about five to seven children. It was always the same core group of children. This group was myself, another boy, two Māori girls and a blonde girl. One of the Māori girls was probably 16 or 17, the other was 12 or 13.
- 2.51. We were the main ones. The adults would pick and choose from us. From conversations I overheard in the hallway, they would say what they wanted, and the nurses would go off and find us.
- 2.52. From what I could tell, none of the girls that I saw being abused could speak or communicate properly. I do not know what their disability was. I just remember that they were disabled and they could not talk. This is probably how a lot of this happened, is that they victimised kids that could not speak, could not fight back, could not express themselves, and they got away with it. When it came to me, the only thing that I could fight back with was running away.

*Identity of adults*

- 2.53. There were four female nurses who always wore the same nurses uniform, with the white pointy hats. It was always the same four nurses every time. I do not know their names. Sometimes the nurses would sit in their underwear and watch and giggle.
- 2.54. The men who came to visit came by car. The cars were always already there when we were brought over. There were four men who were always there. These same men were always doing things that they shouldn't be doing. There were also other men who would come and go. You might see these men for a couple of weeks or a month, but then they would not come back again.
- 2.55. I do not think these men were staff members. I think they were people from the outside. I believe that these people were paying because sometimes I could hear conversations out in the foyer or in the hallway. They would talk about these girls and they would talk about money and cost. They would tell the nurses that they wanted other children around the same age. As I said, I strongly believe that these people were coming in from outside and paying staff.
- 2.56. One time when I ran away, I did not actually leave the Kimberley grounds. I stayed and watched the area where the visitors come in. I remember seeing two cars. They were older model cars, I think it was a Wolseley and a Humber car. I was naughty and I went and let

the tires down on one of the cars! I think it was a grey coloured car. I did not stay around to see who was coming and going from the cars.

- 2.57. Most of the men were dressed in an "ordinary" way. It was the 60s, so it was typical casual clothing from that era. Most of them wore long trousers but some wore shorts. They would wear a plain shirt. Some of the men wore suit-like trousers, but none of them wore a full suit and tie.
- 2.58. All of the men were European. There was a big age range, from about 30 to 60 years old. Although, as a 13 year old boy I think it can be difficult to tell how old adults are. I do remember one man brought his son who was probably 18 or early 20s. The father was probably around 40 or 50, and always called the other man "Son" or "my son". The father and son came probably 20 times.
- 2.59. No one ever spoke much but I could hear the men in the hallway talking to the nurses. I would hear them discussing what children they wanted. They would say things like "Can you get someone else?" or "I'm not happy with that one". I remember the father of the young man saying something like "My son wants somebody else". Almost all of the time, there would be no conversation at all inside or outside the room. There was very little conversation between the nurses and the men.
- 2.60. Sometimes I overheard these hallway conversations where the men would ask to take a girl home for the weekend. They never said where "home" was. They would just say "Can I take this one home?". The nurses would discuss arrangements and sometimes they would say that they would have to let them go, because often these children would have regular home visits planned (to their actual family homes).
- 2.61. The adults never called anyone by their name. I was called "boy" or "my boy". Sometimes they might use nicknames for us, like Blondie, Redhead or Freckles.

*Police involvement and running away*

- 2.62. One time when I ran away, I managed to hop on a train and go all the way up to Auckland. I think the Police were involved, because they put out a missing person report. I was picked up and taken all the way back to Kimberley. Again, there were no punishments, no questions, nothing.
- 2.63. I also ran away with my friend, [GRO-B-2], [GRO-B-2] and I were friends at Kimberley. We went to the Kimberley school and Scouts group together. [GRO-B-2] and I were making a plan to run away together.
- 2.64. Another girl that attended the school overheard us plotting to escape. She told us that she wanted to run away, too. She was probably around the same age as us and she was blonde. I think she had a slight speech impediment, or she may have been Deaf. She kept to herself mostly. This girl ended up running away before we did, but she was caught and taken back. She did not come back to the school again after she had been caught running away.



- 2.65. When [GRO-B-2] and I ran away, we were picked up by a police officer and taken to the Palmerston North police station. The police officer picked us up in a private car, not a police car. I do not know if he was a detective or if he was just off duty. He had his wife with him. When we got to the police station, a uniformed police officer put [GRO-B-2] and I in a cell together. We tried telling a police officer what had been happening to us at Kimberley, but no one took any notice of us.
- 2.66. I do not remember the police officers writing our names down or writing down anything that we were saying. No one seemed to be taking any notes. I told the police officer that I wanted to tell him about Kimberley, but he just focused on securing the cell. I told him there was sexual abuse going on but he just ignored me and walked off.
- 2.67. [GRO-B-2] was sitting right next to me at the time. He also tried to tell the police officers about the abuse at Kimberley as well but they did not care, they did not listen. They were not interested. They just ignored us. It would have been about half past ten in the morning. We were picked up by Kimberley staff at about five o'clock and taken back. Again, no one asked us why we ran away.
- 2.68. I think [GRO-B-2] had some bad experiences of his own at the school, but we never spoke about it directly. He acted out after Kimberley. There was a time when he grabbed another girl from behind when we were at Feilding. I yelled at him and he stopped quickly and apologised, but it was behaviour like this that made me think something had probably happened to him at Kimberley.
- 2.69. When I was at Guy's House, I met someone called [GRO-B-3] who was also a resident. We were friends. He was probably in his early 20s. He worked outside of Kimberley. He had a job in the Levin township. We became good friends. [GRO-B-3] and I would always go to breakfast, lunch and dinner together. We would go for walks together. After I left Kimberley, [GRO-B-3] got in touch with my mother and he sent her lots of my belongings that had been left behind.
- 2.70. I think [GRO-B-3] got married to a girl at Kimberley hospital. He lived in Cambridge for a few years. Overtime, we lost contact with each other. I only knew [GRO-B-3] for about two weeks or a month before I left Kimberley.

#### **FOSTER CARE – [GRO-B-4]**

- 2.71. After being discharged from Kimberley in late 1964, I was placed in a different foster home with the [GRO-B-4] in 1964. I do not call her Mrs [GRO-B-4], because she does not deserve that title. She is just [GRO-B-4]. I was knocked around a bit in this home and never received any visits from welfare officers.
- 2.72. There was a boy called [GRO-B-5] who had an "IHC standard" disability. He was also being assaulted in the foster home. [GRO-B-2] stayed in this foster home, as well. When I arrived, there was an older boy called [GRO-B-6] or [GRO-B-6] staying there. He was [GRO-B-2]'s older brother. [GRO-B-4]'s daughter would watch me in the bath. She would have a giggle and then walk out. She was a bit of a perve.

- 2.73. One time, I ran away and I was picked up by the police. I told the police that [GRO-B-4] was no good. She was not suited as a foster mother. I felt like I became a slave there. She would go out of her way to make my life miserable. From the moment I woke up until I had to go to school I would do chores, and then there would be more chores as soon as I got home. I had to make [GRO-B-6]’s bed every morning. This was a 22 year old man. I had to tidy all the rooms, mop the floors, sweep, milk the cows.
- 2.74. [GRO-B-4] accused me of stealing a girl’s underwear from school, and accused me of sneaking out and stealing underwear from washing lines late at night. It was all made up. None of it was true. The police even talked to me about her allegations but nothing happened.
- 2.75. [GRO-B-4] accused me of stealing pens and pencils, shooting sheep and even stealing an insurance policy. I did not know about any of this at the time. No one talked to me about it. But when I read my files, I saw all of these accusations were being made. She even said I must have mistaken the insurance policy for money. At 14 years old, I would have known better than that!
- 2.76. I think she made all these things up because she knew my mother was trying to get me back. [GRO-B-4] was reading my letters from my mum. [GRO-B-4] was doing everything to make life hell for me. She did not want me to leave because she did not want to lose the money.
- 2.77. [GRO-B-4] would not give me my pocket money. My social worker told me I was supposed to receive five dollars a week, well I never received that. My social worker talked to [GRO-B-4] and found out she was using my pocket money to buy fish and chips for everyone on the weekend.
- 2.78. As soon as the slightest thing went wrong, I was always the one who was blamed. If [GRO-B-4] thought I did anything wrong, she would tell [GRO-B-6] [GRO-B-6] would clip me around the ears or kick me up the bum and tell me not to do that again.
- 2.79. [GRO-B-5] and I had a couple of incidents, but in general I got on well with [GRO-B-5]. However, one time I overheard [GRO-B-4] ask [GRO-B-5] if I did something. I heard [GRO-B-5] denying it, saying that I did not do it. [GRO-B-4] told him to stop lying and was making him say that I did it. She was bribing him with money, saying she would buy him two days of lunch.
- 2.80. After hearing this, I took off to Dannevirke to my mother. I sneaked away, hopped on my bike, and biked all the way to Dannevirke, through the Manawatu Gorge. It was probably a distance of about 200 kilometres. I told my mother all about [GRO-B-4]. She was absolutely furious. My mum got on the phone to [GRO-B-4] and let her have it.

**FOSTER CARE – MRS [GRO-B-7]**

- 2.81. Soon after, I was transferred to the [GRO-B-7]. Mrs [GRO-B-7] treated me like a part of the family. I was welcomed at the [GRO-B-7]. I was allowed to do things that young boys should be allowed to do. Mrs [GRO-B-7] had some of her own children too. I had my own free time to play with her boys. We would go off eeling and hunting.
- 2.82. When I first arrived, Mrs [GRO-B-7] told me I could watch TV. I sat on the floor. Mrs [GRO-B-7] asked me why I was sitting on the floor. I told her that I did not think I was allowed on the couch, because I was not allowed to sit on the furniture at [GRO-B-4]. Mrs [GRO-B-7] was so shocked.
- 2.83. Mrs [GRO-B-7] noticed that I had chilblains on my feet because [GRO-B-4] made me walk to school in barefeet. Mrs [GRO-B-7] told the social workers about it but [GRO-B-4] denied everything. [GRO-B-4] kept accusing me of misbehaviour and of stealing even when I was living with the [GRO-B-7].
- 2.84. I used to get up to mischief with one of Mrs [GRO-B-7]'s sons. Unfortunately, a bad mistake was made and Child Welfare put another foster boy in the home who was much worse than me at committing crimes. We did do little bits and pieces, like go and try to steal a few birds, budgies and things like that.
- 2.85. But this other boy was going around stealing lots of stuff, and me and Mrs [GRO-B-7]'s son got caught up in it. We were the ones who were caught. That was when I had to leave foster care and I was sent to Epuni.

**LOWER HUTT BOYS' HOME (EPUNI)**

- 2.86. At Epuni, I experienced further physical abuse and sexual abuse from multiple staff members. I did run away a couple of times or so that I was there. Overall, I was not really punished the first time. The second time I run away, I got locked into one of these cells down there, which they were just starting to build. When I was in the cell, I broke my toe after tripping and accidentally kicking a wall.
- 2.87. A staff member called Miss [GRO-B-8] noticed that I had hurt my toe so she tried to put it back but it really hurt and I screamed so loudly. Miss [GRO-B-8] took me to hospital. On the way to the hospital, a totally different story. She started touching me in a place that she should not have been touching me. She goes, "I'm sorry for your toe and what I did. I should have realised. I'm gonna make it up to you".
- 2.88. When we got back from the hospital, Miss [GRO-B-8] gave me a nice job in the laundry of folding up her clothing and putting it all away. I used to get pocket money. I would go to the pictures and she would turn up and take me for sex. I do not know if this happened to others as well. She would come around when no one else was around.



2.89. There was another guy there by the name of Mr. GRO  
B-9. Every time you hopped into bed, would come along and rub his hands up and down your legs, rather close to your private things. This is why I took off from there.

### 3. IMPACT

- 3.1. I was released from state care back to my mother aged 18. I was told to pack all of my stuff up from Epuni and go to the railway station. They gave me \$10 and I sat at the station for two and a half hours waiting for a train to take me back to Dannevirke. Once your release time was up, that was it. They gave you a swift kick in the backside and sent you out the door.
- 3.2. I never settled in Dannevirke because I was victimised by one of the police officers there when he saw me. Straight away, the police officer said, "You behave yourself. If anything happens around Dannevirke, I'm going to come and get you and arrest you because it would only be you, because since you've been gone, nothing like this has ever happened."
- 3.3. I had a reasonably good job working at the Council, but all this just carried on. While I was at the Council, a couple of guys that I worked with tried to pull my trousers down. They talked about sex, sex, sex all the time. I actually laid a complaint with the council but nothing happened. Eventually, I had enough of it and I decided to go up to Rotorua to my half-sister.
- 3.4. My half-sister discovered that there was something wrong because I would not go to the doctors, I would not go to hospitals and I was always nervous around people. I would not socialise. I eventually told her what happened.
- 3.5. My sister and I tried to get access to my files and they turned around and said, "No". They told me that my files had been destroyed because once I was released from State care, there was no use for my files anymore.
- 3.6. My sister had to help me learn how to socialise. Even when I first found a girlfriend, I was absolutely terrified. My sister had to always come along with me, and act like a chaperone. She knew I could not socialise so she told me exactly what to say and what gifts to buy her. My sister helped me to get over my fears of going out by myself.
- 3.7. I experienced long-term impacts from my time in care. How could I put it? You had your heart torn from you, because you'd gone from one place thinking you're going to be safe, into another place where you're going to be safe and then onto another place.
- 3.8. Ever since I was a child, I have held all of this in. I never properly talked about what happened to me until my younger son was diagnosed with ADHD. We started getting counselling for my son, and the counsellor noticed that there was something wrong with me too.

- 3.9. I started seeing a local counsellor after that. It did help in some ways, but everything has still stayed with me. There are still things that you read, hear on the internet, on TV or in the papers and things like that, that trigger.
- 3.10. If these things never happened to me, I could have been a totally different person. I mean, I don't know where I could be today. I could have been well off, I could have been a rich man. They robbed me of my childhood and my ability to socialise. They completely robbed me of any form of education. There was no way I could ever catch up. When I went to high school, I didn't know what the work was. I couldn't cope with it. I used to just hop on a bike and go for a bike ride. Even Mrs. GRO-B-7 told the welfare officers that school was a waste of time for me.

#### **4. REDRESS**

##### **Claim to Ministry of Social Development (MSD)**

- 4.1. I still have not made any progress with my MSD claim. It has been six years. I was told that if I went to my doctor and got a letter outlining all of my health conditions, that I would not have to wait so long. I got all this information together and sent it to MSD. They told me that everything had been accepted for me to go on the fast track programme, but I have still been waiting and waiting.
- 4.2. I keep being given different excuses. They keep telling me to wait three months, then wait another month. It's the same old story every time. At the time of signing this statement, I have had about 12 months of this and I am still waiting. I am not expecting any miracles. It's just a load of whitewash.
- 4.3. My doctor told MSD that it was important for me to be able to put this to rest. I need to be able to put things to rest. I hope that just maybe, by going through these processes and by going through the Commission, I may be able to put the past behind me. No matter what, I will never be able to get this out of my mind. I cannot get rid of this. It is a thing that will stay with me until the day that I die. However, in some senses I hope that I can put some small parts of my experience to rest.
- 4.4. If a Minister gives me an apology letter, it will not mean anything to me. If I get an apology letter, I will rip it up and put it in the bin. I will never accept that apology.

##### **ACC sensitive claim**

- 4.5. The first ACC counsellor I went to was terrible. She cancelled my appointment at the last minute because she booked someone else in my spot. She kept shutting me down when I talked about Kimberley and my health issues. She kept saying, "I've read the files, I've read the files, I've read the files". She kept getting up and going to the door to see if this other person had arrived yet. I felt like I was wasting my time. She was not interested in me. She did not want to listen to me or what I had to say. She still wrote up my assessment, but it got declined by ACC. I think she did a pretty poor job on it.



- 4.6. I appealed against ACC's decision and I went to a different counsellor. I got all of my medical records from the doctors so I could show how I suffer from stress and anxiety. This counsellor sat with me for one and a half hours and we talked about my health and all of my other issues. She listened to every word I said. She told me she would read all of my files. When we finished and I got up to leave, she told me "I'll do the best I can for you, the best I can". I felt that at long last I had been heard, I had achieved something.
- 4.7. After this, I got a call from ACC saying that my claim had been accepted. They gave me some money, but it was pittance. It felt like a kick in the backside. I got \$3000 and then I got a three-monthly payment of \$300. But this does not mean a thing. What is the difference between Lake Alice and myself? Some of those people got pay outs of \$50,000. I got \$3000 for 50 years of suffering. I spent the \$3000 on my van which was a necessity.
- 4.8. I think there is a real injustice to how ACC works. I feel they could have done more for me. In saying that, I struggled and fought against ACC but they are still the only ones who have even shown up for me at all.

### **Complaint to Police**

- 4.9. As I said earlier, the Police became involved in my life several times as a child. I told them that GRO-B-4 was awful and that I did not want to go back there. Me and GRO-B-2 tried so hard to tell the Police about all of the terrible things happening to us at Kimberley but they did not listen and they did not care.
- 4.10. I have heard that back then in the 1960s, the Police never charged women for sexual abuse. I am not even sure if women could be charged for sexual abuse. I think maybe that is how they got away with everything at Kimberley. No one listened to my complaints because they knew they would never be charged.
- 4.11. As an adult, I never went back to the Police to lay a complaint. I felt like no one would listen to me. I am sure that everyone who abused me would be dead by now, so I would never get anywhere. When I learnt that women could not be charged for sexual abuse against children, it just made me even more sure that the Police would not do anything if I complained.

## **5. LOOKING FORWARD**

- 5.1. I want to see the Government change their tactics. Foster homes and institutions need to be monitored. When a child says something is wrong to someone like a teacher or a police officer, those people need to respond appropriately. Those complaints need to be investigated and children need to be listened to.
- 5.2. There were all of these institutions like Kimberley, Lake Alice, Cherry Farm and Porirua Hospital. All of these institutions were exactly the same. They took advantage of children that could not stick up for themselves. I am sure that today, so many of these children are dead.

- 5.3. There used to be lots of photos of Kimberley after it closed, but now they seem to have all disappeared. I have tried to find them again, but I cannot. I have seen photos of Kimberley where there was lots of spray painted graffiti with words like "rape" and "sexual assault". Those photos seem to have all disappeared now.
- 5.4. So many of these children were sexually assaulted and groomed at Kimberley. They could be working as prostitutes now. They were groomed into a situation, where they could not do anything about it. That would be the only thing they knew. They never got an education, they never got any training or anything. The only training they got was abuse.
- 5.5. The New Zealand Government and Child Welfare have made big, big mistakes. They put us in places that we should never have been put into in the first place. They never followed up or checked on us, they never really looked into the people they were hiring to make sure they were suitable. If we had the chances to come forward and tell our stories without being pushed away, perhaps today there would be less people like myself and there would be less people in prisons that have been through the same thing. People like this, we cannot correct ourselves on our own. This is what the Government needs to look at.
- 5.6. Why are they putting kids into foster homes when the foster parents are too old to look after children? That was one of the mistakes. They should be looking and monitoring us. Ninety nine percent of these foster homes are not worried about the kids, they are worrying about the income. They don't give a damn about the kids. These old women should not have been caring for 13 and 14 year old boys like myself. They did not have the skills to look after me. When you have a family yourself, you don't wait until you are 65 to have a baby.

### 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:

20/12/2021

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